AC17 – Sabbatical Leave
Frequently Asked Questions

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SABBATICAL LEAVE COMMITTEE

Who should serve on the college committee?

- The composition of the college review committee is at the discretion of the Dean/Chancellor.

SABBATICAL LEAVES AND ANNUAL EVALUATIONS

Must the annual review (AC40 - Annual Evaluation of Faculty Performance) be completed if a faculty member is on sabbatical?

- Yes, an annual evaluation of faculty performance is to be completed. As stated in AC40, “this policy provides the process for an evaluation of the performance of each member of the faculty at least once each year.”

Must the extended five-year review (AC40 – Annual Evaluation of Faculty Performance) be completed if a faculty member is on sabbatical?

- The extended five-year review is postponed one academic year if the faculty member is on sabbatical leave; however, the faculty member has the right to proceed with the extended review while on sabbatical if so desired.
SABBATICAL LEAVE ELIGIBILITY

According to AC17, how is “contract years” defined?

➤ A tenure-line contract year starts July 1 and ends June 30. A full contract year is based on the weeks of service specified in an individual’s Memorandum of Service.

We have a faculty member who was in a non-tenure line position for several years before being hired in a tenure line position. Would any of that time count or do only the years on the tenure line count?

➤ The applicant may not combine years of service in a non-tenure line position with years served in a tenure line position.

When would tenure-line faculty be eligible for their first sabbatical leave following the probationary period (after being awarded tenure)?

➤ Tenure-line faculty members must serve six (6) full-time contract years in a tenure-line position before they can apply for a sabbatical. A faculty member can apply during year seven (7), in the year tenure was awarded and if approved, the sabbatical would commence the following contract year, during year eight (8).
➤ Below is an example for a faculty member’s first sabbatical after successfully being awarded tenure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract Years</th>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Faculty member hired on the tenure track</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2020-2021</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2021-2022</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2022-2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2023-2024</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2024-2025</td>
<td>Faculty member attains tenure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2025-2026</td>
<td>Faculty member applies for sabbatical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2026-2027</td>
<td>Sabbatical year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a faculty member has been awarded early tenure, when are they eligible for their first sabbatical leave?

➤ Faculty members awarded early tenure would be eligible to apply for a sabbatical leave during year six (6) with the sabbatical leave to commence in year seven (7) per policy AC17 (Sabbatical Leave).
➤ Below is an example of a faculty member who has been awarded early tenure:

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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2021-2022</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2022-2023</td>
<td>Faculty member granted early tenure, contract year four (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2023-2024</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2024-2025</td>
<td>Faculty member applies for sabbatical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2025-2026</td>
<td>Sabbatical year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SABBATICAL ELIGIBILITY (continued)

When are faculty who have gone through the immediate tenure process eligible for their first sabbatical?

- Faculty members hired with immediate tenure would be eligible to apply for a sabbatical leave during year six (6) with the sabbatical leave to commence in year seven (7) per policy AC17 (Sabbatical Leave).
- Below is an example of a faculty member who has been hired with immediate tenure:

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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2025-2026</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty member hired with immediate tenure

When would a faculty member be eligible for subsequent sabbatical leaves?

- A faculty member becomes eligible for subsequent sabbatical leaves after completing at least six (6) contract years of full-time service (the minimum required). Time spent on sabbatical leave, or any unpaid leave, is not counted as one of the required contract years of full-time service.
- In the example below the first sabbatical year is the 2019-2020 academic year:

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sabbatical year

Are teaching or clinical faculty members eligible for a sabbatical?

- The policy does not apply to non-tenure line teaching, or clinical faculty members.

Are non-tenure line research faculty eligible for a sabbatical?

- Yes; per AC17, research professors, associate research professors, and assistant research professors must serve the University for a minimum of seven (7) full contract years of full-time service in that position to be eligible.

Does tenure credit count toward the calculation of sabbatical eligibility?

- No; per AC17, faculty must complete six (6) years of full-time service on the tenure-line. A faculty member can apply for their first sabbatical year in year seven (7) for their sabbatical to commence in year eight (8). If a faculty member received immediate or early tenure, they may apply in year six (6) for their sabbatical to commence in year seven (7).
SABBATICAL ELIGIBILITY (continued)

*Updated* How does a leave of absence affect the timing of sabbatical eligibility?

➤ Time spent on any leave(s) (paid or unpaid), including FMLA leave, totaling more than six months in a single contract year will result in one year of service being deducted from the faculty member’s sabbatical clock, extending their date of eligibility for a sabbatical by one year.

If a faculty member is approved for a sabbatical leave in academic year 2020-2021, but delays that sabbatical to AY 2021-2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, when is that faculty member eligible for a subsequent sabbatical leave?

➤ In this scenario the sabbatical eligibility clock will not be affected or reset. The faculty member’s eligibility for a subsequent sabbatical will be calculated as if the sabbatical had taken place in 2020-21 and the faculty member will be eligible for a sabbatical in academic year 2027-2028.

If a faculty member is approved for a sabbatical leave in academic year 2021-2022, but delays that sabbatical to AY 2022-2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, when is that faculty member eligible for a subsequent sabbatical leave?

In this scenario the sabbatical eligibility clock will not be affected or reset. The faculty member’s eligibility for a subsequent sabbatical will be calculated as if the sabbatical had taken place in 2021-22 and the faculty member will be eligible for a sabbatical in academic year 2028-2029.

Will the sabbatical eligibility clock be reset if I delay my approved sabbatical for reasons unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic? For example, if my anticipated funding is not awarded?

➤ In keeping with past practices, all changes to approved sabbatical requests unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic will result in the faculty member’s eligibility clock being reset. For example, if a faculty member was scheduled to take a sabbatical leave in academic year 2020-2021 but delayed to academic year 2021-2022 for reasons unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic, the faculty member will be eligible for a subsequent sabbatical in academic year 2028-2029.

If I take the Extension to the Probationary Period due to COVID-19, may I apply for sabbatical during my sixth review year, given that it is my 7th year of full-time service?

➤ No. Penn State’s standard practice is to not allow those in the last year of the probationary period to apply for sabbatical and that practice will be maintained for those faculty who have confirmed extension of the probationary period.
PERMITTED ACTIVITIES WHILE ON SABBATICAL LEAVE

**NEW** If a faculty member is on a sabbatical, may the faculty member serve on a promotion and tenure review committee?

- No, while on sabbatical leave, faculty members may not participate on promotion and tenure review committees. The academic unit should respect the purposes of the leave, including sabbatical leave, and there should be no expectation that faculty on sabbatical leave donate their leave time for department service of any kind. Academic units should carefully consider whether to allow a faculty member on a one-semester sabbatical leave in the Spring semester to serve on a promotion and tenure committee that may be called back into service while the faculty member is on sabbatical in the spring as the faculty member would not be able to participate in any discussions, meetings, or votes.

Can a faculty member do work for the University while on sabbatical?

- No; a sabbatical is a leave of absence, and faculty should not participate in University-directed work while on a leave. This includes serving as the instructor of record for a course, serving on committees, or serving in administrative roles.
SABBATICAL LEAVE APPLICATION

If a sabbatical is not recommended at the campus/school/college/department/division level does the request still move forward?

- Per AC17, only sabbatical applications recommended by the campus, school, college, department or division should be forwarded to the Office of the Provost for further consideration. Thus, if the unit head does not recommend the sabbatical, then the request would not be sent forward for further review. We advise unit leaders to provide faculty members with feedback about the sabbatical proposal submitted.

A faculty member is questioning the need to include letters of invitation for several short visits that will be taken during the sabbatical leave. Do we need to include letters of invitation from these institutions when the sabbatical application is submitted?

- As noted in the document, Preparing Sabbatical Leave Applications: A Guide for Faculty, if your project requires access to restricted libraries or laboratories or affiliations with other institutions, please append letters of invitation, letters granting access, space, or support from the relevant authorities. It is also true that academic units may expect to see such letters regardless of whether dedicated resources are needed to ensure that the sabbatical proposed will take place as planned; we suggest that you consult with your unit’s academic leader to determine whether there is an expectation that such a letter be included.

Can a faculty member take a sabbatical that crosses academic years (e.g. Spring 2019/Fall 2019)?

- There is no policy or guideline that would prohibit a faculty member from requesting a sabbatical that would cross fiscal years. It is not encouraged however, as when calculating the years until a subsequent sabbatical can be taken the latter of the two semesters taken is used. For example, if requesting SP19 and FA19 as the sabbatical year, we would use 2019/2020 as the sabbatical year when calculating the timing of the next sabbatical rather than 2018/2019 when the sabbatical began.

When will a faculty member be notified if their sabbatical application has been approved? Who will notify them?

- Sabbatical applications are due in the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost no later than November 1. Decisions are to be expected at the beginning of December, dependent upon the number of applications in any given year. Notification will come from Dean/Campus Chancellor.

For faculty members with a joint appointment, is the application reviewed by the secondary department/unit? If it is, does a letter of support need to be included from the secondary department?

- It is recommended that the dean with budgetary responsibility consult with the unit executive of the secondary unit and document that unit’s support. A letter from the secondary unit is not required.
COMPENSATION

*Updated* Can I receive a salary from another institution while on sabbatical?

- As stated in ACG15, no faculty member may be on the regular payroll of another organization while on leave, unless the activity is an approved part of the sabbatical program.

How is the percentage of salary calculated for University Libraries faculty?

- Because University Libraries faculty members work a full calendar year, their percentage of salary is calculated based on a 52-week appointment (12 months).

*Updated* Can I undertake my sabbatical in another unit at Penn State?

