

# SABBATICAL LEAVES OF ABSENCE

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST  
COMMUNICATION NO. 19

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## I. OVERVIEW

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Under certain circumstances, the University's *Statutes* provide that a member of the tenure system faculty who has the rank of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor may be granted a sabbatical leave of absence with pay for the pursuit of study or research. All sabbatical leaves are granted by the Board of Trustees, upon recommendation of the President. The object of the leave is to increase the individual's value to the University; however, work towards a graduate degree is not a qualifying basis for a sabbatical leave. The University's *Statutes* impose the requirement that individuals may not accept any payment for work while on a sabbatical without advance approval from the Chancellor. The department/unit executive officer and dean/director (acting at the dean level) must review the sabbatical leave request with care and certify that: 1) the leave will enhance the faculty member's value to the University, 2) the proposed plans will improve the applicant's capabilities for carrying out objectives of the unit and the University, and 3) the work of the unit will not be disrupted by the leave. Once the leave has been recommended by the executive officer of the faculty member's unit and has the concurrence of the dean/director, it is subject to review and approval by the Provost.

A faculty member must submit a report of activities to her/his college upon completion of the leave, per the Provost's Communication #19 Sabbatical Calendar of Events. The report should include a description of activities and where the sabbatical occurred. It should incorporate the significance or usefulness of the sabbatical activities to the individual and to his or her field. Additionally, it should address how the sabbatical leave enhanced the individual's value to the University and how it improved the individual's capabilities for carrying out the objectives of the unit and the University. (See Sabbatical Leave Report Attachment.) It is the responsibility of the unit executive officer to review the report for approval, and then forward it to the dean of the college, who will, in turn, approve and forward the report to the Provost. These review, approval and transmittal procedures must occur in a timely manner, as noted in the Calendar of Events in section 8. Any anticipated delay must be communicated to the Office of the Provost in advance of the due date for approval of an exception to the established timeline.

According to the University *Statutes* (Article IX, Section 7.d.), a faculty member who has been granted a sabbatical must agree to return to the University on the expiration of the leave and remain in full-time service for at least one year thereafter. Normally, the faculty member shall return *immediately* upon the expiration of the leave. Exceptions to the requirement for an immediate return to service may be considered at the discretion of the dean and requires approval by the Provost. If the obligation to remain in service for a year following the sabbatical leave is not fulfilled, the faculty member or his or her new employer must reimburse the University for the salary paid while on sabbatical leave.

It is very important that faculty members read this entire document and follow the policies and procedures as outlined when preparing applications for sabbatical leave.

This Communication incorporates the President's Guidelines.

**[A copy of the President's Guidelines, as well as the sabbatical leave application and instructions, are available at the website of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.](#)**  
**The application may be filled out on line and downloaded to print and route for administrative approvals.**

Applications not following these instructions will be returned for revision, which may delay consideration of the application. Under some circumstances, this may prevent the faculty member from taking the sabbatical leave when desired.

## **II. ELIGIBILITY FOR SABBATICAL**

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### **A. Criteria**

The purpose of sabbatical leave is to enable faculty members to acquire additional knowledge and competency in their respective fields, and thereby enhance their value to the University. As part of the proposal, an applicant must describe his or her proposed activities and how each aspect relates to the individual's service to the University. The following points must be addressed:

- How each activity will improve the applicant's capabilities for carrying out the objectives of the academic unit and the University.
- How the proposal relates to the campus goal of excellence in teaching, research, and service.
- Where appropriate, how the proposed activity will help the applicant to better serve particular needs of the State of Illinois and the nation.

