

Scholarly Leaves of Absence

(Reviewed October 17, 2016; Revised 12/17)

Scholarly leaves of absence may be granted at the discretion of the Provost upon the recommendation of the dean. (This policy does not pertain to pre-tenure course release after a successful fourth year review)

Purpose and Conditions of Scholarly Leaves

Vanderbilt University grants scholarly leaves of absence for the purpose of advancing scholarship to the benefit of faculty members and the university. A scholarly leave is granted in recognition of the productivity of the faculty member. It is not an entitlement such as may exist in other institutions that provide sabbatical leaves. As a matter of university policy, requests for scholarly leaves are generally not granted more frequently than once every six years, and a longer minimum interval may apply in specific programs. Leaves will not be provided to any faculty members if the leave would be taken in the terminal year. The period between leaves begins with the first full academic year after the leave. (Tenure-track faculty members who have had a positive 4th-year review do receive a one semester leave from teaching.)

Scholarly leaves are not cumulative. If more than six years have passed between leaves of absence, that fact will not shorten the required interval between subsequent leaves or allow a full year's paid leave instead of one semester.

Unless waived in writing by the Provost, a faculty member who is granted a scholarly leave is obligated to return to active status for at least an equivalent period immediately following such leave. Scholarly leaves of absence may be granted to full-time (or full-status partial-load) tenured and tenure-track faculty members and to full-time clinical and practice faculty members.

A scholarly leave is granted for research, which may consist of research, study, writing for publication, or some other activity consistent with a scholarly purpose. It is not intended that scholarly leaves will consist of a "semester off". The granting of leaves is determined after taking into consideration department and college staffing requirements, availability of funds from all sources, and other factors, such as scholarly productivity (including publications) and the outcomes of previous research leaves. Because it is expected that coverage of the duties of faculty members on leave will be accomplished within existing resources, strong preference will be given to leave requests that would not involve hiring part-time instructional staff such as adjuncts or students to cover multiple duties. This constraint necessarily limits the number of scholarly leaves of absence that can be accommodated in a particular semester.

Generally, a faculty member on a scholarly leave is granted half-salary and full benefits for a full year or full salary and full benefits for a half-year (one semester). In some cases, leave may be granted to pursue appropriate scholarly activities that may benefit the faculty member and a third party, such as collaboration in a research project with a colleague at another institution or appointment to service for a governmental agency for a defined period. Such leaves may be paid

or unpaid, depending upon the specific activity and on whether outside funds are available to support the faculty member. When granted, such leave does not normally affect eligibility for salary raises or promotion.

As stipulated in the *Faculty Manual*, all faculty members returning from scholarly leaves are expected to submit to the Dean a report of their scholarly activities and accomplishments. This report should be quite brief (a two-page memo will suffice), and it should be submitted within one month of return.

Procedures for Requesting Scholarly Leave

If contemplating requesting a leave of absence, please discuss plans with the department chair as soon as possible and submit the written request shortly thereafter. Faculty seeking scholarly leaves must submit their requests to their department chairs no later than November 1 in the academic year prior to the academic year in which the leave would occur. This deadline applies to all scholarly leaves, whether fall, spring, or full-year.

The request must include the information listed below and should be sent to the department chair, who will transmit it to the Dean, along with their recommendation. Please keep in mind that department chairs have been asked to prioritize and send all leave requests to the Dean as a group by December 1. Once all requests are received and assessed, decisions about individual requests will be made and faculty will be notified no later than January 15.

The following information is required:

1. A two paragraph description of the applicant's intended scholarly activity during the leave and how the scholarly leave would advance their programmatic line of research.
2. WHEN: The period proposed to be on leave.
3. WHERE: Where the proposed leave of absence will be.
4. PURPOSE: Describe the specific scholarly and research objectives of the proposed leave and the products (e.g., submitted manuscript) that will result.
5. SPECIFIC PLANS: Describe how specific objectives of the proposed leave will be met and possible collaborators.
6. COURSE COVERAGE: How will classes be handled? It is expected that coverage of the duties of faculty members on leave will be accomplished within existing resources.
7. STUDENT SUPERVISION: What arrangements will be made for affected graduate and/or undergraduate advisees.

8. OTHER DUTIES: What arrangements will be made for coverage of other departmental and/or college duties?
9. TERMS: Please specify whether salary and fringe benefits are requested for the period of the proposed leave.
10. PREVIOUS LEAVES AND TERMS: Please list when previous leaves occurred and corresponding financial terms.
11. CURRENT CURRICULUM VITAE

Requests for leaves of absence are acted upon by the department chair and dean. If recommended, the provost will review and approve.