8.6 Sabbaticals and Leaves

**SABBATICALS AND LEAVES**

Updated as of July 1, 2019

This policy addresses Sabbaticals and different forms of Leaves for faculty, including scholarly Leaves and other unpaid Leaves.

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. All Sabbaticals are subject to approval by the vice president for academic affairs (VPAA). Sabbaticals do not count as semesters of full-time service towards the accrual of future Sabbatical eligibility.

   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.

   c. A faculty member is eligible to receive a small stipend from the University if he or 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 divisional dean to the VPAA upon receipt of a fellowship that meets the above-stated criteria.
2. Request Process for Sabbaticals and Leaves

All requests for Sabbaticals and Leaves should be submitted by the department chair for approval through the divisional dean, to the VPAA. These requests should be in writing and should include a statement of the purpose for which the Sabbatical or Leave is requested and the potential impacts on the curriculum of the department and any units it serves.

3. Eligibility for Sabbaticals and Leaves

In approving requests for Sabbaticals and Leaves, the VPAA 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 a 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 VPAA 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 3i and 3j 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. 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.

d. An appointee to the faculty who has had two or more years of previous full-time service as a member of the faculty at another college or university may receive sabbatical credit for such service, as specified in the appointment letter.

e. A non-tenured faculty member is not eligible for a Sabbatical in the last two years of a terminal appointment.

f. Sabbatical and Leave eligibility for non-tenure-track faculty: Sabbaticals for non-tenure-track faculty may be awarded by the VPAA in exceptional circumstances. The VPAA’s decision will be based on the ability of the department to deal
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effectively with the absence of the faculty member, and on the circumstances of the faculty member’s appointment. In cases where the appointment is solely a teaching appointment, the VPAA will look for evidence of significant and public involvement in the advancement of pedagogy, both in the proposal itself and in the faculty member’s record. Examples could include publication of peer reviewed textbooks in the field, peer reviewed articles on pedagogy, other substantial professional publications, or other significant off-campus professional activities. In cases where the appointment involves other aspects, such as research or performance, the VPAA will look for significant and public involvement in those areas, both in the proposal itself and in the faculty member’s record. Examples in performance could include significant off-campus exhibitions or performances, or service as a guest artist for a prominent institution or group.

Personal or scholarly unpaid leaves (as opposed to parental and medical leaves, which are covered under human resources benefits) for non-tenure-track faculty may be awarded by the VPAA. The VPAA’s decision will be based on the ability of the department to deal effectively with the absence of the faculty member, and on the circumstances of the faculty member’s appointment. Such leaves do not extend the term of the faculty member’s current contract.

g. 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.

h. 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 six years of teaching service, or three consecutive years of absence after nine years of teaching service, etc.).

i. 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).

j. 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 VPAA, with attention both to equity and to the scholarly advancement of the applicant.

4. Sabbatical and Leave Reports

Following a Sabbatical or Leave, the recipient will submit a report to the VPAA, via the divisional dean, indicating the benefits realized. The report will be considered in evaluating requests for subsequent Sabbaticals and Leaves.

5. Constraints

The extent to which the University’s Sabbatical and Leave policy can actually be
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implemented 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.

6. Parental Leaves.

For information on faculty parental leaves, visit http://www.wesleyan.edu/hr/faculty/leaves/index.html.

7. Medical Leaves.

For information about faculty medical leaves, visit http://www.wesleyan.edu/hr/faculty/leaves/index.html.