### **B. Eligibility Based on Full-Time Service**

Faculty members who have served the University on a full-time appointment in a tenure system rank since the original appointment, or since the last leave on salary, are eligible. The following sabbatical leave options are available to the Urbana-Champaign faculty:

- 1) For faculty members on nine-month appointments**
  - a) After eight appointment years of full-time service:
    - i) two semesters at two-thirds salary
    - ii) one semester at full salary
  - 2) After six appointment years of full-time service:
    - a) two semesters at one-half salary
    - b) one semester at full salary

- 3) After four appointment years of full-time service:
  - a) one semester at two-thirds salary
- 4) After three appointment years of full-time service:
  - a) one semester at one-half salary
- 2) **For faculty members on twelve-month appointments**
  - a) After nine appointment years of full-time service:
    - i) three-fourths of an appointment year (9 months) at full salary
  - b) After eight appointment years of full-time service:
    - i) one appointment year (12 months) at two-thirds salary
    - ii) two-thirds of an appointment year (8 months) at full salary
  - c) After six appointment years of full-time service:
    - i) one appointment year (12 months) at one-half salary
    - ii) one-half of an appointment year (6 months) at full salary
  - d) After four appointment years of full-time service:
    - i) one-half of an appointment year (6 months) at two-thirds salary
  - e) After three appointment years of full-time service:
    - i) one-half of an appointment year (6 months) at one-half salary
    - ii) one-fourth of an appointment year (3 months) at full salary

The sabbatical leave options available to faculty are limited to those specified in the University *Statutes*. No other options can be negotiated or approved by unit executive officers or deans/directors.

Faculty with administrative appointments and stipends will not receive their administrative increment during the period of the leave, nor will the increment be included in the calculation of the sabbatical leave pay.

A sabbatical leave of absence for a specified period of time at one-half pay cannot be changed to leave for a period of time at full pay without prior approval of all recommending officers-- unless such option was requested in the original application and subsequently approved by the Board of Trustees.

### **C. Probationary Faculty**

Sabbatical leave applications may be submitted by probationary faculty members only if the college forwards recommendations for promotion and indefinite tenure for those faculty members. Such applications will not be forwarded by the Provost for final approval by the Board of Trustees until a positive recommendation on tenure is made.

#### D. Employment while on Sabbatical Leave

The University *Statutes* state that:

Leaves of absence . . . are given to members of the faculty primarily for the purpose of enabling them to acquire additional knowledge and competency in their respective fields. No one to whom a leave of absence with pay has been granted shall be permitted while on such leave to accept remunerative employment or engage in professional practice or work for which pecuniary compensation is received. This prohibition, however, [does not] forbid a faculty member while on leave from giving a limited number of lectures or doing a limited amount of work. But, in such cases, the approval of the Chancellor . . . shall be required. Nor [does this prohibition] forbid the acceptance by a faculty member, while on leave, of a scholarship or fellowship carrying a stipend for the purpose of study, research, or scientific investigation, or the acceptance of a grant of money made for such purposes, provided that the acceptance of the grant does not impose on the recipient duties and obligations . . . incompatible with . . . the general purpose for which leaves of absence are granted (Article IX, Section 7.e.).

Occasionally, problems have arisen regarding what constitutes a “limited number of lectures” or a “limited amount of other work,” and what is to be considered an acceptable stipend in the form of a “fellowship, scholarship, or grant.” In such cases, the last phrase of the above-cited regulation is to be considered as the ultimate definition of legitimacy.

The words “fellowship, scholarship, or grant” are intended to be illustrative of the sorts of stipends that are legitimate under this provision, but are not intended to exclude stipends by other names that are exclusively “for the purpose of study, research, or scientific investigation” and do “not impose duties and obligations incompatible with the purpose for which such leaves of absence are granted.” Accordingly, an appointment to a position with a title such as “visiting scientist,” “visiting scholar,” “visiting professor,” or the equivalent in other languages, would be acceptable if the terms of appointment provide only that the recipient engage in the research program for which the leave has been granted, but not if the recipient is to give any formal course--even a graduate seminar in his or her own research specialty--unless this stipulation were part of the original application for the sabbatical leave.

Similarly, the expression “limited number of lectures” does permit the giving of a lecture or even a short series of lectures as a visitor to other institutions (advance approval should be obtained), but it does not imply the legitimacy of giving any sort of formal course for which normally-enrolled students would receive credit as a requirement for receipt of a stipend from the host institution.

***The intent of the above regulation is clear, and the criteria for legitimacy are contained within its final phrase. All work to be done or stipends accepted must be conducive to the attainment of objectives for which the leave was granted initially.***

### **E. Reimbursement of Expenses While on Sabbatical**

The application for sabbatical leave requires the disclosure and approval of funding from any source to be used during the sabbatical leave. In regard to requesting and approving reimbursement of faculty for expenses related to a sabbatical leave, please note the following clarifications.

