

## Faculty Guide to Understanding and Applying for Leaves of Absence (April 2024)

## Faculty leaves of absence are granted by the University and must be approved by the Provost’s Office in order to be correctly processed.

## Normally, (with the exceptions of sabbatical and medical leave) leaves are granted upon the recommendation of the Dean. This guide is intended to explain the different types of leaves and how to apply for them. It covers the following topics, and provides a planning guide and template for requesting a leave:

## The implications of taking a leave

## The types of leave available

## The best practices and process for requesting that a leave be approved

## Each leave is different, depending on circumstances, external funding, opportunities, and awards, and on the faculty member themselves. Therefore it is important to make sure that you have discussed your needs and plans with your chair (if appropriate) and the dean’s office in order to make sure that your leave is structured correctly to meet your objectives and that your leave is processed as efficiently as possible. Final processing is evidenced by receiving an approval letter from the Provost’s Office.

## Implications of Taking a Leave

## There are many good reasons that a faculty member may wish to request a leave, but it is important to consider a number of issues when contemplating the type and duration of a leave. Some key issues to consider are listed below:

## Compensation: Will this leave be paid, unpaid or at partial salary? (This normally depends on the leave type.)

## Benefits: Depending on the level of compensation and length of leave, you may need to pay for the cost of your benefits out of pocket, and you may lose eligibility for certain benefits.

## Period of leave: The Provost’s Office prefers for voluntary leaves to begin July 1 or January 1 and end June 30 or December 31 to coincide with university semester calendars. However, exceptions are sometimes granted if a strong case can be made to do so.

## Responsibilities while on leave: Does this leave only exempt you from teaching and require that you be available for meetings and advising or do you plan to be off campus the entire time?

## Teaching Credits: What are the teaching credit implications of this leave?

## Please note: Teaching credits for a leave are pro-rated and calculated on the percentage of effort covered by the leave out of the full teaching load.

## Tenure Clock/Sabbatical Clock: Will this leave impact your tenure or sabbatical clock?

## Visa/Immigration: Will taking a leave impact your immigration status?

## Impact on Division/School: Whenever considering a leave it’s useful to discuss the potential impact on teaching or other responsibilities within your division.

## Types of Leave

## The details of leave policies and types of leaves are outlined extensively in the Faculty Handbook: see section “Officers of Instruction: Leaves of absence” at the following link:

## <https://facultyhandbook.columbia.edu/content/officers-instruction/leaves>

## A list of leave types is also included below:

## Sabbatical

## Sabbaticals are granted by the University to tenured faculty as an investment in their intellectual refreshment.

## Sabbaticals are considered University service, and faculty are prohibited from teaching in for-credit courses at Columbia or elsewhere, and limited in the number of hours of executive education during sabbatical leaves.

## The [Business School- Provost’s Office Sabbatical Pilot](https://www8.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty-staff/system/files/Sabbatical-Teaching-Adjustments-Final.pdf) agreement through June 2024 aligns formal sabbatical leaves with Business School terms and allows for up to 70 hours of CBS Executive Education.

## January 1 – April 30 (spring term, 4 months)

## May 1 – August 31 (summer term, 4 months)1

## September 1 – December 31 (fall term, 4 months)

## Eligibility is based on years of service.

## Eligible faculty are contacted by the Provost Office via email each year, typically in November or December prior to the year they are eligible.

## Faculty must sign and submit a sabbatical form indicating whether or not they intend to take their sabbatical. Requests to postpone a sabbatical must be signed by both the divisional chair and the Senior Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs prior to submitting the form to the Provost Office.

## Questions regarding sabbatical eligibility can be directed to Faculty Affairs [facultyaffairs@gsb.columbia.edu](mailto:facultyaffairs@gsb.columbia.edu), Kerith Gardner or Melody Brumfield. Other elements of this planning guidance are not applicable to sabbaticals.

## Leaves of Absence for Scholarly Purposes (or Research Leaves) – Normally used for faculty to leave campus to focus on research, or to take an outside fellowship away from campus.

## Exemptions from Teaching Duties – Normally used for faculty who will not teach a regular load in order to participate in another activity, but will be participating in meetings and working on research.

