

SEMESTER SABBATICAL: To provide 100% of salary and release time for one semester, or

YEAR SABBATICAL: To provide 50% of salary and release time for one year

PERSONS ELIGIBLE:

Full-time, tenured faculty members who have accrued a period of six or more years of full-time service at Roanoke College. Faculty members should apply during their fifth year of service for a sabbatical during their seventh year. Faculty granted sabbatical leave may not receive additional sabbatical leave until he or she has accrued an additional six or more years of full-time service at the College after a sabbatical was last awarded.

APPLY TO: Faculty Development Committee

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 15 of the calendar year prior to the academic year in which leave would occur; for example, the application deadline for the 2024-2025 academic year is February 15, 2023.

A written final report must be submitted to FDC within the first six weeks of the regular semester following the sabbatical.

Guidelines for Sabbatical Leave Proposals

Purpose

The opportunity to take a sabbatical leave and pursue a program of scholarly study or research is an important part of the academic workplace. At the same time, Roanoke College resources may not always be sufficient to allow all faculty members who wish to take a sabbatical to do so. The Faculty Development Committee is responsible for determining acceptable proposals and ranking proposals in merit order. That list is used by the Dean and the President of the College, along with considerations such as budgetary constraints, in determining how many leaves are awarded. These guidelines are intended to provide a clear picture of the current expectations in these areas, but not to replace the essential information for sabbatical leave proposals found in section 2.10.1.1 of the Faculty Handbook.

What is an “acceptable program of study or research”?

A variety of activities may be pursued as part of a sabbatical leave. Disciplinary research, teaching-related scholarship, or professional retraining activities may fit into the definition of an acceptable program of formal study or research. A brief description of each of these areas is included below:

- **Disciplinary Research** - Research investigations or creative works within the academic discipline of the faculty member. Note that the exact type of professional project envisioned will vary significantly with discipline. Major creative efforts are viewed as valid types of disciplinary research, along with critical analytical research projects, scientific laboratory research, etc.
- **Teaching-Related Research** - Sabbatical projects designed to produce and implement innovative instructional methodologies, or to pursue in-depth study of course-related areas of knowledge.
- **Professional Retraining** - Over the 35-year career of an academic faculty member, it is not uncommon to need significant retraining. Many disciplines have core content which shifts during this time, or even in a period as short as fifteen years. While reeducation of faculty is a yearly effort, a sabbatical leave devoted to substantial retraining can become necessary. Roanoke College supports the need to provide timely instruction to students, and enable faculty members to develop their scholarly capabilities to pursue a research program. While sabbatical leave is one mechanism to obtain retraining, a fully planned and justified program will be required for this category of sabbatical leave, as is the case for more traditional research leaves.

Incorporation of travel into the sabbatical leave period

Fresh perspectives and insights on one's academic discipline are often a significant benefit of the sabbatical leave period. Frequently, travel to other institutions or countries provides those insights and perspectives. Such travel may be of short-term duration, or may involve extended time. The benefits of travel will be evaluated along with all other factors during the review of each application. Faculty should clearly discuss the benefits expected from such travel.

Proposed Outline

All sabbatical leave proposals should include:

- a title specific to what is being proposed
- the author's name, title, and department
- the type of grant and time of the proposed leave (Full year, AY 2024-2025, for example)
- an abstract of approximately 150 words
- an explanation of the problem, topic, or retraining area using literature/sources as appropriate. This discussion should:
 - justify the applicant's initial positions or what has been accomplished (by the applicant and in the field) prior to this proposed work, including arguments or topics to be explored
 - describe how proposed efforts will achieve the desired goals
 - describe the approaches to be used
 - comment on the importance and implications of the expected conclusions or achievements

- describe how additional funding, if needed, will be obtained. This step may not apply to all proposals.
- a timetable for completion of the project, including the "outcomes" stage which may involve publications, presentations, and exhibitions.
- a bibliography
- a current CV attached to the end of the proposal
- the department chair's recommendation, including a statement of how the faculty member's academic responsibilities will be covered, and the estimated cost of that coverage. If a department chair does not support/recommend the faculty member's proposed work, this needs to be conveyed in the letter. This letter should be sent as a PDF directly to FDC.
- **Clear headings and subheadings are encouraged in the proposal.**

Expectations

To write a proposal at the expected level of development, the faculty member will need to do a significant amount of planning and reflection on their goals. cursory proposals will not be adequate. While proposal topics and styles vary widely by discipline, and no hard and fast rules apply, proposals will likely be around six pages, or perhaps 2,500 or more words, single-spaced, not including the bibliography.