Projected allowable reimbursements must be requested and approved by the department, college, and Chancellor/or Designee as part of the leave application process. Applicants are requested to note any and all of the following applicable items and attach to the sabbatical application a description of the charges and approximate costs for approval:

- Initial travel to and/or return from the sabbatical location;
- Travel to and/or return from the sabbatical location to campus during sabbatical period (i.e., for graduate student supervision, research activities, or other departmental business; allowable only if approved by the department and college);
- Meal per diem for short periods of sabbatical travel;
- Travel lodging during short periods of sabbatical travel (not for duration of a sabbatical at a remote location);
- Differential expenses when residing at another location (e.g., housing, cost of living) for the duration of the sabbatical (allowable only if covered by grant or allowable gift or external funds);
- Other (attach description);

Travel to conferences attended on a regular basis regardless of the sabbatical leave need not be listed. Additional conference travel must be approved. (Reimbursement may be provided from gift, ICR, grant, or other allowable fund sources.)

### **III. APPLICATION PROCESS TO BE COMPLETED BY FACULTY MEMBER**

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[The University of Illinois sabbatical leave application and guidelines for the application are available on the website of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.](#) The application may be filled out on line and downloaded to print and route for administrative approvals. The signature of the applicant is required on the application, as well as certification by the unit executive officer, school director (if applicable) and dean.

NOTE: If it is anticipated that a leave of absence without pay is to be taken in conjunction with a sabbatical leave, this should be noted on the sabbatical leave application, but it will be necessary to submit a separate written request for leave without pay after the sabbatical leave is approved and plans are fairly certain. (See Provost's Communication No. 20)

### **A. Leave Contingent Upon Receipt of Supplementary Financial Aid**

If successful completion of the program of research, study, or travel is contingent upon the applicant's receiving additional financial aid, either from the University or elsewhere, details concerning the contingency and a description of the alternative plan should be included in the "Statement of Plans." In no case should an individual delay applying for a sabbatical leave while awaiting word on a grant proposal.

If the faculty member wishes to combine his or her sabbatical leave with either additional leave and/or salary supported by outside funds administered by the University, the arrangements must be as follows:

- 1) the combined salary may not exceed the faculty member's 100% salary for the appointment year during which the sabbatical leave is taken;
- 2) if sponsored project funds are used in combination with the sabbatical leave salary, an explicit statement must be submitted with the sabbatical leave application indicating that the proposed salary payment from sponsored project funds has the approval of the contracting or granting agency, or will have if an external sponsor grants a request already made but still pending. The possibility of using such funds to complement sabbatical leave salary does not in any way alter or change the spirit of the statutory requirements.

In other words, an eligible faculty member may take sabbatical leave for one appointment year at one-half salary and the remaining half of the salary may be paid from a grant or contract administered by the University.

### **B. Purpose for which the Leave is Requested**

This information is used to prepare a document for approval by the Board of Trustees. Please avoid an over simplified statement such as "to write a book."

Samples of appropriately concise, understandable statements are provided below.

"To complete a major series of paintings that deal with alterations of the rectangle in combination with painted illusions."

"To complete a study of feeding mechanisms in carnivores and to develop a graduate course on the physiology of human feeding."

"To complete research and write a monograph on the theme of the American claimant in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century American fiction and to read in American literary scholarship."



### C. Statement of Plans

Provide information as indicated on the sabbatical application form. NOTE: While the full statement may be included as an attachment to the application form, please include the sabbatical period, location and brief title on the application. Attached text should incorporate the section headers provided on the application form. Applications will be returned if text in an attached Statement of Plans does not follow the format of response to the section headers described in the application form.

Please **do not** include a *curriculum vita*, research summary, list of publications, or similar career documentation. If additional materials are needed during processing of the application, they will be requested specifically.

