NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY
GUIDELINES FOR REQUEST FOR
EDUCATIONAL LEAVE (with/without pay), SABBATICAL LEAVE,
OR PROFESSIONAL LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

NOTE: Faculty leaves normally do not exceed one year, and if exception is granted, are not normally extended beyond the second year. Periods of sabbatical, educational, and personal leave (with or without pay) normally do not count toward eligibility for tenure and/or promotion decisions. Professional and other types of leave periods may count toward such eligibility upon agreement among the faculty member, the department, and the administration. Twelve-month faculty accrue and report annual and sick leave as usual while on sabbatical or educational leave. Any leave at less than half pay does not accrue annual or sick leave.

It is the responsibility of the requestor to verify the information in this publication with the referenced sections contained in the New Mexico State University Administrative Rules and Procedures.

Educational Leave With Pay (Section 8.52.A.)

After five years of satisfactory service, leave with partial pay may be requested by any full-time faculty member on regular appointment with rank of instructor or above (including exempt staff with faculty rank in the Cooperative Extension Service), normally for the purpose of taking coursework toward a degree, professional licensure or certificate which is related to the individual’s university job assignment. If granted, the recipient of such leave shall be required to sign a supplementary contract agreeing to return to the employing university unit and to serve for a minimum of two years. Failure to do so would require immediate full refund of all salary paid by the university during the leave. Normally, no individual may receive more than one such leave with pay. In the case of a non-tenured faculty member, time used for educational leave (with or without pay) will not apply toward the probationary period. The time granted for educational leave with pay will not normally exceed the time allowed for a sabbatical leave. The following options apply:

1. One semester at no reduction in annual salary.
2. One full academic year at half salary. (Those within five years of retirement may wish to request full salary for one semester or a six-month period and personal leave without pay for the other half.) Semester II (spring) of year one and Semester I (fall) of the following year, at 1/4 annual salary for each semester of leave.

Educational Leave Without Pay (Section 8.52.B.)

Any regular full-time exempt staff member or faculty member on regular appointment with rank of instructor or above is eligible for and may request an educational leave of absence without pay after three years of service, normally for the purpose of taking coursework toward a degree, professional licensure or certificate which is related to the individual’s university job assignment. If the leave is approved, all annual leave should be used before the educational leave without pay begins. The individual’s sick leave balance at the beginning of the leave remains on hold during the period of the leave. The university will contribute the employer’s portion of insurance premiums during the leave period. A faculty member on educational leave without pay, on continuous or temporary contract, will be required to notify the department head in writing 90 days before the educational leave without pay terminates, or 30 days after notification of salary and position, whichever is later as to the date of return to academic service on the faculty. In the absence of such notification, the department head may immediately initiate proceedings for termination of the contract.

Updated 8-27-2018
Professional Leave Without Pay (Section 8.53)

A. Eligibility: After three years of service and with the approval of appropriate department head and administrators, any regular full-time exempt staff member or any faculty member of regular appointment with rank of instructor or above may submit an application for professional leave without pay, normally not to exceed 1 year, for the purpose of undertaking some project that will directly benefit the university and the person’s professional development. These benefits must be detailed in the application.

B. Use of Accrued Annual Leave: If the leave without pay is approved, all annual leave should be used before the professional leave without pay begins.

C. Non-Accrual of Leave During Period of Professional Leave Without Pay: Annual and sick leave do not accrue during professional leave without pay.

D. Professional Leave Absence is Unpaid: All days, including legal holidays, in the period between the date the professional leave commences and the date the employee returns to work are taken without pay.

E. Insurance Premiums Contribution by NMSU: The university will contribute the employer’s portion of insurance premiums during the leave period.

F. Performance Evaluation: In cases where the individual enters a contract with a state or federal agency, such agreements must provide for a calendar-year evaluation to be prepared by the appropriate supervisor in that agency and forwarded to the appropriate department head or supervisor.

G. Effect on Tenure Process: Periods of professional leave without pay normally will not apply toward the probationary period for tenure. All conditions of professional leave without pay, including the status of the individual upon return to the university and (if appropriate) the effect of this period on tenure and promotion eligibility, must be in writing prior to the leave period.

Sabbatical Leave (Section 8.54)

A. Purpose: The purpose of a sabbatical leave is to promote professional growth and increased competence among faculty members by subsidizing significant study and research, creative work, or some other program which is judged to be of equivalent value and which cannot be accomplished during the fulfillment of normal academic duties and responsibilities. All departments and colleges including community colleges are encouraged to participate fully in the sabbatical program.

B. Qualifications and Options: Application for sabbatical leave may be made by any tenured full-time faculty member (above the rank of instructor) with at least 12 regular semesters of full-time service at the university without a sabbatical. A faculty member who is in the last year of the probationary period may be considered for sabbatical leave if a favorable decision on tenure has already been made. Sabbatical leave may be taken in conjunction with earned annual leave, personal leave, or educational leave without pay. Personal leave and educational leave without pay must comply with university policies. In instances where, for good and sufficient institutional reasons, a sabbatical leave is delayed (not to exceed two years), the faculty member will become eligible for a succeeding sabbatical leave after an equivalently reduced period. A faculty member should be given as much notice as possible if a sabbatical leave cannot be approved for the time frame requested.