Many sabbatical leaves include enhancements provided by successful external grant proposals. The application deadlines for such programs closely follow the internal college deadlines for applying for sabbatical leaves. The brief period of time available for external proposal development following internal authorization is one reason why the College requires internal proposals to be polished so external requests will be competitive. Faculty members submitting sabbatical leave requests should consider whether their proposal, with minor additional work, is in a form and development stage that could be competitive externally.

Sabbatical leave for professional retraining, as referred to above, deserves a special comment in these guidelines. Such requests do not involve preparation of a research project per se, yet advance planning, in relatively specific detail, is required for a successful retraining effort. If faculty members desire to become more current in their fields by attending specific graduate courses at universities, or specific major professional meetings, detailed plans for these activities should be submitted as part of the sabbatical leave proposal. For example, while the faculty member may not have chosen a university for continuing education, perhaps they will have identified a group of three institutions. For those three, the faculty member can obtain course catalogs and develop potential course lists. If the faculty member is contemplating work with colleagues at other institutions, written agreement to the collaboration by those colleagues should be obtained at the time of submitting the proposal to Roanoke College.

Example Proposals

Faculty considering an application for sabbatical leave are urged to speak with their department chair early in the process, and look at successful proposal examples prior to developing their own proposal. As much as is possible, examples of all categories of proposals (disciplinary research, teaching-related research, and professional retraining) will be made available.

Evaluation of Sabbatical Leave Proposals

While not a formal “rubric”, the following are the main criteria the Faculty Development Committee will use to evaluate sabbatical proposals. It is the committee's task to *rank* proposals and provide the Dean of the College with that ranking. All final sabbatical decisions are subject to the Academic Dean's recommendation and approval by the President and the Board of Trustees.

1. Overall quality of the proposal. Did the applicant follow the guidelines and expectations, resulting in a professional, easily interpreted proposal?
2. Intellectual merit and feasibility of the proposal
3. Benefits to the faculty member's scholarship
4. The match between the proposed project and the unique opportunities provided by a sabbatical
5. Balanced distribution of support among faculty in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences, all other criteria being equal.

Final Report

Faculty will submit a written report and assessment of the sabbatical period to the chair of the Faculty Development Committee and the department chair. This report should be submitted within the first six weeks of the regular semester following the completion of the sabbatical. It is also expected that returning faculty will share the results of their research/writing with faculty colleagues.

Mechanism for the review and reauthorization of changes in previously approved projects

While it is unavoidable that some changes will occur in proposed sabbatical leaves between the time of the original request and the start of the leave period (17 months later), it is necessary to have some control over the changes which can be made, and to have a mechanism in place for the approval of such changes.

Changes to the proposed project which occur after initial approval by the College must be reapproved. Such changes should be submitted in writing, with a detailed justification, to the Academic Dean of the College. The Dean may approve such changes immediately, or may refer those changes to the Faculty Development Committee for review. Such review may result in a recommendation for approval of the change, or a recommendation that the leave proposal not be approved in the revised form.

- Changes which enhance the sabbatical leave project are encouraged. Moving to a larger research library location, moving from a small university location to a larger location with better resources, or the addition of travel to foreign countries not originally included in the project, are examples of beneficial changes.
- Changes which reduce the scope or benefits of the sabbatical leave are discouraged. Such changes from the initially approved project are not fair to other applicants whose sabbatical leaves were not approved. It is expected that the primary reason for changes in approved projects will be financial in nature. External grant funds for necessary travel are difficult to obtain, and funding timetables are such that approval of external grants will not be assured at the time of the initial College approval of the project. Nevertheless, a project may need to be delayed as necessary funds are sought. The Faculty Development Committee recognizes that changes in the plan might be unavoidable, and will apply that knowledge to the review of revisions to proposed projects.