

Sabbatical Policy

September 8, 2003

Purpose and Principles

Eastern Kentucky University maintains and promotes a program of sabbaticals for faculty as a part of its overall efforts to maintain high quality academic programs and an energized faculty. A sabbatical can be a rejuvenating experience for a faculty member, permitting time to investigate avenues for improving academic quality in the pursuit of excellence. All eligible faculty members are strongly encouraged to apply for sabbaticals.

Sabbaticals are designed for professional improvement of current faculty members by providing, for a specified period, time away from the usual contractual obligations. This time enables faculty members to pursue scholarly activities that will strengthen teaching, scholarship, service and/or any combination therein at the department, college, library, or university levels. Sabbatical requests are to be closely related to each faculty member's teaching area but are not granted for the completion of an advanced degree or for any other activities related to that goal.

Since a sabbatical is a privilege and not a right, sabbaticals are not granted automatically after the required semesters of service. A sabbatical may be granted to a faculty member who has demonstrated an above-average ability in teaching, scholarship, and service and who has completed an application which meets the sabbatical requirements.

Funding and Salary Payment

University sabbatical pool funds are derived from the University budget and other funds which may be allocated by the University. The distribution of available funds is given to the colleges based on the proportion of full-time, tenure-track faculty. Additionally, individual colleges may fund sabbaticals for faculty members through college development funds, indirect cost allocations, private sources designated for the college, or other approved sources. Faculty members are encouraged to seek outside sources of funding to help supplement their sabbatical request.

The three types of sabbaticals for which eligible faculty members on full-time appointments may apply are as follows: (1) one year at half salary, (2) one semester at full salary, or (3) one-half time for two semesters at full salary. The salary will be based upon the amount that would have been received for the academic year had the sabbatical not been taken. In the application, the faculty member must designate the type of sabbatical requested as well as the effective semester or year.

Since preference is given to one-year sabbatical requests at half salary, these candidates are encouraged to seek scholarships, fellowships, or other honorary stipends to supplement their sabbatical salaries.

Eligibility and Application Process

To be eligible to apply for a sabbatical, faculty members must meet the following requirements:

1. Complete twelve (12) semesters of full-time service to the University before the first sabbatical or between subsequent sabbaticals.
2. Submit an appropriate request document with supporting information in accordance with the faculty member's college criteria.
3. Submit requests to the department chair no later than September 15 of the year preceding the academic year of the sabbatical. (Requests may be submitted two years in advance for approval. If the request is denied, a new application may be filed the following year.)
4. Obtain all required approvals at the department and college levels and receive written approval from the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.

College Procedures

Each college will assure that the University-approved procedures have been followed and that the sabbatical recommendations concur with the goals and needs of the college. The following procedures apply to the colleges:

- A. Each college will develop specific guidelines regarding the criteria, quality, and weight assigned to specific categories of scholarly activities and service which are the basis for a sabbatical. These guidelines will be clear and concise and will address the process, procedures, and expected results. These guidelines will be published for all faculty members; and each college will establish an education and assistance program to help faculty members in the development of high quality sabbatical requests within one (1) year from the publication of this policy.

Preferred purposes for sabbaticals include, but are not rank-ordered or limited to, the following:

1. A carefully designed scholarly/creative project related to the discipline.
2. Scholarly writing or other comparable form of creative activity with a goal of publication or presentation.

3. A clearly defined program of independent study related to instructional responsibilities.
 4. A clearly defined program of a major course revision and/or new course development.
- B. Each college will develop policies, procedures, and guidelines approved by a majority of the faculty of the college for the review of sabbatical applications. These policies and procedures will include the following elements:
1. Timetables for receiving the sabbatical request.
 2. Parameters for the development of the reasonable request document and supporting materials.
 3. Evaluation criteria that will take into account the benefits of the sabbatical for the faculty member, the department, the college, and, ultimately, the students.
 4. A departmental review committee for screening and making recommendations to the chair. (A faculty member who will be considered for a sabbatical will not be eligible to serve on this committee. The same rule applies to anyone with a significant conflict of interest, e.g., the candidate is a member of one's immediate family.)
 5. A college review committee for making recommendations to the dean.
- C. The dean of the college will forward the selected sabbatical requests to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs by November 1.
- D. The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs will evaluate and forward the selected sabbatical requests to the President by December 15. The President will notify selected faculty members following action by the Board of Regents.

Faculty Rights During a Sabbatical

Successful candidates will retain the following rights during their time spent on a sabbatical:

1. The faculty member may share in the salary increases awarded by the University.
2. Retirement contributions depend on the faculty member's retirement plan. KTRS is a Defined Benefit Plan, and the Non-KTRS programs are Defined Contribution Plans.

- a. If the candidate is a KTRS participant, retirement contributions are not withheld and the University does not make retirement contributions during the sabbatical period. However, as stated in the KTRS guidelines, participants may purchase service credit within the “interest-free period” and the University will pay the difference between the service credit purchase price and the amount that would have otherwise been deducted from the candidate’s pay. By purchasing the service credit, the sabbatical year or semester counts toward retirement service.
 - b. Retirement withholdings for non-KTRS candidates and contributions by the University on their behalf will continue at the rates in effect before the sabbatical began.
3. The candidate who is a member of a University insurance coverage plan or a family plan will continue to receive coverage at the same rates while on a sabbatical.
 4. The sabbatical period counts toward requirements for promotion.

Faculty Obligations After a Sabbatical

The successful applicants will accept the following obligations regarding the sabbatical:

1. A faculty member who is approved for a sabbatical is expected to carry out the plan set forth in the application and forward a comprehensive open-file report to the dean of the college identifying the accomplishments within ninety (90) days from the completion of the sabbatical and to publish, if appropriate, the findings of the sabbatical within six (6) months.
2. A recipient of a sabbatical will return to ECU for a minimum of one (1) academic year following the sabbatical. (Unless otherwise agreed in advance by the faculty member and chair or dean, the sabbatical recipient will return to his or her former position within the University.) In the event that the faculty member does not return to ECU for the specified period, the recipient will reimburse ECU in full for the salary and fringe benefits received during the sabbatical.

Exceptions to the University Policy

The President, in concurrence with the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, has the option of making exceptions to the above-stated policy when deemed in the best interest of the University.