

# Guidelines for Sabbatical Leaves

The purpose of this document is to clarify NIU's sabbatical application processes for applicants, departments, and colleges. NIU's sabbatical policies are directly inserted in the guidelines, wherever applicable. For current information on NIU's sabbatical leave policies, please check:

- [Board of Trustees Regulations Subsection E. Sabbatical Leave](#)
- [Working Rules of the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee](#)

## Guidelines for Applicants

1. Sabbatical leaves are ordinarily limited to tenured faculty members and non-temporary supportive professional staff (SPS) members. The term "faculty" is used in the rest of this section to include both faculty (ranked) and SPS (no rank).
2. Sabbatical leaves are granted only in connection with proposed or ongoing programs that promise to enhance the professional competence and improve the professional standing of the faculty member.
3. Sabbatical leaves **are not** ordinarily granted to a faculty member in order to:
  - (a) revise books designed primarily for use as texts,
  - (b) retrain or develop competencies primarily for a different professional position,
  - (c) primarily to visit various locations of general, professional, or academic interest,
  - (d) perform full-time duties at another institution similar to the duties presently performed at NIU,
  - (e) complete a doctoral or other terminal degree, or
  - (f) carry out formal study at NIU.

Sabbatical leaves for a semester at full pay cannot be granted to a faculty member if, during the leave, the faculty member is to undertake full-time or part-time employment that is not an integral part of the scholarly purpose of the leave. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their planned sabbatical activity with their unit heads (school/department/division chair/director, etc.) before preparing the application.

4. A first sabbatical leave is granted only to faculty who will have completed five years of full-time service by the time the leave begins. Full-time service on a temporary appointment shall count toward a sabbatical leave. Periods of time on leaves of absence without pay shall count toward a sabbatical leave provided the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee judges the activity associated with that leave without pay to be comparable in professional significance to service as a member of the faculty.
5. A subsequent sabbatical leave may not begin before a faculty member has completed full-time service for six years (i.e., 72 months) since the end of his or her most recent sabbatical leave.
6. Each applicant for sabbatical leave must propose a program of scholarship which is capable of being substantially advanced by means of the leave. The applicant shall indicate the nature of the program, its present state of development, and, in some detail, plans for advancing the program during the leave.

7. Each applicant must complete all the items in the *Application for Sabbatical Leave Cover Sheet* and the *Request for Sabbatical Leave Proposal*, attach a current resume/vita and any reports submitted for previous sabbatical leaves, and submit them to his or her unit level head (e.g., school/department/division chair/director) by the deadline set by the unit. Individuals with academic rank in the University Libraries or in a college without academic departments shall submit their applications to the personnel committee of their unit.
8. Each applicant must answer all items in the sabbatical application cover sheet and the proposal and follow the space limits, wherever indicated. The sabbatical title and the non-technical statement of the proposed sabbatical activity and its value must be meaningful for reviewers outside the applicant's field of expertise and appropriate to use in documents and reports prepared for the FSPC and Board of Trustees.

**Sample of brief, hypothetical titles of sabbatical leaves:**

- “Conduct research on socio-economic themes in 19<sup>th</sup> century American literature”
- “Study the impact of zebra mussels’ invasion on waterways of Illinois”
- “Explore new heuristics for optimal scheduling of semiconductor wafer manufacturing”
- “Investigate new choreography models of regional dance movements”
- “Examine the impact of coal mining effluents on adolescents’ cognitive development”

**Sample of non-technical statements of hypothetical sabbatical activities and their value:**

“To analyze recurring themes in the writings of 19<sup>th</sup> century American writer John Ragland in order to enhance my English fiction course as well as prepare manuscripts for publication.”

“To study air quality in office buildings during winter to find the best techniques to prevent the spread of airborne illnesses, promote the health and safety of building occupants, and minimize building maintenance costs.”

“To examine the movement of barbarians in ancient times and apply the findings to understand modern day fringe political movements and their potential impact on society.” “To complete the unfinished compositions of Joan Q. Public and make them available to educational institutions for further exploration and integration in their curricula.”

9. By submitting the sabbatical leave application, each applicant agrees to do the following, if the application is approved:
  - Submit a written report describing the personal scholarly activities during the sabbatical leave to the department or division chair, to the dean or director, and to the executive vice president and provost **within 30 days** following resumption of regular duties at the university.
  - Return to NIU for a period of at least one year subsequent to the leave.
  - Approximately two years after the sabbatical leave, submit a report on the sabbatical outcomes related to research and artistry, teaching, and/or engagement and outreach to the department or division chair, to the dean or director, and to the executive vice president and provost. This is different and separate from the report submitted within 30 days.
  - Meet the required commitment of effort to any federal grant during the sabbatical period, and obtain prior approval for any outside consulting or research activities during sabbatical leave.

- Obtain necessary approval from IRB, IACUC, IBC or other appropriate research compliance bodies for the proposed sabbatical activity, and make arrangements for continued oversight and management of ongoing research during the sabbatical leave.
- Continue to fill out and report time expended on the SOEEA Work Time Reporting System during the sabbatical leave.

10. Applicants must submit a *Request for a Change in Sabbatical Leave Date or Notice of Declination of Sabbatical Leave Award* form, at the earliest convenience, to the department or division chair, to the dean or director, and to the executive vice president and provost if the approved sabbatical leave has to be changed or declined. This will give applicants on the alternate list an opportunity to be considered for a sabbatical leave.

