

SABBATICAL LEAVE GUIDELINES (updated 7/2/2019)

University policy provides for the granting of sabbatical leaves for the purpose of professional improvement of the faculty. Such leaves are not automatic with tenure or the accumulation of years of service and are regulated by budgetary, legal and other considerations.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a sabbatical leave, by the start of the proposed sabbatical a faculty member shall have:

- the rank of assistant professor or above
- tenure
- completed twelve full semesters of service at the university OR
- completed fourteen full semesters of service at the university since completing any previous sabbatical

Normally sabbatical leaves are granted for either one full semester at full pay or two semesters at one-half pay.. Summer sabbaticals will be granted only with special approval in exceptional cases. In the event that a health or personal crisis prevents a faculty member from beginning an approved sabbatical at the specified start time, the faculty member may appeal to the dean. The dean will then forward his/her recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Faculty members holding positions as academic deans, department heads, or academic directors are also eligible for sabbatical leaves. The President may recommend a number of such leaves proportionate to the number of eligible faculty members having no administrative duties receiving sabbaticals. The Council of Academic Deans shall serve as a review committee for these applications to advise the Vice President for Academic Affairs prior to their submissions to the President for his consideration.

Application Process

Applications for leave must be submitted in writing no later than dates established in the Administrative calendar of the academic year preceding the date the leave would begin. A meritorious sabbatical proposal will demonstrate how a sabbatical leave will further the development of a serious scholarly, creative, or pedagogical project in the applicant's discipline. The application must include:

1. A detailed but concise narrative of no more than 4300 characters (including spaces) outlining the specific goals and objectives of the applicant's proposed activities for the period of the leave, including some indication of their contribution to the applicant's professional improvement. The planned activities should present mutual benefit to the faculty member and the university. Two-semester sabbaticals are more competitive, so applicants should be sure to provide clear justification for the longer sabbatical period. **In writing the narrative, candidates should carefully review the College Sabbatical Advisory Committee's evaluation criteria (see "Review Process: At the College Level" below).**
2. A brief, 2-3 page CV
3. If applicable, Attachment A detailing outcomes of any previous sabbatical (see end of sabbatical application form).

Review Process

At the Department Level

Sabbatical leave applications must be endorsed by the applicant's department head. In a paragraph of 250-300 words, department heads should comment on the following:

1. An estimation of the soundness of the applicant's proposal, such as:

- Does it make sense?
 - Is it probable that it can be accomplished?
 - Is it your belief that this applicant can do it?
2. An evaluation of the intrinsic worth of the proposed activity, such as:
 - What is your opinion of the value of this activity to the individual? In what way(s) will this person improve professionally?
 - How, if applicable, will the Department and University communities benefit if the applicant succeeds in accomplishing the proposed endeavor?
 - What significance might the proposal have to communities beyond WKU? For example, if this applicant proposed to explore a new theory or segment of learning, might the findings add a new dimension to his/her academic discipline? Are there ways in which the proposed activity would positively impact local or regional communities?
 3. Bearing in mind current staffing capabilities, what assurance can be given that approval of the sabbatical leave will not jeopardize the quality and scope of the academic program and that the candidate's responsibilities can be maintained in his/her absence?

There may be instances in which a department head will have a lack of personal expertise in the specialty subject matter of a proposal. In such a case, it is recommended that the head consult with such person(s) (not the applicant) as may be able to give the head expert advice, sufficient to permit the head to provide the requested estimation and evaluation.

It is requested that department heads not forward applications to the Dean's Office until "if" situations are resolved. Reference is to proposals which are conditional, expressed by the applicant in terms such as "...if I can get into a program which will benefit me." A statement reflecting only tenuous arrangements does not provide a feeling of certainty that the applicant can, in fact, accomplish his/her proposed objective. Department heads are encouraged to urge prospective applicants to secure a resolution of questions and a confirmation of commitments prior to the submission of their applications if at all possible.

At the College Level

A College Sabbatical Advisory Committee will be appointed by the dean of each college to receive applications and make recommendations to the dean. The College Sabbatical Advisory Committee shall consist of an elected tenured representative from each department within the college. Members of the College Sabbatical Advisory Committee serve three-year rotating terms.

