SABBATICALS AND LEAVES
Updated May 16, 2016

The following general policy governing sabbaticals and leaves for members of the faculty was approved by the Board of Trustees and became effective with the beginning of the academic year 1959–60. There have been subsequent amendments in detail.

1. Definition of sabbaticals and leaves

(a) A sabbatical is a leave of absence for a semester or an academic year with salary and other benefits that the recipient would have were he/she on present duty.

(b) A leave is a leave of absence from the University for one semester or an academic year of a continuing appointment, without salary from the University. All leaves are subject to approval by the VPAA. Leaves do not count as semesters of full-time service towards the accrual of sabbatical eligibility.

Faculty may apply for two types of unpaid leaves: a scholarly leave, to conduct research or take a temporary prestigious academic appointment; or an unpaid leave to work elsewhere in a tenured/tenure-track, or equivalent, appointment or to work in a nonprofit or for profit organization/company. During an unpaid non-terminal scholarly leave, faculty will be eligible for most benefits; during an unpaid leave to work elsewhere in a tenured/tenure-track or equivalent appointment, or in a for profit organization/company, Wesleyan will provide no benefits. For details click here: https://wesfiles.wesleyan.edu/departments/acaf/facultyhandbook/Benefits for Faculty on Leave_CBCSpring2015.pdf

(c) Effective July 1, 2007, a faculty member is eligible to receive a small stipend from the university if he/she is on a one-semester leave of absence without salary from the University during a non-terminal year and is funded that semester by a fellowship that is less than the faculty member’s salary but which is at least 40% of the annual salary of a beginning assistant professor. The amount of the stipend will be adjusted from time to time. The University will not make pension-contributions based on the stipend and will limit its insurance premium contributions as per section 1b. All requests should be made through the academic dean to the vice president for academic affairs upon receipt of a fellowship that meets the above-stated criteria.
2. All requests for sabbaticals and leaves should be made through the departmental chair and the academic dean to the vice president for academic affairs. These requests should be in writing and should include a statement of the purpose for which the sabbatical or leave is requested. Cases where the decision is in doubt will be referred for recommendation to the Advisory Committee by the Office of Academic Affairs.

3. In making recommendations for sabbaticals and leaves, the vice president for academic affairs will take into consideration the purpose of the sabbatical or leave and the eligibility of the applicant. The following principles in regard to eligibility are intended to serve as norms in practice with the understanding that exceptions may be made as the circumstances require.

(a) The purpose of the sabbatical is for research, study, writing, or other creative work contributing to the professional development and effectiveness of the recipient as a scholar and teacher. It should not be granted primarily for purposes of health or rest, nor for general travel except as this may serve the main purpose. The sabbatical may not be used for purposes of salaried services elsewhere except with Fulbright appointments or other similar assignments where sabbatical salary or a part of it is necessary for fulfillment of sabbatical purposes, the amount of such sabbatical salary needed for such purposes to be determined by the Board of Trustees on recommendation of the president after consultation with the faculty member involved.

(b) A tenured faculty member is eligible for a semester's sabbatical after every three years of full-time service on the Wesleyan faculty or for a year's sabbatical after every six years of such service, subject to the qualifications in (f) and (g) below; and in addition is eligible for a semester's or a year's leave after every three years of such service, the actual incidence of sabbaticals and leaves being determined by consideration of the circumstances of one's department.

(c) An appointee to the faculty who has had two or more years of previous full-time service as a member of a college or university faculty may apply for a semester’s sabbatical earlier than usual, the actual incidence of such a sabbatical being determined by consideration of the circumstances of one’s department.

(d) The total of sabbaticals and leaves should not be more than one year in every four. In general, a schedule should be observed that will separate all full
years of absence of an individual (whether on sabbatical or leave or a combination of both) by three consecutive years of teaching.

(e) There shall be no accumulation of credit toward longer sabbaticals or leaves or combinations of the two (for example, two consecutive years of absence after 6 years of teaching service, or three consecutive years of absence after 9 years of teaching service, etc.).

(f) In exceptional circumstances, absences of up to four contiguous semesters may be recommended by the department and approved by the president, with the understanding that the absentee will indicate not later than the end of the third contiguous semester away (December 31 or June 30) whether or not he/she will return after the fourth semester away. Failing a positive indication at that time the absentee's appointment will be deemed to lapse as of the end of the fourth contiguous semester away (June 30 or December 31).

(g) Departmental recommendations for extensions of appointment for persons taking leaves of unusual duration (i.e., leaves totaling three terms or more, continuous or not) will be submitted to close scrutiny by the vice president for academic affairs, with attention both to equity and to the scholarly advancement of the applicant.

(h) Full or partial parental leave is available to full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty members and to full-time adjunct faculty members on the instructional budget and on a multiyear contract, as follows:

1. Full parental leave with full pay is available to the birth mother (or in the case of adoption, the primary parent, of any gender), during the semester in which the birth or adoption occurred, or the semester immediately thereafter, if the birth or adoption occurred between semesters. This leave confers full benefits and no loss of status, but does not count toward accrual of sabbatical eligibility.

2. a) Full parental leave for one semester with two-thirds salary (without loss of benefits or status), or b) partial parental leave with a reduced load of at least one full course for a semester at full salary (without loss of benefits or status) is available to the non-birth parent of any gender (or in the case of adoption, the non-primary parent of any gender). A partial parental leave counts as a semester of service towards the accrual of sabbatical eligibility; a full parental leave does not. The leave will normally be taken the semester in which the birth or adoption occurs or the semester immediately after. If a child is born or
adopted between semesters, the leave may be taken the semester immediately after.