## IV. APPROVAL PROCESS

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### A. Routing of Application

Using the attached form, the faculty member submits the application in triplicate to the executive officer of the unit. The executive officer of the unit reviews the request and, if he or she approves, transmits the application through the appropriate administrative levels to the Office of Academic Human Resources, which receives all applications on behalf of the Provost.

The applications are forwarded for review by the Provost on behalf of the Chancellor and forwarded to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

### B. Unit Executive Officer's Approval

The unit executive officer's approval should be based on a positive judgment that the proposed sabbatical activities will increase the individual's value to the University. The executive officer must explain this judgment on the sabbatical leave application form and may be called upon to articulate further the rationale and basis for his/her approval by successive reviewers.

In addition, it is the executive officer's responsibility to certify that the unit can operate effectively in the member's absence. The *Statutes*, Article IX, Section 7.b. state:

In recommending a leave with pay according to any of the options provided...it shall be understood by all recommending officers concerned that the department in which the applicant is teaching or working undertakes, so far as is practicable, to carry on during the applicant's absence without increase in the departmental budget, such part of the applicant's work as the interests of the department and of the University require to be continued without interruption during the period of absence.

Applications ordinarily should not be approved if any additional costs to the University are involved. If exceptions to this rule are to be made, a specific request must be submitted through appropriate channels for the approval of the Chancellor.

Certification of the sabbatical application by the executive officer should include the unit's ability to meet its undergraduate instructional obligations and, where appropriate, those related to graduate student instruction and supervision and administrative duties. Where an individual holds a budgeted position in more than one unit, the approvals of each unit, as described in this policy, are required.

### **C. Dean/Director's Approval**

The dean/director must independently concur with the unit executive officer's certification that the proposed activities will increase the individual's value to the University. The dean/director must further review the executive officer's ability to maintain the operations of the unit, taking into account all sabbatical leaves requested in the unit. The dean/director may be called upon to articulate the rationale and basis for his/her approval of sabbatical leave proposals individually and by unit.

### **D. Academic Human Resources' Approval**

The Office of Academic Human Resources checks the sabbatical leave requests for eligibility requirements and inclusion of all required information.

### **E. Provost's Approval**

The Provost has responsibility for general oversight and mainly focuses on the completeness of the application and the integrity of the process. However, when the case is not clearly made that the sabbatical leave will enhance the faculty member's value to the University, the Provost may query the unit executive officer and dean/director for material supporting their approvals.

### **F. Approval by the Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees has the final approval of all sabbatical leaves.

### **G. Other Required Approvals**

#### **1. If the faculty member requesting sabbatical leave is a Primary Investigator (PI) and he/she will remain active on a sponsored project (grant or contract) while on Sabbatical Leave:**

For each sponsored project in which the PI will remain active during sabbatical leave, the PI shall contact the respective program manager at the funding agency (in writing) to inform the funding agency of her/his research plans during the sabbatical period. A copy of this written communication with the sponsor will be placed in the department and/or college files. Additionally, if the applicant wishes to take University equipment off campus during the sabbatical leave, an Inventory Loan Agreement must be completed, approved, and filed in the administrative office of the loaning unit, before any equipment is removed.

## 2. If the PI will not remain active on a sponsored project while on Sabbatical Leave:

If the applicant is the principal investigator (PI) on a sponsored project and will be unable to manage the project activity for a period of three months or more, the applicant must designate a substitute PI to monitor the project. This designation should be done via a letter initiated by the PI, with agreement signatures of the substitute PI and department head/chair, and processed through Grants and Contracts for approval by the sponsoring agency.

## V. REVISION OF SABBATICAL LEAVE PLANS

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When the Board of Trustees approves a sabbatical, it is based on the information provided on the sabbatical application. Subsequently, if a faculty member wishes to revise his/her sabbatical leave information, a statement of the proposed revision must be submitted promptly to the Provost through regular approval channels (e.g., unit executive officer, dean/director). The unit executive officer and the dean/director must each indicate that the changed plans meet the original criteria. All changes to data submitted and approved via the original application should be forwarded through the normal channels to the Office of Academic Human Resources (AHR) for review and any further approvals. Only after approvals have been received may the faculty member proceed per the revised information.

## VI. REQUIREMENTS UPON COMPLETION OF LEAVE

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### A. Report

Upon returning from sabbatical leave, the faculty member must submit a written report on his or her study and travel during the leave. A reminder of this requirement will be sent to the faculty member from AHR. Submission should be made to the unit executive officer per the Provost's Communication #19 Sabbatical Calendar of Events (section 8). The executive officer will review for approval then forward the report to the school director if applicable, or the dean for review. If approved, the dean will transmit the report to the Office of the Provost in conjunction with the Calendar of Events. The Sabbatical Leave Report form includes sections for recording the concurrence of the responsible administrative officials. (Use Attachment to Provost's Communication #19, a fillable Word form document, then print, sign, and forward one original.)

Should a question arise upon receipt of the report as to whether the activities undertaken were consistent in good faith with the approved plan, it will be referred to the Provost through normal reporting channels.

### B. Service Obligation Following Sabbatical Leave

It is important to understand the University's statutory requirement (Article IX, Sec.7.d.) that **a faculty member who takes a sabbatical leave must return to the University on the expiration of the leave and must remain in full-time service for at least one year following his/her return from leave.** If this obligation is not fulfilled, the faculty member or his or her new employer must reimburse the University for the salary paid while on sabbatical leave. This requirement is strictly enforced.

## **VII. ACCUMULATION OF SERVICE CREDIT AFTER A SABBATICAL LEAVE**

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For faculty members on nine-month appointments, credit toward a sabbatical leave will begin to accumulate at the beginning of the first semester after returning from a sabbatical leave to full-time service. For faculty members on twelve-month appointments, credit will begin to accumulate upon return from sabbatical leave to full-time service. For example, if a staff member is on sabbatical leave the first semester of a given academic year, credit toward the next sabbatical leave begins to accumulate at the beginning of the second semester of that same academic year. Please note service that has been counted toward a sabbatical leave cannot be counted toward an administrative leave, and vice-versa. Finally, time spent on leave of absence without pay from the University does not ordinarily count as service in establishing eligibility for a sabbatical leave with pay unless recommended and agreed upon in advance.

## **VIII. CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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### **A. Application Process**

Due dates as stated, or on the following business day if stated date falls on a weekend:

December 1	Application for sabbatical leave, including the “Statement of Plans,” due in the Office of Academic Human Resources.
	Late sabbatical leave applications will be considered only with sufficient justification. Late applications may experience a considerable delay in approval, to the extent that the faculty member may not be granted a sabbatical leave when desired.
By end of March	Applicants will be notified of the status of their application by the Secretary of the Board of Trustees. Probationary faculty will be notified later because recommendations for sabbatical will not be forwarded from the campus to the Board of Trustees for consideration and final approval pending completion of the annual Promotion and Tenure review cycle.

### **B. Post-Sabbatical Reporting**

Due dates as stated, or on the following business day if stated date falls on a weekend:

- 1) Faculty serving on an Academic Year service basis:
  - Sabbatical reports on academic year or spring semester sabbaticals are to be submitted to the unit executive officer by November 15.
  - Sabbatical reports on sabbaticals concluding with the fall semester are to be submitted to the unit executive officer by April 15.

- 2) Faculty serving on the twelve-month service basis:
- Sabbatical leave reports are to be submitted to the unit executive officer following return from sabbatical on the earlier of November 15 or April 15, whichever date allows the returning faculty member at least three months during which to submit the report.
- 3) Administrator Responsibilities: Reports submitted to the unit executive officer are reviewed for approval then transmitted to the dean of the college for review. Upon approval of the dean, reports will be transmitted to the Office of the Provost.
- Reports due from faculty on November 15 are due to the Provost by December 15.
  - Reports due from faculty on April 15 are due to the Provost by May 15.

**Any anticipated delay in report submittal or transmittal must be communicated to the Office of the Provost in advance of the due date for approval of an exception to the established timeline.**

## **IX. ASSISTANCE**

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For policy questions regarding sabbatical leaves, please call the Office of the Provost.

## **X. ATTACHMENT**

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1. Sabbatical Leave Report
2. Link for Sabbatical Leave of Absence:  
<https://www.vpaa.uillinois.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=420456&pageId=441035>