The College Sabbatical Advisory Committee will evaluate each application using the criteria below:

- To what extent would the proposed activity accomplish **any** of the following:
 - Utilize applicant's skills in a way not otherwise possible
 - Allow a synthesis or development of prior efforts and experiences
 - Involve a planned and concerted effort to augment or develop professional skills
 - Enhance the research or teaching capabilities of the department or service unit
 - Contribute to the educational needs and goals of the University
- To what extent has the candidate demonstrated previous scholarly or creative productivity in the area of proposed activity, and is the proposal a natural extension of prior experience? If a change in scholarly direction is indicated, is a rationale presented?
- Is the plan for the academic leave detailed, comprehensive, and sound? Are the objectives specified, is the significance of the work described, is the methodology appropriate, and are the expected outcomes listed?
- Is the candidate committed to the project and is he/she prepared to do what the plan proposes?
- To what extent will the academic leave contribute to the candidate's professional development at this stage in his/her career?

- To what extent will the academic leave contribute to undergraduate, graduate, public service, and/or research programs in the department, college, and university? To the applicant's disciplinary field?
- If the candidate is to visit or coordinate work with another facility, is there evidence that the candidate has contacted those responsible for the facility and has been accepted by them?
- To what extent does the proposal have the support of the candidate's department head and/or faculty colleagues?

The College Sabbatical Advisory Committee will have an initial meeting promptly after the application deadline to review the evaluation criteria and elect a chair. With the above criteria in mind, committee members will individually review and each application on its own merit (1- Excellent, 2-Very Good, 3-Good, 4-Below Average, 5-Poor) and rank the applications in the order by which they believe the proposals merit consideration. Committee members will submit their ratings, rankings, and brief comments to the chair, who will tabulate the ratings and collate comments. The College Sabbatical Advisory Committee will hold a second meeting to discuss and rank applications. The committee chair will submit final rankings and comments to the dean no later than October 31.

The dean of each college will receive the recommendations of the College Sabbatical Advisory Committee, evaluate the proposals, and make specific recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs consistent with the resources allotted to that college for sabbatical leaves. After a review of the budgetary and departmental staffing implications and an evaluation of the overall impact on the university by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, a recommendation will be made to the Board of Regents for official approval.

Any major modification of plans by a leave recipient must be approved by the College Sabbatical Advisory Committee. Faculty members with approved academic year sabbaticals may not change to one-semester sabbaticals.

Upon Completion

Within thirty (30) days after completion of the sabbatical leave, the faculty member shall submit a written report on the activities engaged in during the leave period to their department head and the appropriate dean. The dean will then forward the report to the College Sabbatical Advisory Committee and to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The College Sabbatical Advisory Committee will evaluate the report based on the extent to which the objectives of the sabbatical leave were achieved. This evaluation will be sent to the faculty member and placed on file with the report.

Faculty and administrators on either a sabbatical or paid leave are expected to return to the university for at least one academic year following the conclusion of the year in which the sabbatical or leave is taken. Those on a summer sabbatical must return for the academic year following the summer in which the leave is taken. Failure to comply obligates the individual to repay the university for the compensation received. This policy will prevail in all cases unless otherwise stipulated.

Western Kentucky University

Application for Sabbatical Leave

Name of Applicant

Department

Number of Years at W.K.U.

Rank

Have you had previous sabbatical leaves: Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please complete Attachment A.

Check type of leave preferred:

One-half year, full-pay: _____ Fall Semester _____ Spring Semester

One-year, half-pay: _____ Fall and Spring Semesters

*Summer, normal Stipend: _____

*Restricted by Board of Regents to exceptional cases where leave activities cannot be pursued during the regular school year.



Detailed outline of applicant's proposed activities including indication of contribution to his/her professional improvement:

Outline of plan should be continued on next page.

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Application for Sabbatical Leave
(Continued from previous page)

Signature

Date

Endorsements

Endorsement by Department Head

Date

Comments:

Outline of plans for conduct of classes normally taught by leave applicant:

Upon endorsement by the Department Head, an original plus one copy for each representative of the College Sabbatical Advisory Committee should be forwarded to the Office of the College Dean. (The College Sabbatical Advisory Committee is composed of one tenured faculty member in each department within the college.)

*Endorsement by Chairman, College
Sabbatical Advisory Committee*

Date

Comments:

Endorsement by College Dean

Date

Comments:

Upon endorsement by the College Dean, original plus one copy are to be forwarded to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