- While it is possible for a faculty member to engage in sabbatical activities in another unit at Penn State, in general, faculty are encouraged to explore opportunities for scholarship and research outside of the University, as it is typically not necessary to be placed on leave in order to pursue opportunities at Penn State. Sabbatical activities undertaken within the University must be part of a sabbatical plan approved by the college and must meet the purpose of a sabbatical as outlined in AC17: “To provide a leave of absence with pay for purposes of intensive study or research which has as its outcome increasing the quality of the individual's future contribution to the University.” The receiving unit must be consulted and agree to the sabbatical plan. Faculty members may not teach in another unit of the University during a sabbatical unless the purpose of the teaching is primarily related to intensive study or research, e.g., to study teaching from a scholarly perspective or to develop a new pedagogical technique. Faculty may not receive supplemental pay from Penn State while on sabbatical.

If a faculty member accepts a position at another institution in the academic year following a sabbatical leave, will Penn State allow the faculty member to waive the requirement to refund the salary received from the University while on sabbatical?

- As specified in AC17, “Individuals granted sabbatical leaves are required to return for a full contract year of service following the sabbatical leave.” Persons who do not return or remain for the full contract year, will be required to refund the salary received during the sabbatical leave. Penn State’s standard practice is to not make exceptions to this policy.

What happens if I return for six (6) months following my sabbatical leave rather than a full year? Will the salary to be refunded be prorated to reflect the six (6) months I returned to my position?

- As specified in AC17, “There will be no proration of the amount to be returned if the employee remains for any fraction less than the full contract year.”
CHANGES TO APPROVED SABBATICAL LEAVES

Can a faculty member amend approved sabbatical dates?

- Yes, the process to revise an approved sabbatical is as follows:
  - The faculty member sends their request to revise/cancel/postpone their sabbatical to the department/division head/director of academic affairs/school director.
  - The unit head will send the Dean/Chancellor a memo or email stating their approval/support, along with the faculty member’s original request.
  - The Dean/Chancellor sends their approval memo along with the unit head’s and faculty member’s request to the Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Abby Diehl (agc105@psu.edu) with a copy to Mindy Kowalski, Faculty Affairs Administrative Support Coordinator (msk22@psu.edu).
  - The Faculty Affairs office will review and respond to the Dean/Chancellor either approving the request or requesting additional information.
  - Ms. Kowalski will send an updated approval memo and communicate the change to the Absence Management team in Human Resources.

Can a faculty member defer an approved sabbatical to another year?

- An approved sabbatical may be delayed for one academic year. If another deferral is required, a new sabbatical application must be submitted.

WORKDAY AND SABBATICAL LEAVES

Why am I showing as “On Leave” in Workday?

- The Leave and Absence Management team places a faculty member “On Leave” in Workday so that their status is accurate. This action also allows for the reduction in salary to be applied for those taking a two-semester sabbatical leave. Once the sabbatical leave commences, the Leave & Absence Management team will return the faculty member to active status.
RETURNING FROM A SABBATICAL LEAVE

A faculty member was awarded a fellowship while on a two-semester sabbatical. The fellowship is set to commence six (6) months after the faculty member returns from sabbatical leave. Will the faculty member have to pay back the salary received while on sabbatical leave since they are not returning for a full year?

- The answer depends on the nature of the fellowship and its potential impact on the faculty member’s contribution and commitment to the University. The faculty member may request postponement of the remaining return-to-service commitment until after the fellowship concludes. Before approving such a request, the dean should consult with the Faculty Affairs Office. Approval of a postponement request must be in writing and confirm the remaining return-to-service time commitment. If the faculty member does not return for the remaining months of service owed to the University following the fellowship, the faculty member will be required to repay salary owed as noted in policy AC17.

How do I know if I must complete an Arrest and Conviction Self-Disclosure form before returning from my sabbatical?

- As stated in policies HR99 (Background Check Process) and AC17 (Sabbatical Leave), “Individuals with a break in service of six (6) months or longer are required to complete a Penn State Arrest and Conviction self-disclosure form before returning to work.” Absence Management facilitates this process and will send the form to the faculty member.

Where do we send the completed Arrest and Conviction Self-Disclosure forms for faculty returning from sabbatical?

- The completed forms should be sent to the Absence Management team via email at absence@psu.edu or via fax at (814) 863-6227

Upon return from sabbatical, to whom should the Sabbatical Leave Report be submitted?

- Reports should be submitted to the Dean/Chancellor of your college/campus. After review by the Dean/Chancellor, the reports are sent via email to Shawnee Wagner (txe2@psu.edu) in the Human Resources Records Management office, located in the 331 Building at University Park.

**New** For what period of time do I need to return to Penn State after my sabbatical?

- Per policy AC17, “Individuals granted sabbatical leaves are required to return for a full contract year of service following the sabbatical leave. Any person who does not return or does not remain for the full contract year following the sabbatical leave, will be required to refund the salary received from the University during the sabbatical leave.” If a faculty member takes a sabbatical during the fall semester only, for example, or takes a sabbatical during spring semester of one academic year and fall semester of the next academic year, then they must still return for the spring semester plus the next contract year.