**McCormick Policy on Faculty Leaves of Absence**

The McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science encourages all of its eligible faculty members to take advantage of the opportunities available for academic leaves of absence to enhance their research and expand opportunities for their departments and the school. McCormick follows the position on faculty leaves outlined on page 23 of the 2018 edition of the *Faculty Handbook* of Northwestern University:

Leaves of absence rather than sabbatical leaves are given at Northwestern. Northwestern is committed to the scholarly and professional development of the faculty. The University recognizes the need for its faculty to engage in research and professional development activities that will benefit both the scholar and the University. Active encouragement will be given to provide opportunities for professional and research leaves.

Leaves of absence may be granted to faculty for academic/professional reasons (*academic leave*), for starting new companies to commercialize their research (*entrepreneurial leave*), or for medical/parental/personal leaves. The following policies supplement the policies presented in the Faculty Handbook, https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/faculty-resources/new-faculty/index.html pages 23-25.

**With the important exception of medical and parental leaves, all leaves** should be discussed with the faculty member’s chair(s)/director(s) as early as possible to ensure sufficient time to plan the faculty member’s absence.

**ACADEMIC LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

1. **Description:** An academic leave of absence releases a faculty member from on-campus teaching and service responsibilities for a specified period of time. Any extended absence from the University during academic quarters that results in the inability of a faculty member to adequately perform typical resident teaching, advising, and research duties will be considered a leave of absence.

   According to the Faculty Handbook, “faculty members are expected to be in residence and available to students and colleagues throughout the period of their appointment — in the case of faculty on nine-month appointments, from the arrival of students in the fall through Commencement.” Furthermore, an absence from the University of more than 30 consecutive days would be considered a leave during a quarter for which a faculty member has no classroom teaching responsibilities. Faculty should not be absent for more than a few days at a time during a quarter for which a faculty member is teaching.

2. **Eligibility:** Tenured faculty members are eligible for academic leaves of absence. The conditions under which the faculty member is eligible for a leave with full or partial salary are given in item 5 below.
Such a leave is not normally given to untenured faculty, although exceptions to this policy will be considered in unusual circumstances.

3. **Purposes:** Valid reasons for taking an academic leave include but are not limited to:

- To collaborate with research colleagues in residence at other universities or laboratories
- To engage in a new field of study having a significant potential for future growth
- To establish a new research center
- To write a book
- To gain unique and career-relevant industrial experience
- To engage in entrepreneurial activity related to the faculty member’s research
- To perform a specialized service for city, state, or federal governments

4. **Procedure:**

   a. Prior to March 15 preceding the academic year for which leave is requested, the faculty member submits a 1-2 page leave request through the Department Chair (or Chairs for jointly appointed faculty) to the Dean(s) indicating:

      - Time period (start and end dates) of the academic leave of absence requested.
      - Specific purpose of the leave and its relationship to the missions of the Department, School, and University.
      - External financial support for salary, travel, etc., that is sought and/or secured.
      - Disclosure of any official appointments that are expected at the host institution and what services the faculty member will provide to the host institution.
      - Proposed arrangements for fulfilling the faculty member’s on-campus duties during the period of leave including advising undergraduate students and fulfilling departmental committee responsibilities.
      - Proposed arrangements related to research while on leave including advising graduate students, assuring a safe lab environment, filing appropriate effort and progress reports to the University and funding agencies, and assuring ongoing funding for graduate student advisees.
      - Plans to notify funding agencies of absence from the campus and/or diversion from funded research.
      - A plan for communication during the leave so that the department chair, business administrator, research administrator, and the faculty member’s graduate student advisees can readily contact and interact with the faculty member.
      - Verification that faculty member understands his/her intellectual property (IP) obligations to Northwestern and the IP policies of the host institution. In some cases these policies may conflict. It is important to address and resolve potential conflicts in advance. The McCormick Office of the Dean can provide advice on these matters.

   b. The Department Chair (Chair of the Primary department in the case of jointly appointed faculty) forwards the faculty member’s request to the Dean with a cover letter assessing the value of the requested leave to the Department, specifically stating how the faculty member’s teaching and other duties will be covered. This message should include acknowledgement of support of secondary department chairs and School Deans, for cross school appointments. The Department Chair(s) should reorganize the teaching schedule so that teaching is covered at no incremental cost to McCormick. If this is not possible, the chair must provide a rationale for requiring additional teaching resources. In such cases McCormick will cover the cost of hiring
replacement adjunct faculty for up to one course during each quarter of one-quarter and two-quarter (half-year) leaves. For three-quarter (full academic year) leaves of absence, the department Chair should be able to reorganize the teaching schedule to cover one to two courses. If this not possible, McCormick will share the cost to hire additional adjunct faculty for the remaining one to two courses.

Chairs are responsible for managing, scheduling and advancing leave requests in their departments to ensure that teaching and other duties are covered, and that the total incremental costs of leaves for McCormick in a given year are reasonable and feasible within the constraints above. The Chair has the authority to deny or defer a leave request if it creates a significant burden on the Department.

For joint appointments:
• Persons with joint appointments must process their leave request through both Department Chairs and Deans (if applicable) simultaneously. In the cross-school case, particular care is needed to design and secure approval for the leave because leave policies may not be identical across schools. In particular, financial arrangements needed to be specifically crafted in advance, and written approval of chairs and deans in both schools is required.
• Faculty jointly appointed across McCormick departments must work out leave arrangements, particularly disposition of duties, with both Department Chairs.

c. The Dean reviews the request for each leave and can approve, deny, or defer a leave request on the basis of the benefits and costs to McCormick. If the leave is approved by the Dean, he/she makes a favorable recommendation to the Provost.

d. The Provost reviews and makes a final decision on each leave request.

e. Faculty members should expect to receive written confirmation of leave approval from the Dean and should not begin their leaves until they have that confirmation.

5. **Salary and Benefits**

a. For a one-quarter leave, up to full salary and full benefits\(^1\) will be provided by McCormick during the leave, provided at least three years of service have accrued since the end of the last academic leave and the total salary from all sources during the leave does not exceed the amount in item 5.e below.

b. For a two-quarter leave, up to full salary and full benefits will be provided by McCormick during the leave, provided at least six years of service have accrued since end of the last academic leave and the total salary from all sources during the leave does not exceed the amount in item 5.e below.

c. For a three-quarter (full academic year) leave, up to 50% of the academic year salary and full benefits will be provided by McCormick during the leave, provided at least six years of service

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\(^1\) For the purposes of this policy the term “full benefits” shall be taken to include: (a) Full health and dental insurance, with the University and faculty member’s contributions to the cost the same as if the faculty member were not on leave; (b) Full long-term disability and life insurance at the same level of coverage the faculty member would have, were (s)he not on leave; the University and faculty member’s contributions to the cost will remain the same as if the faculty member were not on leave; (c) Full tuition benefits (including accrual of time toward the service requirement for these benefits) as if the faculty member were not on leave; (d) University and faculty member contributions to University retirement plans will be proportional to the fraction of the faculty member’s salary paid by the University.
have accrued since the end of the last academic leave and the total salary from all sources during the leave does not exceed the amount in item 5.e below.

d. Under certain circumstances it may be necessary for a faculty member to take a multi-quarter leave interspersed with non-leave quarters, e.g., a two-quarter leave in two consecutive winter quarters. Such a leave plan can be approved as long as on-campus arrangements during leave quarters can be designed to be acceptable to Chair(s) and Dean(s).

e. Relocating temporarily for an academic leave can be a major financial burden. Thus, in cases where an outside source pays part of the faculty member’s salary during the leave, the total salary during the period of the leave from all sources (McCormick and outside) is permitted to exceed the faculty member’s nominal salary, unless a separate fund for travel expenses is provided by Northwestern University, the host institution, or the awarding agency. The allowed excess is limited to 25 percent of the faculty member’s salary during the leave period. Alternatively, a faculty member may utilize his/her own discretionary funds to cover personal travel and relocation expenses during the leave (airfare, accommodations, etc.) up to 25 percent of his/her salary during the leave period.

f. In general, sponsored funds may not be used to fund academic year salary during a leave unless a written approval of using sponsored funds for salary during the leave is provided by the research sponsor. Similarly, sponsored funds may not be used for summer salary during the leave unless such use is approved in advance by the funding agency. It is permissible to use sponsored funds to cover a small fraction of academic year or summer salary, no more than 20%, during a leave with the understanding that this covers responsibilities related to continuing advising and other research duties handled remotely during a leave. For academic year salary, sponsor funds are used to offset the salary cost incurred the University, not as a supplement to the salary paid by the University during the leave.

g. A faculty member may not earn extra pay from Northwestern University for teaching or other activities during the period of the leave prior to accepting a paid academic leave, faculty members are required to sign a legal agreement committing them to return to their regular duties for at least one full academic year at the end of the leave. Faculty who choose not to return for at least an additional year of service will be obligated to pay back salary and benefits paid to them by the University during the leave.

h. An academic leave without pay or benefits is also available. This would be appropriate for entrepreneurial leaves of absence to devote full time to a start-up company, leaves to serve temporarily in governmental posts for which there is separate pay and benefits, or similar activities. Such leaves are typically no longer than one to two years. A faculty member will not be granted a leave of absence to accept a tenure-track or tenured faculty appointment or permanent full-time administrative position at another academic institution or other employer.

i. For purposes of all university benefits that depend upon the number of years of “continuous full-time service,” time away for an academic leave will be considered “continuous service” and the time will count in full toward the individual’s “service requirement” independent of the fraction of salary paid by the university.2

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2 Thus, even if a faculty member secures full non-Northwestern funding for a leave, the time away during the leave will be considered “continuous service” and the time will count in full toward the faculty member’s “service requirement” for benefits that depend on the length of service to the university.
k. In all cases, it is expected that the faculty member will attempt to secure external support for salary and benefits for the period of the leave.

6. Teaching Load:

a. The teaching load during the academic year of a one-quarter leave will be two-thirds the normal load.
b. The teaching load during the academic year of a two-quarter leave will be one-third the normal load.
c. The teaching load during the year of a one-year leave will be zero.

ENTREPRENEURIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Faculty applications for entrepreneurial leaves will be considered for faculty members starting new companies. These are leaves without pay or benefits and are typically for one year. The application procedure is the same as for an academic leave, with a memorandum from the faculty member to the Department Chair(s) describing the motivation for the leave, the value to the Department, McCormick and Northwestern, and suggesting a disposition of duties. Points under item 4.a for an academic leave should be addressed.

The Chair will review the request, define the disposition of duties, and make a recommendation to the Dean. Based on his/her review, the Dean may recommend approval to the Provost, who makes the final decision.

In exceptional circumstances a faculty member may request a second year of entrepreneurial leave. Such a request must arise from a compelling need and can be granted only upon satisfaction of all of the following conditions:

- The activity of the faculty member during the leave must be consistent with the Department’s academic goals.

- The leave will not cause serious problems for teaching and other assignments in the Department including advising undergraduate students, fulfilling departmental committee responsibilities, advising graduate students and assuring their satisfactory progress, filing appropriate effort and progress reports to the University and funding agencies, and securing ongoing funding of graduate student advisees.

- A second year of entrepreneurial leave may be granted under extenuating circumstances. Arrangements for covering the faculty member’s on-campus duties must be renewed and reconfirmed. Application for the leave extension must be received in writing.

- A faculty member may not earn extra pay from Northwestern University for teaching or other activities during the period of the leave.

If a faculty member seeks a second year of entrepreneurial leave, then he/she must prepare a detailed proposal explaining the need for the leave, describing the work to be done and showing how the conditions described above will be met. This proposal must be approved by the Department Chair and submitted to the Dean for review and decision. The final approval must come from the Provost as usual. In no cases will a third year of leave be permitted.

As in the case of academic leaves, a faculty member on an entrepreneurial leave is expected to return to campus full time for at least one year following his/her leave or must return any salary and benefit payments received from the University during the leave.
A faculty member may request a leave of absence of specified length for personal reasons such as child bearing, child rearing, family emergency, illness, required military service, or the exploration of career alternatives (see the Northwestern University Faculty Handbook). Faculty are covered by the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Leaves taken due to the faculty member’s own illness or under the auspices of the Faculty Family Leave Policy are paid for a specified period. Other personal leaves may be unpaid.

Applications for medical or parental leaves are handled through The Hartford, a company external to Northwestern. For full details, see the Provost’s Office website, www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/faculty-leaves/index.html.

1) ILLNESS OR DISABILITY
Faculty members who are unable to work as a result of a medically certified disability are eligible for sick leave at full salary for up to six months. Faculty members with external grants should be aware that it may not be possible to collect summer salary during medical leave as effort cannot be certified. Furthermore, The Hartford follows the federal FMLA legislation, stating that faculty on medical leave cannot continue in any University-related activity, including advising graduate students. Northwestern expects that faculty on medical leave to cease all University duties.

The Hartford will inform the University of the need for a medical leave, based on the recommendation of the faculty member’s physician, but will not share any details regarding a medical condition. The McCormick Faculty Affairs Office will notify a department if a colleague’s teaching should be cancelled during the leave, but also will not provide any details regarding the reason for the leave. At the end of an approved medical leave, The Hartford may request certification from the faculty member’s physician indicating that he or she is able to resume regular duties.

2) MATERNITY, ADOPTION, AND CHILDREARING LEAVES
The University’s policy on leaves for the birth, adoption and rearing of children may be found at: www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/faculty-leaves/index.html. Eligible are: full-time, benefits-eligible tenured or tenure-track faculty and other full-time, benefits eligible instructional faculty (including research faculty) who, at the time of the birth or adoption, have completed three years of continuous full time service on the Northwestern faculty or who are serving on an academic appointment of three years or longer at the time of the leave.

The approval of parenting leaves is handled by The Hartford. To initiate the leave of absence, contact The Hartford either online at TheHartfordatWork.com, or by phone at 1-888-541-7283.

1) Childbirth.
One quarter of leave for the mother during the quarter of birth or the quarter thereafter. The mother/birth parent is also eligible for childrearing leave, see below.

2) Adoption.
One quarter of leave for the parent at the time of adoption. Parents are also eligible for childrearing leave, as described below.

3) Childrearing.
One quarter of leave for a parent who carries at least an equal portion in caring for a child. To be taken during the quarter of birth or adoption or in another quarter within the first year after birth or adoption.
(4) Release from duties.
Faculty members on childbearing, adoption, and childrearing leave will not be required to fulfill such University service responsibilities as membership on committees. Faculty on childbearing leave may retain responsibility for any necessary supervision to students pursuing such work as undergraduate senior honors, masters, or doctoral research or make other arrangements for supervision during the leave. Faculty on adoption and childrearing leave are expected to retain responsibility for any necessary supervision to students pursuing such work as undergraduate senior honors, masters, or doctoral research.

During the academic year in which the leave is taken, a reduction in the annual teaching load corresponding to the length of the leave will be made. If the course reduction and leave from service are not taken in the academic year in which the birth or adoption occurs, the faculty member may take the remaining course reduction(s) and leave from service in the following academic year. Notwithstanding the provisions regarding course reductions, it is assumed that no faculty member's teaching load will be reduced to less than one course a year because of childbearing/adoption and/or childrearing. Childbearing, adoption, and childrearing are fully approved personal leaves and faculty will not be asked to make up for these leaves with teaching, course preparation, or service activities at any subsequent time. Faculty cannot be retaliated or discriminated against for having requested or using the rights granted pursuant to this policy.

