

Guidelines for Sabbaticals

Updated September 1, 2026

Sabbatical leave is a form of faculty development involving relief from University duties for a semester or an academic year. When the University grants a sabbatical it invests in the development of its faculty, and what it expects in return is a stronger and more productive colleague. A sabbatical is not granted automatically. It is awarded on the strength of a demonstrated plan for significant professional development.

These guidelines explain who is eligible, how to apply, and what reviewers look for. They summarize Sections 12.0 through 12.6 of the Faculty Handbook. **Where these guidelines and the Faculty Handbook differ, the Handbook governs.** Please read this document in full before beginning work on an application.

Part One – Eligibility, Terms, and Procedure

Eligibility

A faculty member is eligible for sabbatical leave during or after the seventh year of service, dating back to the initial appointment or to a previous sabbatical. Faculty who become eligible in the seventh year ordinarily apply during the sixth.

A faculty member who has received a postponement of tenure review due to childbirth or adoption, or a leave of absence, may not take a first sabbatical until after receiving tenure, except in the case of a pre-tenure research sabbatical. Such a faculty member becomes eligible for a second sabbatical early, by the same number of years the tenure review was postponed.

Faculty Specialists are not eligible for sabbatical leave. A faculty member on disciplinary probation is not eligible to receive a sabbatical during the probationary period.

Three Kinds of Sabbatical

- **Regular sabbatical.** A full academic year or a single regular semester.
- **Librarian Special Sessions Sabbatical.** Available to faculty librarians, this sabbatical covers a summer session and the subsequent intersession, and begins in the summer immediately following notice of an approved application. Choosing this option does not preclude library faculty from applying instead for a regular semester or academic-year sabbatical.

- **Pre-tenure research sabbatical.** Tenure-track faculty may apply during the third year of the probationary period for a one-semester sabbatical to be taken in the fourth year. Library faculty may instead apply in the third year for a Librarian Special Sessions Sabbatical. A pre-tenure proposal **must describe a research project and may not be a curriculum development project.** Recipients are expected to include a copy of the proposal in the third-year reappointment portfolio and to make substantial progress toward a peer-reviewed scholarly publication or comparable juried creative or applied professional product. Faculty holding a terminal contract, and faculty who do not hold a terminal degree, are not eligible. All other procedures are the same as for regular sabbaticals.

Length, Salary, and Teaching Load

A faculty member on a one-semester sabbatical or on a Librarian Special Sessions Sabbatical receives full salary. A faculty member on sabbatical for a full academic year receives 70 percent of base salary. Benefit plans operative during full-time employment continue during a sabbatical on the same contribution schedule; benefits tied to salary level are determined by the salary actually paid.

When a faculty member takes a one-semester sabbatical during the academic year, the normal teaching load for the non-sabbatical semester is twelve teaching credits.

A faculty member awarded a full-year sabbatical may elect to convert it to a single semester, or, for librarians, to a Librarian Special Sessions Sabbatical. **Requests to convert should be made no later than April 30 in the calendar year of the sabbatical,** with the semester determined in consultation with the department chairperson.

Time spent on sabbatical, including a pre-tenure research sabbatical, counts toward the computation of time for promotion and continued service.

Types of Projects

A sabbatical proposal may concentrate on either research or curriculum development. The one exception is the pre-tenure research sabbatical, which must be a research project.

A **research project** should be a substantial undertaking generally related to your continuing research interests. Typically it results in significant scholarly publication, a major grant proposal, or a comparable product. The expected outcome is submission to a peer-reviewed medium. Choose a project with definable parameters — ideally one that can be completed within the sabbatical period. Identify clearly what will be

completed during the leave; if the work is part of something larger, explain what portion the sabbatical covers.

A **curriculum development project** should make a clear contribution to the instructional program in your area of teaching competence, and will often grow out of a recognized departmental need. The work must be more than updating course notes, which every faculty member is expected to do continuously. The need addressed must fall outside the normal responsibilities of a faculty member or chair. The project should be concrete, well defined, and a significant contribution to the curriculum.

How to Apply

By September 15 of the year prior to the contract year in which you seek the sabbatical, two things are due, and they go to two different people:

- A **statement of intent** to apply for sabbatical leave, submitted to your **Dean**.
- Your **application**, submitted to your **department chair**. The application outlines the sabbatical project and must include a timeline for the submission of any application needed to an internal or external review body, such as the Institutional Review Board or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Where approval has already been obtained, attach it.

The application form is available from the Office of the Provost at the following address:

<https://www.scranton.edu/academics/provost/research-sponsored-programs/sabbaticals.shtml>

At the same time you submit your application to your department chair, please send an electronic copy, assembled as a single document, to Linda Walsh in the Provost's Office at linda.walsh@scranton.edu. If you have difficulty opening the form, call Linda at extension x7520.

Review and Decision

The application moves on the following schedule:

- **September 15** – Statement of intent to the Dean; application to the department chair.
- **September 22** – The department chair reviews the application, provides a recommendation on any resources needed to cover your responsibilities during the leave, and forwards both to the Dean.

- **October 15** — The Dean makes a recommendation and forwards the file to the Faculty Research Committee (FRC).
- **November 30** — The recommendations of the chair, the Dean, and the FRC are submitted to the Provost/SVPAA, who decides whether to grant the leave.
- **End of the fall semester** — You, your dean, and your chairperson or chairpersons are informed of the decision.

The Faculty Research Committee begins its review at a fall semester meeting.

Throughout the process the Committee may request additional information, and at any stage an application may be returned to the applicant for clarification or expansion. No member of the Committee sits in review of an application submitted by that member or by a member of that member's immediate family; in such cases the Committee operates with its membership reduced accordingly.

Note that the chair and the Dean each provide a **recommendation**. The decision to grant or refuse a sabbatical rests with the Provost/SVPAA.

If a sabbatical is refused, the Provost/SVPAA will provide written reasons together with the recommendations of the Dean and the Committee. **You may submit a written response to the Provost/SVPAA within fourteen days of receiving notice of the refusal, asking that the sabbatical be reconsidered.**

The Provost/SVPAA may defer a sabbatical for programmatic or financial reasons, or at your request. If a sabbatical is deferred, you become eligible for a subsequent sabbatical early, by the same number of years the leave was deferred.

What Reviewers Look For

Reviewers assess applications from two perspectives.

The quality of the proposal. Is the topic substantial enough to merit release from all other duties? Are the details of how the work will be accomplished, and of the intended outcome, adequately spelled out? If publication is intended, is the medium appropriate to the discipline? Can the project realistically be completed within the sabbatical period?

Departmental feasibility. Can the department's schedule accommodate the leave? Have adequate provisions been made for covering your normal responsibilities?

The Committee looks for a well-defined plan built around these guidelines. Proposals should be succinct, well presented, and carefully thought through, with enough detail

to show that the plan is both worthwhile and achievable. Reviewers pay particular attention to proposed outcomes.

Responsibilities While on Sabbatical

A sabbatical alters your normal responsibilities for a specified period and for a specific academic purpose. During the leave you may not teach regular courses at the University, although under special circumstances such as a fellowship you may teach regular courses at another institution.

Unless you seek and receive approval from the Provost/SVPAA, you may not teach readers, tutorials, or independent study courses; mentor an honors project, graduate thesis, or doctoral dissertation; or serve as department chairperson, program director, academic advisor, faculty senator, Faculty Development Board member, Faculty Research Committee member, or University Governance Council member.

You retain the option to take part in regular department meetings; departmental reappointment, rank, tenure, and hiring deliberations; committee work; and the faculty/student research program. You may also continue, at your discretion, to moderate student organizations or to hold elected faculty offices for which there are no alternates, such as a position on the FAC Executive Committee. Faculty members are strongly advised to recuse themselves from service on the Board on Rank and Tenure during any academic year in which they will be on sabbatical.

After the Sabbatical

A sabbatical concludes at the end of the contracted period — the end of the fall semester, the end of the spring semester, or, for a Librarian Special Sessions Sabbatical, the end of Intersession. You must then file a report with the Provost/SVPAA. The report is a relatively brief narrative of one to two pages outlining what you accomplished during the contracted period, and you may attach products developed during the leave: manuscript drafts, book chapters, or a grant proposal for a research project; new or substantially revised syllabi, student workbooks, or lab projects for a curriculum development project.

Reports are due as follows:

- Fall semester sabbaticals — **March 1**
- Spring semester and full-year sabbaticals — **September 1**
- Librarian Special Sessions Sabbaticals — **April 1**

If a report is not filed by the deadline, eligibility for your next sabbatical may be delayed by one year. Where that penalty applies, the Provost/SVPAA will notify you, with reasons, within two months of the report deadline.

By accepting a sabbatical leave, you commit to one year of service to the University immediately following the end of the leave.

Part Two — Preparing the Proposal

The guidance below reflects what the Faculty Research Committee has found separates strong applications from weak ones. Following it closely is the best use of your preparation time.

Begin with a Summary

Present a summary of the project first, in non-technical English. Make plain right at the outset what you want to do, why it matters, and what it contributes. Keep this to a page or less. Many reviewers will not share your subfield, and the summary is where you either bring them with you or lose them.

The Body of the Proposal

Focus on precisely what the project is, why it is important, who will benefit, why you want to undertake it, and — where applicable — where you intend to seek publication.

For a curricular project, discuss concretely why the work is needed and what impact it will have on educating students in the major, in the minor, and more generally. Note what has changed in the field to make the project necessary, show how it fits into the curriculum, and explain why the work falls outside the normal responsibilities of a faculty member or chair. Specify any other impact you anticipate.

Include a Plan

Provide a research plan for a research project, or an action plan for a curricular one, detailing what you will do to reach your goal. Be specific: name the places you need to visit, the resources you need to consult, the people you need to interview. A plan that could describe any project in your field is not yet a plan.

State the Benefit

Indicate how completing the project will benefit you, your department, and the University. This is the return on the investment the University is being asked to make, and it should be stated rather than implied.

Questions

Questions about the application process may be directed to Linda Walsh in the Office of the Provost at linda.walsh@scranton.edu or extension 7520. Questions about eligibility or the terms of a sabbatical should be directed to the Office of the Provost.