

Sabbatical Policy

Policy Number: HR-LOA-007 **Effective Date:** January 1, 2021 **Last Updated:** August 1, 2023 **Owner:** People Operations **Applies To:** All full-time employees globally

Purpose

NovaTech Solutions offers sabbatical leave to reward long-tenured employees and support personal growth, rest, and renewal. Sabbaticals help prevent burnout and enable employees to return refreshed and re-energized.

Eligibility

First Sabbatical

- Available after 5 years of continuous employment
- Must be in good standing (no active performance improvement plans)
- Available to all full-time employees globally

Subsequent Sabbaticals

- Available every 5 years thereafter
- Same eligibility requirements apply

Sabbatical Entitlement

Tenure	Sabbatical Duration	Pay
5 years	4 weeks	100% base salary
10 years	6 weeks	100% base salary
15+ years	8 weeks	100% base salary

Sabbatical leave is in addition to regular annual leave.

How Sabbaticals Work

Timing

- Sabbaticals should be taken within 12 months of becoming eligible
- Extensions may be granted with VP and HR approval
- Sabbaticals not taken within the eligibility window are forfeited

Leave Structure

- Must be taken as a continuous block
- Cannot be combined with other extended leave (parental, medical)
- May be taken adjacent to annual leave with manager approval

No Purpose Required

You are not required to have a specific purpose for your sabbatical. Whether you travel, learn, rest, or pursue a passion project is entirely up to you.

Applying for Sabbatical

Timeline

1. **6 months before:** Initial conversation with manager about timing
2. **3 months before:** Submit formal request in Workday
3. **2 months before:** Receive approval confirmation
4. **1 month before:** Complete knowledge transfer and handoff

Request Process

1. Submit request in Workday under “Leave of Absence” → “Sabbatical”
2. Include proposed dates
3. Manager reviews and recommends approval
4. HR confirms eligibility
5. VP provides final approval
6. Confirmation sent within 10 business days

Approval Considerations

- Team coverage availability
- Project timelines and deliverables
- Business cycle (avoid fiscal year-end for Finance, for example)
- Multiple team members requesting similar timeframes

Requests are rarely denied, but timing may be negotiated.

Preparing for Sabbatical

Knowledge Transfer

- Document ongoing projects and responsibilities

- Identify backup contacts for each area
- Complete knowledge transfer template (Notion: People Ops > Templates)
- Train backups at least 2 weeks before departure

Communication

- Notify key stakeholders of absence and backup contacts
- Set up out-of-office messages
- Remove yourself from on-call rotations

Work Boundaries

- Disable work email and Slack on personal devices
- No expectation to be available during sabbatical
- In emergencies, HR will contact your designated emergency contact

During Sabbatical

Benefits

Benefit	Status
Health/Dental/Vision	Continues
Equity vesting	Continues
401(k) match	Based on contributions (none during sabbatical)
Annual leave accrual	Pauses
Tenure	Continues to accrue

Contact

- You are not expected to be reachable
- Provide an emergency contact (family member, not colleague) to HR
- True emergencies only: HR will contact you through your emergency contact

Returning from Sabbatical

First Week Back

- Scheduled check-in with manager
- Catch-up briefings from team
- No immediate deliverables expected

Re-integration

- Gradual ramp-up over 2 weeks recommended
- Update on company/team changes since departure
- Debrief with manager on any insights or ideas (optional)

Position Guarantee

- You will return to the same role and level
- If organizational changes occurred, you will receive an equivalent position

Special Circumstances

Resignation During/After Sabbatical

- If you resign within 6 months of returning from sabbatical, you may be required to repay a prorated portion of sabbatical pay
- This does not apply to layoffs or terminations initiated by the company

Sabbatical and Other Leave

- Sabbatical cannot run concurrently with parental or medical leave
- Parental leave eligibility is not affected by sabbatical
- Upcoming sabbatical does not affect annual leave entitlement

Part-Time Employees

Part-time employees who reach 5 years tenure may be eligible for prorated sabbatical. Contact HR to discuss.

Manager Responsibilities

- Discuss sabbatical plans early with eligible employees
- Plan for coverage and knowledge transfer
- Do not contact employee during sabbatical except through HR for emergencies
- Support smooth re-integration upon return

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I extend my sabbatical with unpaid leave? A: Up to 4 additional weeks of unpaid leave may be approved. Request in advance.

Q: What if I'm not ready to take sabbatical when I become eligible?
A: You have 12 months from eligibility to take sabbatical. After that, the entitlement is forfeited.

Q: Can I work on a side project during sabbatical? A: Yes, but remember that conflict of interest policies still apply. Review the Conflict of Interest Policy (HR-EMP-006).

Q: Does sabbatical affect my performance review? A: No. Your review will be based on the time you worked, and sabbatical is not considered when evaluating performance.

Contact

For questions about sabbatical eligibility or planning, contact People Operations at sabbatical@novatech.com or via #ask-hr on Slack.

Related Documents: Annual Leave Policy (HR-LOA-001), Knowledge Transfer Requirements (HR-OFF-010), Conflict of Interest Policy (HR-EMP-006)