

SABBATICAL LEAVE GUIDELINES

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.

To be eligible for a sabbatical leave, a faculty member shall have the rank of assistant professor or above, shall have tenure, and shall have completed six continuous full academic years of service at the university. 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.

Applications for leave must be submitted by email to marcia.sanders@wku.edu no later than dates established in the Administrative calendar of the academic year preceding the date the leave would begin. (Link to [Sabbatical Application](#):

https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/forms/sabbatical_leave_application.pdf). The application must include a general outline of the applicant's proposed activities for the period of the leave, including some indication of their contribution to the applicant's professional improvement, and must be endorsed by the applicant's department head. 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 endorsement of the department head can be of the greatest utility to the College Sabbatical Advisory Committee if it will contain at least the following information:

- A. An estimation of the soundness of the applicant's proposal, such as:
 1. Does it make sense?
 2. Is it probable that it can be accomplished?
 3. Is it your belief that this applicant can do it?
- B. An evaluation of the intrinsic worth of the proposed activity, such as:
 1. What is your opinion of the value of this activity to the individual? In what way(s) will this person improve professionally?
 2. How, if applicable, will the University community benefit if the applicant succeeds in accomplishing the proposed endeavor?
 3. Has the proposal any significance to the larger community? For example, if this applicant proposed to explore a new theory or segment of learning, might his/her findings add a new dimension to his/her academic discipline?

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 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.

The dean of each college will receive the recommendations of the College Sabbatical Advisory Committee, will evaluate the proposals, and will 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.

Faculty members holding positions as academic deans, department heads, or academic directors are eligible for sabbatical leaves, and a number of them proportionate to the number of eligible faculty members having no administrative duties receiving sabbaticals in any academic year may be recommended by the President to receive such leaves. 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.

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.

Within thirty (30) days after completion of the sabbatical leave, the faculty member shall submit a written report to the College Sabbatical Advisory Committee with copies to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the appropriate dean and department head on the activities engaged in during the leave period. 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.