Creighton University School of Medicine

Policy on Sabbaticals and Leaves of Absence

The various forms of leave covered by this policy are intended for the benefit/enrichment of individual faculty members, and/or the improvement of Creighton University School of Medicine (SOM). There are 4 categories of leave covered by this policy. They are:

1. Sabbatical Leave
2. Leave of Absence
3. Academic Leave
4. Professional Development Leave

The definition, purpose, eligibility, duration, funding and application procedure of each type of leave covered by this policy are outlined under each category below. All faculty members granted leave under this policy will retain their faculty status for the duration of the period of leave. All benefits for the duration of the leave will be subject to Creighton University Human Resources policies.

All applications for leave covered by this policy must be submitted in writing to the Committee on Leaves and Sabbaticals (hereafter referred to as the Committee) through the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs. All supporting documents (see details in each category of leave) necessary for the deliberations of the Committee must accompany the request for leave. The Committee will review the application, request additional information as needed, and submit a recommendation in writing to the Dean of the SOM. The applicant and his/her Department Chair must refrain from direct communication with the Dean prior to the application being considered by the Committee. The Dean’s decision regarding all types of leave covered by this policy will be final.
Specific Categories, Policies, and Procedures Concerning Leaves

I.  *Sabbatical Leave.*

Definition

A sabbatical leave is defined as a leave, granted by the University upon recommendation of the Dean of the SOM, with full faculty privileges and status including tenure, to engage in full time research, scholarly writing and related incidental teaching, for the purpose of nurturing the professional development of the faculty member to the benefit of the University.

Purpose

The purpose of the sabbatical leave is to free faculty members from their normal SOM duties, enabling them to pursue their scholarly interests full-time and maintain their professional standing so that they may return to their posts with renewed vigor, perspective, and insight.

Eligibility

Applicants must be tenured faculty members with a minimum of six years completed service at Creighton University SOM at the time of application. Subsequent sabbatical leaves will require additional six-year increments of service at Creighton University. Thus, the frequency of sabbatical leave for any individual faculty member cannot be greater than once every seven years.

Acceptance of sabbatical leave carries with it the obligation that upon completion of the leave, the faculty member will resume his/her duties at the SOM for a period of not less than one year. It is also expected that upon return to normal academic duties, the faculty member
will file a written report to the Committee, of the actual professional activities that they engaged in during the period of sabbatical leave, the relationship of such activities to their professional growth, and the ways in which the faculty member deems that the experience gained during the sabbatical leave will improve his/her performance at the University.

The decision of the Dean to recommend granting a sabbatical leave will be based upon a thorough review by the Committee of the applicant’s eligibility, the quality of the proposed sabbatical program, the effect of the grantee’s absence upon the academic programs of the SOM, and clear evidence that the sabbatical leave will contribute to the continued professional development of the applicant and to the best interests of the University.

Sabbatical leave is not an entitlement for a period of service to the University and therefore, will not be granted automatically to eligible applicants. Faculty members are encouraged to develop stimulating, sound sabbatical leave programs that will discernibly contribute to their professional development. Towards this goal, the Committee will lend its support and encouragement to aid interested faculty.

**Duration**

At least one full semester, but not more than one calendar year.

**Funding**

Applicants for sabbatical leave are expected to seek extramural funding, and success in acquiring such funds will be regarded as strong prima facie evidence of the merit of the sabbatical proposal. However, failure to obtain such funds will neither reflect adversely upon the merits of the sabbatical proposal, nor will it preclude granting of the sabbatical leave.

The applicant should be aware that intramural funding may not be available for sabbatical expenses. The applicant should also be aware that extramural funds are awarded on
a competitive basis and the deadlines for submission of applications are such that an applicant must begin planning a sabbatical program well in advance of the desired start of the leave. A lead-time of 18 months is a conservative guide. The Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs will lend assistance to interested applicants in identifying suitable sources of funding.

Faculty members may be eligible to receive up to 100% of their salary for 6 months, or 50% of their salary for one year during the period of their sabbatical leave. If, due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the faculty member’s control, he/she fails to complete the proposed activities during the sabbatical leave, the leave will be regarded as an unpaid Leave of Absence, and any funds disbursed by the University towards support for the sabbatical leave must either be repaid to the University by the grantee, or negotiated with the Dean of the SOM.

**Application Procedure**

The completed application for sabbatical leave should be submitted directly to the Committee at least six months prior to the intended beginning date. The application must be accompanied by all supporting documents including a letter from the Department Chair. The Committee will investigate the merits of the application and consult with the Department Chair, Dean, or any other member of the administration or faculty who will be directly affected by the leave. The Committee will recommend to the Dean, along with supporting statements, approval, disapproval or deferral of the application, based on the eligibility criteria described above.

**Application Format**

The application should include the following:

1. General statement of the sabbatical leave program including the purpose of the leave, the location of the leave, the duration and inclusive dates involved.
2. A letter from an official spokesperson of the host institution indicating his/her willingness to commit laboratory and library facilities, materials and supplies, and if necessary, technical support to the applicant’s sabbatical program.

3. Description of the sabbatical program. This should form the body of the application and should include a modestly detailed description of the program itself. Since it is expected that the sabbatical leave will enable the grantee to conduct full-time original research and/or writing in a selected area of interest, the application should include an outline of the research/writing the applicant intends to pursue and a brief summary of the applicant’s research/scholarly accomplishments. These statements should not involve detailed, lengthy research proposals and protocols of the kind required in grant applications. The particular merit(s) of the selected site or institution with respect to the intended research/writing program should be pointed out clearly.

4. A statement describing explicitly how the sabbatical program is expected to contribute to the professional development of the applicant and the relevance of this development to his/her future role in the University.

5. A letter must be requested from the Department Chair. The Department Chair’s letter should verify the alternative arrangements that have been made to cover all the faculty member’s duties during the period of the sabbatical leave.

6. A statement describing the arrangements that have been, or are to be made to distribute the grantee’s teaching and other responsibilities among his/her colleagues.
7. A statement, where applicable, describing the arrangements that have been agreed upon to reassign the grantee’s administrative responsibilities, including appropriate remuneration, as in the case of a Department Chair requesting a sabbatical.

8. A complete financial statement concerning salary support and associated expenses the applicant expects to receive from Creighton University and/or from identified outside sources. It is of concern to the Committee that the grantee should be able to complete the sabbatical leave without suffering undue financial hardship.

9. A curriculum vitae including selected, representative publications.

II. Leave of Absence.

Definition

A leave of absence may be granted to any faculty member who requests such leave for any legitimate reason. Such reason would include, but would not be limited to, ill health, pursuit of advanced training, financial necessity as deemed by the applicant, public service, or other reason judged sufficient by the Committee.

Purpose

The purpose of a leave of absence is to allow the faculty member to attend to situations that cannot be accommodated by other types of leave, and return to the University once such needs are fulfilled.

Eligibility

Application for a leave of absence requires a minimum of 5 completed years of service, except under extenuating circumstances or if covered under the Creighton University Family and Medical Leave Policy per the Faculty Handbook.
Faculty status and privileges including tenure, will normally be retained during the leave subject to qualifications and standards per existing ‘fitness for duty’ policies and provisions detailed in the Faculty Handbook.

Retention of faculty status does not imply that time spent while on leave of absence will accrue toward tenure or advancement in rank. On the contrary, such time generally will contribute neither to acquisition of tenure nor to advancement; but neither will it be counted as part of the probationary period during which tenure must be attained. Specific details concerning these aspects should be agreed upon by the applicant and the Dean with the concurrence of the University Committee on Rank and Tenure. A clear statement of this agreement should be included in the formal notification of approval by the University.

Access to the faculty member’s laboratory and/or office space may be retained, provided his/her students/mentees continue to work in those spaces during the faculty member’s leave of absence.

**Duration**

The duration of a leave of absence would normally be from six months to two years, but could extend for a longer period in an extenuating circumstance. Such extension would require permission from the Department Chair with the concurrence of the Dean.

**Funding**

A leave of absence is invariably granted without pay.