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Sabbatical leave is available under the following options:

1. One semester at no reduction in annual salary.
2. One full contract year at 60 percent salary (Those within five years of retirement should consult the Employee Benefits Office about the possible negative impact on the retirement benefit formula.)
3. Semester II (spring) of year one and Semester I (fall) of the following year, at 30 percent annual salary for each semester of leave.

When a person has served as both a nine-month and 12-month employee in the six-year period immediately prior to the requested sabbatical, the amount of time allotted for the sabbatical will be prorated. A faculty member employed on a continuing basis on a 12-month contract may take a six-month leave at full salary or a 12-month leave at 60 percent salary.

C. Applications: Sabbatical leave will not be granted automatically upon the expiration of the necessary period of service. Rather, a qualified faculty member shall, normally at least 6 months in advance of the leave, submit an application and proposed leave program to the department head or chair, with evidence of research, creative activity, or other academic achievement, including publications, to support the program of work which is planned for the sabbatical period. Also, this program shall give reasonable promise of accomplishing the major purpose of the leave. Request for a sabbatical leave should be accompanied by a detailed explanation of the benefits to the faculty member, university, and the state resulting from the sabbatical leave. For main campus faculty, the approval of the cognizant dean, is required. For community colleges, the approval of the division dean, CAO and CEO are required. In addition to the work plan, the leave application should include: (1) a statement regarding choice of options; (2) departmental verification that during the applicant’s absence, teaching, research, and service duties can be managed by the department; (3) a statement concerning compensation to be received during the leave. A faculty member on sabbatical leave at full pay usually will not take other paid employment during the leave; and (4) a clear statement of the benefit of the proposed leave to the university. A person on sabbatical at 60 percent time usually will not take more than 40 percent time employment. However, it is recognized that such employment may be necessary for or enhance the leave. In such cases, a request to take compensated employment should be included in the proposal submitted and must have administrative approval. The evaluation of an application should be based on whether the planned program satisfies the aims and goals explicitly set forth in the Purpose statement above. These aims and goals may be independent of geographical location of the leave activities and, therefore, the place of the faculty member’s residence during leave should be only one factor in considering the merits of the application. However, to ensure that the sabbatical experience provides opportunities not otherwise available to the main campus faculty member, the sabbatical period will normally include a component of study/work away from the home institution.

D. Related Conditions: Time toward each new sabbatical begins immediately after return to full-time service regardless of the semester of return. The sabbatical leave will not adversely affect salary increases or promotions. Institutional participation in faculty retirement and group insurance will be continued for staff on sabbatical leave with pay. A faculty member on sabbatical leave may request, through the department head, travel support for participation in professional meetings. Consideration will be given if the faculty member is an officer of the professional organization or is to participate in some other significant way. Educational or other leaves are excluded as time counted toward eligibility for sabbatical leave. Twelve-month faculty will accrue annual and sick leave (at 60 percent for those on 60 percent pay) and will report annual and sick leave as usual.

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E. Departmental Implementation: Long-range department plans should consider the necessity of, and provide for, temporary absences for sabbatical leave. The initial leave discussions and concomitant management of duties is primarily a matter for discussion and approval by the concerned department. However, in transmitting the final leave request to the dean and provost, the department head should provide assurance that all student needs will be served by the department during the faculty member’s absence. In some departments, the absence of one faculty member might place an undue load on the other department members. After a department has taken every step possible to plan for sabbatical leaves, it should submit its proposal to the dean for consideration. The administration will attempt to accommodate these special cases.

F. Procedures:

1. At least six months prior to the requested leave period (exceptions to be considered on a case-by-case basis), application for sabbatical leave is submitted to the department head on a Request for Leave Form and includes the supporting materials detailed in the Application section.

2. Preliminary approval is obtained when signatures of the department head, cognizant dean, dean of the Graduate School are affixed to the Request for Leave Form. For community college faculty, preliminary approval is obtained when signatures of the department chair, division dean, CAO and CEO are affixed to the Request for Leave Form. A supplementary contract, stipulating that the faculty member is obligated and agrees to return to the university to serve a period of one year, and failure to do so would require immediate full refund of all salary paid by the university during the leave, is prepared and sent to the faculty member. Upon receipt of the signed supplementary contract, final approval of the leave is granted and the faculty member is notified.

NOTE: Department Heads or Chairs: Make sure that the departmental administrative assistant submits a Personnel Action Form to place the faculty member on leave. [https://hr.nmsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/E_F_Personnel_Action_Form-version-7-10-2018.pdf](https://hr.nmsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/E_F_Personnel_Action_Form-version-7-10-2018.pdf)

G. Post Sabbatical Obligations: Sabbatical leaves will be approved only with the clear understanding that at the completion of the sabbatical and/or supplemental leave, the faculty member will return to the university for a period of service of one year. Failure to do so will require immediate full refund of all salaries and benefits costs paid by the university during the sabbatical, and repayment for any annual leave accrued and used during the extended leave. Within the first semester upon return from the sabbatical, the main campus faculty member shall submit to the provost, through the department head and dean a full report of the research, creative work, publications, or other results of the period of leave. This final report should contain a brief summary of the proposal, including a review of the objectives, as well as a summary of what was accomplished. An explanation should be given in the event that some objective(s) were not met. This report will be incorporated in the faculty member’s annual written report and may be used in the annual performance evaluation process. The dean will forward the report with both the dean’s and department heads comments to the provost regarding the overall value of the sabbatical to the faculty member and to the university and indicating the extent to which the sabbatical plan was accomplished. Community College faculty will submit a similar report to the Campus President through their immediate supervisor.

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