3. Only one parental leave is granted for a birth or adoption (without regard to the number of children born or adopted), therefore, if both parents are eligible for a faculty parental leave benefit: the parents may propose a way to share one parental leave or designate one parent to take it.

4. If one spouse or domestic partner is a faculty member who is eligible for a faculty parental leave, and the other a Wesleyan staff member, the policy on parental leave for staff applies to the staff member.

5. In certain unusual circumstances, and upon pre-approval, faculty members who intend to take a partial parental leave may be permitted to fulfill their teaching obligation for that leave by offering the scheduled course in the semester prior to or after their parental leave. As per the university’s policy on teaching loads, if enrollment in such courses is fewer than five students, the course will not be credited to the instructor’s teaching load, and the instructor will be expected to make up the deficit in a later semester. This option may be taken only if it can be shown to be in the best interests of the department or program as well as that of the faculty member. Faculty who have obtained permission for this option must be available for other university responsibilities during the parental leave semester as is normally the case for faculty on partial parental leaves. Approval for this option has to be obtained in advance from the Office of Academic Affairs.

6. The parental leave policy is intended to provide a leave for the birth or adoption of a child into a family; it is not intended for an adoption of a marital or domestic partner’s child.

7. This policy is flexible on the question of whether the leave semester must count toward the canonical time for a tenure or promotion decision. If the parental leave concludes before a faculty member submits his or her dossier to the department for a tenure decision, the faculty member has until the end of the leave (but no later) to declare whether the semester’s full or partial leave will count or not as a semester toward her or his probationary tenure period. As part of his or her declaration, the faculty member has the option (within the same time constraint) to declare that the semester immediately following the parental leave semester shall likewise not count as a semester toward her or his probationary tenure period. If the faculty member decides to count the leave
semester toward the probationary period or if a leave is not taken, the appointment contract and the schedule for personnel decisions are not affected. If the faculty member decides not to count the semester toward her or his probationary period, the leave will have the effect of extending the appointment contract and the canonical time of personnel decisions for nontenured faculty. If the parental leave concludes after a faculty member submits his or her dossier to the department for a tenure decision, the schedule for the tenure decision is unaffected, and the faculty member must have the support of both the department and the vice president for academic affairs for the contract to be extended. This parental leave policy does not supersede the benefit that parents of adopted children enjoy for reimbursement of expenses associated with adoption. Consistent with university policy, this parental leave is a paid leave, which may not be used for purposes of salaried services elsewhere.

(i) Medical Leaves. Faculty members who are at least half-time will continue to be paid their regular salary for occasional absences because of illness or injury; faculty who are less than half-time are not eligible for short-term disability. Eligible faculty members who are absent for six or more consecutive working days due to illness or injury should apply for short-term disability, which is subject to approval by Wesleyan’s Short-Term Disability insurance provider. Please contact the Benefits Office in Human Resources for directions on how to file a claim. Due to faculty’s unique teaching and semester-driven responsibilities, the faculty member will then be placed on unpaid leave. If the medical leave is approved by the insurance provider, salary will then be continued along with a retroactive payment to the date of disability. The length of short-term disability will be determined by Wesleyan’s Short-Term Disability insurance provider, but can be no longer than six months. For a disability of longer than six months, eligible faculty may receive coverage for additional benefits provided under the University’s long-term disability insurance program, which is administered by Wesleyan’s Long-Term Disability insurance provider in coordination with Social Security.

Faculty members who know they will apply for short-term disability shall advise their chair and Academic Affairs as soon as possible so that efforts may be made to replace courses if necessary and make other accommodations as needed. If a faculty member returns to work too late in the semester to teach full-semester courses, it is expected that the faculty member will contribute to the work of the department by offering partial credit courses (if applicable), advising, reading theses, serving on committees, participating in other
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... scholarly activities, and being available to assist the department in any other way possible.

(j) Incidental Family Medical Leaves. If a dependent child, spouse, domestic partner, or parent is ill or injured, faculty may take time off with pay to care for that family member, with dean and provost approval. A maximum of 10 paid days is allowed for this purpose in any calendar year.

(k) A pre-tenure, tenure-track faculty member is eligible for a maximum of one semester of sabbatical. This sabbatical may be taken only after reappointment. Additional pre-tenure service on the faculty will count toward eligibility for sabbatical after tenure is awarded.

(l) A non-tenured faculty member is not eligible for a sabbatical in the last two years of a terminal appointment.

(m) Sabbatical eligibility for non-tenure-track faculty: Faculty members serving more than half-time on renewable, multiyear appointments are eligible for a semester’s sabbatical after every five years of service. The purpose of the sabbatical is enhancement of professional skills and knowledge, and the activity undertaken during the sabbatical must be directly related to the applicant’s teaching. The term of the sabbatical will be pro-rated according to the average full-time equivalency during the preceding five years.

4. Following a leave or sabbatical the recipient should write a letter to the vice president for academic affairs via the academic dean, indicating the benefits realized.

5. The extent to which this sabbatical and leave policy can actually be supported will depend necessarily on budget considerations. In recognition of this, the following practices are recommended as ways by which the cost of the program may be minimized.

(a) Faculty members are requested to secure research grants or funds from outside sources when feasible, in lieu of sabbatical stipends.

(b) Departments should plan their offerings in such a way that sabbaticals can be taken without the provision of replacements.