## Medical Leaves – Eligibility determined at University level, confidentiality maintained throughout. Faculty should apply if a medical issue impacts your ability to perform your normal responsibilities.

## Parental Workload Relief Plan (PWLR) / Child Care Leaves – PWLR plan provides a half year of teaching relief and an additional year on the tenure clock for ‘primary care givers’ within a year of a child’s birth. Other types of child care leaves are structured differently but can be taken if a faculty member is not eligible for PWLR because their partner is not employed or for other reasons. Please note that PWLR is intended for child care, and therefore over-teaching during PWLR is not permitted.

## Other Leaves: Usually granted faculty to take on military, government, or public service for a limited time. While the faculty handbook does not articulate this specifically, this is the type of leave to request if you are going to work for a company or non-profit that will be paying you. This is referred to as a “(full or partial) leave of absence without salary.”

## Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) Leaves: an alternative to PWLR or to care for a sick family member.

## By discussing your needs and objectives with the Dean’s Office, we should be able to determine how best to structure your leave to achieve your objectives.

## Teaching Credit Relief Associated with Leaves

## Unlike some other parts of the University, Business School faculty do not always teach the same amount in all three terms (spring, summer and fall). Therefore, regardless of the timing of a leave, the teaching credits for a leave are pro-rated and calculated on the percentage of effort covered by the leave out of the full teaching load for a full year. For example – See numbers below for a full-time teaching load of 3:

## For a full year of leave at 100%, a faculty member is relieved of a full year of normal annual teaching responsibility. (3 credits of relief)

## For a half year of leave of leave at 100%, a faculty member is relieved of half of normal annual teaching responsibility. (1.5 credits of relief)

## For a full year of leave at 50% (normally for a medical leave), a faculty member is relieved of half of normal annual teaching responsibility. (1.5 credits of relief)

## For a 4 month of leave at 100%, a faculty member is relieved of a 1/3 of normal annual teaching responsibility. (1 credits of relief)

## For a 4 month of leave at 50%, a faculty member is relieved of a 1/6 of normal annual teaching responsibility. (0.5 credits of relief)

## For a 3 month of leave at 100%, a faculty member is relieved of a 1/4 of normal annual teaching responsibility. (.75 credits of relief)

## Best Practices and Process for Requesting that a Leave be Approved

## Discuss the plans and objectives with your divisional chair, focusing on the period away and implications for teaching and service to the division.

## Please note that the chair is not the expert on leave types and structuring.

## Consider the questions and issues on the attached planning worksheet- YOU DO NOT NEED TO FILL THIS OUT.

## Contact Business School Faculty Affairs (Kerith Gardner) if you want to discuss structure issues or feasibility or external funding.

## Contact the Senior Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs’ Office if you want to discuss tenure clock issues.

## Contact ISSO if you want to discuss Visa issues: <https://isso.columbia.edu/content/meet-scholar-team>

## Columbia University HR Benefits [hrbenefits@columbia.edu](mailto:hrbenefits@columbia.edu) to discuss benefits eligibility and costs, particularly for unpaid leaves or leaves that last longer than one calendar year.

## Discuss the plans and objectives with the Senior Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs and confirm leave structure.

## It may be helpful to bring the worksheet to your meeting or submit it in advance to the Senior Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs.

## If you don’t have questions to discuss, and the request is straight-forward, you can skip to step 4 and send a request.

## Submit a written request to the Senior Vice Dean.

## Please prepare the request on letterhead and include a signature (the Provost’s Office requests this.)

## You may send the request by e-mail as a PDF.

## A template is included below for your convenience.

## OPTIONAL – There is no need to complete this form

## Discussion & Planning Worksheet for Faculty Leaves

## Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Purpose or Reason for leave: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Do you need to extend your tenure clock? Yes ❒ No ❒ Not sure ❒

## Do you need to maintain your current level of compensation? Yes ❒ No ❒ Not sure ❒

## Do you have a grant or other source of compensation? Yes ❒ No ❒ Not sure ❒

## Can you afford to pay for benefits? Yes ❒ No ❒ Not sure ❒

## Do you have any benefits that could lapse during the leave? Yes ❒ No ❒ Not sure ❒

## How much teaching credit relief are you seeking? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## What is your normal teaching load per academic year? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Planned start date of leave: January 1 ❒ July 1 ❒ 20\_\_\_\_

## Planned end date of leave: June 30 ❒ December 31 ❒ 20\_\_\_\_

## Do you expect to be on campus during your leave?

## Yes – all the time ❒ No- not at all ❒ Sometimes ❒ Please specify \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Will your office be available for visitors during your leave?