**Application Procedure**

Faculty members requesting a leave of absence should apply in writing directly to the Committee via the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs, stating the necessity for the leave, the intended duration, and the arrangements for coverage of his/her duties that have been
agreed upon with the Department Chair. The Committee will recommend to the Dean, along with supporting statements, approval, disapproval or deferral of the application, based on the eligibility criteria described above.

**Application Format**

A letter should be submitted to the committee specifying the nature, duration and purpose of leave.

**III. Academic Leave.**

**Definition**

Academic leave is intended primarily to benefit the University. It is distinguished from Sabbatical Leave by the following criteria:

1. Advancement of the SOM teaching/training programs e.g. use of novel technology designed to improve educational outcomes.

2. Enhancement of the reputation and prestige of the SOM e.g. invitation to serve as an officer for a professional society or federal agency – see details under Eligibility.

**Purpose**

To remain abreast of rapidly changing concepts in higher education or enhance the University’s reputation, it may serve the SOM’s interests to grant an academic leave to a faculty member. The purpose of such leave would be acquiring a newer perspective or broader outlook on current innovative educational programs or methodologies developed/adopted at other institutions, or showcasing the SOM at a national level. Thus, the teaching and training programs at Creighton University SOM may be broadly infused with new techniques and
insights that would benefit both students and faculty, or its prestige and national reputation may be advanced.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this type of leave, the faculty member must be a full-time employee of Creighton University. Faculty status and privileges including tenure will normally be retained during the leave. For non-tenured faculty, the tenure clock will be stopped for the duration of the leave, if it is longer than 3 months.

Duration

The duration of an academic leave may vary from one to twelve months; rarely will it exceed one year.

Funding

On rare occasions, a faculty member may be invited by a recognized national professional society or federal agency to serve in an official full time capacity as an officer or spokesperson for the organization. Ordinarily such an invitation would include a salary commitment so that the simple granting of a leave of absence would permit the individual’s participation in this desirable activity. In certain circumstances, however, it is possible that an invitation of this kind might be extended without a salary commitment. In this case, if the need to withhold such commitment can be justified, and if the benefit to the SOM in terms of prestige or advancement of its purposes is readily apparent, the SOM may choose to honor the individual’s salary by granting an academic leave with pay.

Application Procedure

The initiative for requesting an academic leave may rise from an interested faculty member or from a member of the SOM administration with the concurrence of the faculty
member. An application for academic leave should follow the general format prescribed for application for sabbatical leave (see above). In this case however, the application should stress the benefit to be derived by the SOM as a result of granting the academic leave.

A written request should be submitted to the Committee by the faculty member concerned, through the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs. The Committee will assess the potential benefit to the SOM and faculty member of the proposed leave and advise the Dean in writing of its recommendation regarding the leave and its duration.

Application Format

A format similar to that prescribed for sabbatical leave is recommended.

IV. Professional Development Leave.

Definition

This category consists of leave granted to permit a faculty member to acquire a specific skill or capability that would directly benefit an existing or anticipated SOM program.

Purpose

The purpose of this type of leave is primarily to benefit the SOM by enhancing its research, educational or clinical programs.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this type of leave, the faculty member must be a full-time employee of Creighton University. Faculty status and privileges including tenure will normally be retained during the leave. For non-tenured faculty, the tenure clock will be stopped for the duration of the leave if it is longer than 3 months.

Duration
Such leaves ordinarily are of short duration, i.e. three months or less.

**Funding**

This should be decided at the Departmental level.

**Application Procedure**

Leave of this type should be administered at the Department level with the concurrence of the Dean. The Department Chair should notify the Committee of such requests at the initiation of the process, since they may impinge on other cases being considered by the Committee.

**Notification of Approval of Application**

When any type of leave covered by this policy is granted by the Dean, the notification of approval will include all general and special terms of the leave. In the special case of a sabbatical leave taken in residence the terms shall include a stipulation that the faculty member is relieved of all Department and SOM obligations for the period of the sabbatical, except for any responsibilities the grantee, with the concurrence of the Committee, agrees to retain.

*Approved 10/24/2012 at the Fall Faculty Meeting of CUSOM*