Members of the full-time faculty ineligible for the leave described in section 1) above may apply for medical leave during the quarter in which they give birth. When normal parturition is the cause for cessation of work, a period of up to six weeks of disability from the date of birth is assumed and medical certification may be required. Absences connected with complications arising before or after this period are subject to approval as leaves of absence for personal or medical reasons and are treated as any other such leave.

3) MILITARY SERVICE LEAVE
Leave without pay is granted for qualified military service, as provided by law. According to a policy established by the Board of Trustees, faculty members serving in the Armed Forces will be rehired at their former ranks upon returning from service. For further information, please call the Department of Human Resources. To apply for such a leave please contact the McCormick Faculty Affairs Office.

4) PERSONAL LEAVES
Personal leaves other than medical leaves are almost always unpaid. To apply for such a leave please contact the McCormick Faculty Affairs Office.

5) BENEFITS FOR UNPAID LEAVES
When a faculty member is on unpaid leave and is not receiving a paycheck, the University will pay its regular share of benefits. Faculty members will be responsible for paying their own portion of the benefits, and will be billed for these payments. In the event that a faculty member does not wish to retain any University benefits during an unpaid leave, they should contact the University’s Human Resources Office to dis-enroll from these benefits and ensure that they are not billed for them.

EXTENSION OF PROBATIONARY TERM

Faculty members may file applications for extension of the tenure probationary term for reasons related to parenthood through the department chair and Faculty Affairs Office. Please note that The Hartford is not involved in tenure-clock extension process.
• **Birth or Adoption**

In cases of birth or adoption, approval of requests for extension for the tenure clock for one year is automatic. Extensions for childbirth and/or adoption and/or childrearing are limited to a total of two years within a faculty member’s pretenure probationary period regardless of the number of children.

For extension of the pretenure probationary period related to the birth or adoption of a child, the faculty member must initiate the process to obtain an extension before the final year of the probationary appointment by providing a written notification to the faculty member’s school dean. The dean will in turn provide to the faculty member written confirmation that the probationary period has been extended. Approval is automatic.

Faculty requesting an extension for reasons related to childbirth or adoption have the right to request the removal of the extension later.

• **Childrearing**

Requests to extend the pretenure probationary period for circumstances related to childrearing for parents who are at least an equal partner in caring for a child will generally receive favorable consideration. Extensions for childbirth and/or adoption and/or childrearing are limited to a total of two years within a faculty member’s pretenure probationary period regardless of the number of children.

For extension of the pretenure probationary period related to childrearing, the faculty member must initiate the process to obtain an extension before the beginning of the final year of the probationary appointment, by providing a written request to the faculty member’s school dean. The dean will in turn provide to the faculty member written confirmation that the probationary period has been extended.

Faculty requesting an extension for reasons related to childrearing have the right to request removal of the extension later.

• **Other Circumstances**

Requests to extend the probationary period for reasons other than childbirth, adoption, or childrearing, such as for medical necessity, will be granted if they are deemed to be both fair to the faculty member making the request and the University and consistent with personnel practices generally applicable to other candidates for tenure in the University. Such requests must be made by the faculty member in writing and must be submitted prior to the beginning of the final year of the probationary appointment. The request must state clearly the circumstances in the faculty member's situation that might justify an extended probationary period. The letter must also state explicitly that the faculty member making the request understands that he or she will not enjoy an entitlement or stronger claim to tenure by virtue of continued membership on the faculty beyond the customary probationary period.

The request is to be forwarded via the Department Chair(s) to the school Dean(s). If the school Dean(s) support(s) the request, the request, along with the Dean's(s’) formal endorsement, is then sent to the Provost for further review. If the school Dean(s) does (do) not support the request, the faculty member will be notified and will be free to seek further review of the request by the Provost. In all cases, a decision to extend the probationary period will be made by the Provost. The faculty member will receive written notification when the request is approved.

**AGREEMENT TO THE POLICY**

In accepting any leave other than for health or parental reasons, a faculty member will be asked to sign a statement stating that he or she has read and agrees to this policy.