## Yes – all the time ❒ No- not at all ❒ Sometimes ❒ Please specify \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Do you expect to be available to meet with students and participate in committees and meetings?

## Yes – all the time ❒ No- not at all ❒ Sometimes ❒ Please specify \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Will this leave impact or change teaching schedules that have already been planned?

## Yes ❒ No ❒ Not sure ❒ If so, please explain.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in subletting your home during your leave?

## Yes ❒ No- not at all ❒ Not sure ❒

## If yes, please specify dates, number of bedrooms, and whether you are in Columbia housing\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_



## EXAMPLE LETTER TEMPLATE - REGULAR LEAVES – Please feel free to edit as you see fit. If part of the letter is not relevant to your request, please omit it. Please omit all instructions in purple from the final letter.

## DATE

XXXXX Senior Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs

Office of the Dean

3rd Floor Kravis Hall  
665 West 130th Street

New York, NY 10027

Dear XXX:

Following up on our earlier conversations, I write to request a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_leave beginning on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and ending on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*Note to Faculty member:*

* *Dates used above should correspond with the official University semesters so the start date should be either:* 
  + *January 1 or July 1, and the end date should be either*
  + *June 30 or December 31.*

During my leave, I will be working on/at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*Note to Faculty member:*

* *One short paragraph should briefly describe, in one or two sentences, the activity or research to be pursued during the leave.*

My understanding is that if the leave is granted:

* + my teaching load during the 20\_\_-20\_\_ academic year will be \_\_\_\_ credits reflecting an exemption of \_\_\_\_ credits
  + my up or out date will change to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + my salary will be reduced by X %. / My salary will not change / I will receive no salary.

Please let me know if you have further questions and thank you for your consideration of this request.

## Sincerely,

## Please note: If this is a request for Parental Work Load Relief the letter must also include additional information as per the example letter on the next page:

## 

## EXAMPLE LETTER TEMPLATE - PARENTAL WORK LOAD RELIEF

## *Please feel free to edit as appropriate, and please omit all instructions in purple from the final letter.*

## DATE

XXXXX Senior Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs

Office of the Dean

3rd Floor Kravis Hall  
665 West 130th Street

New York, NY 10027

Dear XXX:

Following up on our earlier conversations, I write to request Parental Work Load Relief leave beginning on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and ending on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*Note to Faculty member:*

* *Dates used above should correspond with the official University semesters so either:* 
  + *July 1-December 31 or January 1-June 30 (for one semester PWLR leaves at 0 load and full salary)*
  + *January 1-December 31 or July 1-June 30 (for full year PWLR leaves at ½ salary)*
* *If you wish to have a full year of relief at* ***full-salary****, you must teach ½ your load in each semester. If this is the case, please specify that.*

As you may know, *Child’s Name (if available, or “my child”)*  was born/my child is expected on *Child’s Birthdate*. During the planned period of workload relief, I will be the primary caregiver for *Child’s Name/My Child*  and my (*partner/husband/wife*), *Partner’s Name* will be working (*or in school*) full-time during the term of the workload relief.

My understanding is that if the leave is granted:

* + My teaching load during the 20\_\_-20-\_ academic year will be \_\_\_ credits reflecting an exemption of \_\_\_ credits
  + My up or out date will change to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  *(If applicable).*
  + I will not teach more than my teaching load during the parental leave, and will not request pay out for over-teaching.
  + My salary will be reduced by X %. *(If applicable)*

Parental work load relief reduces my teaching load but I understand that I am still expected to be in residence, to be available for students, and continue my research during this period, and not to accept any assignments outside of the University.

Please let me know if you have further questions and thank you for your consideration of this request.

## Sincerely,