

Guidelines for Sabbaticals

Rationale for Sabbaticals

Sabbatical leaves are a form of faculty development involving relief from University duties for a semester or an academic year. When the University grants a sabbatical, it is making an investment in the development of its human resources and, in fact, its most critical resource. What the University expects to receive in return is a better, more productive faculty member.

The Faculty Research Committee (FRC) members look for a well-defined plan that is built around the sabbatical guidelines noted herein. Members expect proposals to be succinct, well-presented and carefully thought-out with details provided that support the plan as both worthwhile and doable. Members also look carefully at the proposed outcomes. To meet FRC's expectations, please follow these guidelines as closely as possible.

You should review the details in this document carefully prior to beginning work on your sabbatical application. If you intend to seek sabbatical for an academic year, please review relevant language in Section 12.4 of the Faculty Handbook regarding request and justification for greater salary supplement (up to 70%) for a one-year sabbatical.

Types of Projects

A sabbatical proposal may concentrate on either research or curriculum development.

A **research project** should be a substantial undertaking generally related to the faculty member's continuing research interests. Typically, the project will result in significant scholarly publication, production of a major grant proposal, or the creation of some similar acceptable product. Develop a research project that has definable parameters. Perhaps the best idea in this regard is to select a project that can be completed during the period of the sabbatical leave. Applicants should clearly identify the work that will be completed during the sabbatical period. If it is a larger project that will take more time, explain what will be done during the sabbatical timeframe. In the case of a research project, the expected outcome is submission to a peer-reviewed medium for publication.

A **curriculum development project** should make a clear contribution to the instructional program in the faculty member's area of teaching competence. The project will often be an outgrowth of some recognized departmental need, though this need must be outside the norm of what faculty members, including the chair, are expected to do in the course of performing their regular duties. The work must be more than just an updating of one's course notes, something which every faculty member is expected to do on a continuing basis. The project should be concrete and well-defined. It must make a significant contribution to the enhancing of the curriculum.

Preparation of the Proposal

You should present a summary of the project first. Do this in non-technical English and make plain right up front what you want to do and why it is important, why it is a contribution, etc. Keep this to a page or less.

In the body of the proposal, focus on precisely what the project is, why the project is important, who it will benefit, why you want to do it, and where you will seek publication (if applicable). If you do a proposal for a curricular project, make sure you discuss concretely the reasons it is needed and the impact the project will have on educating students for the major, minor and in general. Specify any other impact. Note what has changed in the field to make your project needed and indicate why doing this project falls outside of the normal responsibilities of a faculty member or chair. Show how it fits into the curriculum.

Include a research plan (for a research project) or an action plan (for a curricular project) detailing what you will do in order to achieve your goal. Be specific in your description, noting places you need to visit, resources you need to consult, people you need to interview, etc.

Indicate how the completion of this project will benefit you and/or your department and the University.

Procedure for Requesting A Sabbatical Leave

1. You must complete the sabbatical application form found at <https://www.scranton.edu/academics/provost/research/sabbaticals>. Submit it, along with your application, to your Department Chair and Dean for review.
 - **Your signed application must be submitted to your Department Chair by September 15 of the year prior to the contract year in which you seek the sabbatical. The Department Chair will review the application, make a recommendation and submit it to the Dean by September 22.**
 - At the same time when you submit your application to your Department Chair, please submit an electronic copy of it in one document to Linda Walsh in the Provost's Office at Linda.Walsh@scranton.edu. If you encounter problems opening the application form, please call Linda at ext. 7520.
2. After approval by the Dean, the application will be sent to the Faculty Research Committee whose members will review the applications beginning in late September.

At any stage during the review process, the application may be returned to the faculty member for clarification or more information.

Faculty Research Committee recommendations will be completed by November 30 and sent to the Provost for action. The Provost will notify each faculty member of the decision by the end of the semester.

Review of Proposals

Reviewers of sabbatical applications look at proposals from two points of view:

1. The quality of the proposal is reviewed. Is the proposal dealing with a substantial topic, one which merits release from all other duties? Has the proposer adequately spelled out the details of how the work is to be accomplished, and what the intended outcome is? If publication is an intended outcome, is the intended medium appropriate to the faculty member's scholarly discipline? Can the project realistically be completed within the sabbatical timeframe?
 - With respect to this aspect of the review, it should be noted that sabbatical proposals are sometimes returned to the faculty member for clarification or expansion before the review is completed.
2. Is the sabbatical leave feasible from a departmental point of view? Can the department's schedule accommodate the sabbatical? Have adequate provisions been made for covering the faculty member's normal responsibilities?

In addition, if a sabbatical application includes a project that requires IRB approval, the application should either carry that approval or stipulate a plan to obtain such approval.

Successful applicants are reminded that they must submit a report following sabbatical in accordance with Section 12.3 of the Faculty Handbook, which outlines the content and the due dates for the reports.

Finally, in order to maintain the integrity of sabbaticals and ensure that faculty members have the necessary break from their normal routine and indeed carry out the activities for which the sabbatical is granted, recipients must follow the expectations set forth in Section 12.0 of the Faculty Handbook regarding teaching and other University responsibilities while on sabbatical.

It is important to remember that a sabbatical leave is not automatically granted, but is based on a demonstrated plan for significant professional development.