## Guidelines for Chair/Director/Head of Applicant's Unit

### Faculty Sabbatical Applications from Academic Departments/Schools

1. Each sabbatical application should be submitted through the chair of the department in which the applicant holds rank for review by the department personnel committee.
2. In consultation with the chair, the personnel committee should
  - a. Evaluate the merit of each sabbatical leave application received from the unit,
  - b. If there is more than one such application, rank them in order of merit, and
  - c. Recommend the approval or denial of each application, forwarding it through the dean to the appropriate college personnel committee.
3. The department chair should prepare a cover letter to accompany the committee's rankings which explains how the rankings were developed and how the criteria were applied.
4. In the case of multiple applications from the same department, the chair, in concert with the department personnel committee (and with the dean, if necessary), should determine if sufficient resources are available to reasonably accommodate the absence of all faculty members requesting sabbaticals. Only sabbatical requests that can be reasonably accommodated should be forwarded by a department to the college personnel committee.
5. Differences of opinion between a majority of the personnel committee and the department chair should be resolved at the department level whenever possible. Otherwise, they should be reported in detail to the college personnel committee.
6. The department chair should notify each applicant, in writing, concerning the committee's recommendation (approval or denial) including ranking. A request for reconsideration of the committee's recommendation should be filed by the applicant within 14 days of the date of the notification from the chair. Requests for reconsideration should be heard within the department in accordance with department personnel policies, prior to the start of the deliberations of the college personnel committee.

### Faculty Sabbatical Applications from University Libraries or Colleges without Departments

1. Each sabbatical application should be submitted to the personnel committee of the unit.
2. In consultation with the chief administrative officer of the unit, the personnel committee should
  - a. evaluate the merit of each sabbatical leave application received from the unit;

- b. if there is more than one such application, rank them in order of merit; and
  - c. recommend the approval or denial of each application, forwarding it through the chief administrative officer to the appropriate university council personnel committee.
3. The chief administrative officer should prepare a cover letter to accompany the committee's rankings which explains how the rankings were developed and how the criteria were applied.
4. In the case of multiple applications from a unit, the chief administrative officer, in concert with the unit's personnel committee, should determine if sufficient resources are available to reasonably accommodate the absence of all faculty members requesting sabbaticals. Only sabbatical requests that can be reasonably accommodated should be forwarded by the unit to the university council personnel committee.
5. Differences of opinion between a majority of the personnel committee and the chief administrative officer should be resolved at the unit level whenever possible. Otherwise, they should be reported in detail to the faculty senate personnel committee.
6. The chief administrative officer should notify each applicant, in writing, concerning the committee's recommendation (approval or denial) including ranking. A request for reconsideration of the committee's recommendation should be filed by the applicant within 14 calendar days of the date of the notification from the chief administrative officer. Requests for reconsideration should be heard within the unit in accordance with unit's personnel policies, prior to the start of the deliberations of the faculty senate personnel committee.

### **Supportive Professional Staff Sabbatical Applications**

1. Supportive professional staff members in academic colleges should submit their sabbatical leave requests to their chairs or immediate supervisors. The requests will be evaluated by the supervisors, approved or disapproved, and forwarded to their supervisors for review until they reach the dean. The dean will evaluate all the requests and submit the supportive professional staff sabbatical leave requests in rank order to the provost. The ranking of faculty sabbatical leave requests will be a separate list submitted to the provost by the dean.
2. Supportive professional staff not in an academic college should submit their sabbatical leave requests in accordance with the personnel procedures of that unit, if any, or to their immediate supervisors if the unit does not have such procedures. The requests will be evaluated by the supervisor/appropriate committee, approved or disapproved, and forwarded to the next level for review until they reach the dean, library director, or vice president. The sabbatical leave requests should be rank ordered and then submitted to the provost by the dean, library director, or vice president.
3. A supportive professional staff person who is denied a request for a sabbatical leave may appeal that decision to the next higher level.
4. The provost will submit the faculty and supportive professional staff lists to the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee.
5. The FSPC will then allocate the university's allotment for supportive professional staff leaves in rank order consistent with article 11.36 of the Bylaws. The sabbatical leaves generated by the supportive professional staff will be first allocated to the supportive

professional staff within their college/division. The supportive professional staff leave allocations for the individual colleges will be combined for the purpose of determining the number of sabbatical leaves available to the supportive professional staff in the colleges.

6. The sabbatical leaves not used by the supportive professional staff in that college/division will be first reserved for other supportive professional staff sabbatical leave requests. The unused supportive professional staff leave allocations will return to a common pool.

## Guidelines for Colleges

1. The college personnel committee, in consultation with the dean, should evaluate the applications from all departments in the college, taking into account department recommendations. The committee should review any differences of opinion referred to it by the departments and act in accordance with its own best judgment on the dispute.
2. On a college-wide basis, the committee should rank applications recommended for approval by the department personnel committees. The ranking should respect, insofar as possible, the rankings provided by the departments and should be based upon the committee's judgment of the relative scholarly (research or artistry) merit of each project.
3. Any changes in departmental ranking of sabbatical leave applications should be explained in writing to the affected department and applicants in a timely manner, with specific reason(s) given for the ranking changes.
4. The college dean should notify each applicant, in writing, concerning the college personnel committee's recommendation (approval or denial).
5. Appeals of the college personnel committee's recommendation should be filed within 14 days of the dean's notification; they should be heard in accordance with the policies of the college, prior to the deliberations of the university-level personnel committee.
6. The college committee, through the dean, should forward its recommendations to the executive vice president and provost. The dean should prepare a cover letter to accompany the college recommendations which explains how the rankings were developed and how the criteria were applied. Where differences between a majority of the college personnel committee and the dean are not resolved at the college level, they should be reported in detail to the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee.