

Office of the Dean
McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science
Northwestern University
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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 our school. McCormick supports the position on faculty leaves outlined on page 22 of the 2001 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 personal reasons (*personal leave*). The following policies supplement the policies presented in the *Faculty Handbook*, pp 22-25.

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. Typically, an absence from the University during an academic quarter of more than 30 consecutive days would be considered a leave during a quarter for which a faculty member has no 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 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.

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 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 1 preceding the academic year for which leave is requested, the faculty member submits a 1-2 page leave request through the Department Chair to the Dean 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.
- Proposed arrangements for fulfilling the candidate's on-campus duties during the period of leave including advising undergraduate students, fulfilling departmental committee responsibilities, advising continuing graduate students on their research, filing appropriate effort and progress reports to the University and funding agencies, and securing the ongoing funding of graduate student advisees.

b. The Department Chair forwards the faculty member's request to the Dean with a cover letter assessing the value of the requested leave to the Department, stating how the faculty member's teaching and other duties will in fact be covered, and presenting a plan to finance the coverage of those duties. The Department Chair should reorganize the teaching schedule or hire adjuncts so that teaching is covered at no incremental cost to McCormick for one-quarter and two-quarter leaves. McCormick will cover the cost of substitute teaching for one course during each quarter of three-quarter (full-year) leaves of absence when it is not possible to reorganize the teaching schedule to cover the normal departmental teaching schedule. The details of the cost to McCormick and plan to cover teaching should be spelled out in the Chair's letter requesting the leave.

Chairs are responsible for managing, scheduling and advancing leave requests in their departments to be sure that teaching and other duties are covered, and that the total incremental costs of leaves for the Department and McCormick in a given year are reasonable and feasible within the constraints above. Thus, the

Chair has the authority to deny or defer a leave request if it creates a significant burden on the Department.

- c. The Dean reviews the request for each leave and recommends for or against on the basis of the benefits and costs to the Department, and 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 decision on each leave request.

5. **Salary and Benefits**

- a. For a one-quarter leave, up to full salary and full benefits¹ will be provided by McCormick during the leave, provided at least three years of service have accrued since the last academic leave and the total salary from all sources during the leave does not exceed the amount in item 5.d 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 the last academic leave and the total salary from all sources during the leave does not exceed the amount in item 5.d below.
- c. For a one-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 have accrued since the last academic leave and the total salary from all sources during the leave does not exceed the amount in item 5.d below.
- d. 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 expenses during the leave (airfare, accommodations, etc.) up to 25 percent of his/her salary during the leave period. Sponsored funds may not be used for salary during the leave unless the leave is part of the original proposal and has been approved by the funding agency, the leave portion of the proposal is

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.

approved at the proposal stage by the Dean's office, and the salary is within the 25% allowable excess salary. A faculty member may not earn extra pay from Northwestern University for teaching or other activities during the period of the leave.

- e. 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.
- f. 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. In no case will a third year of leave be permitted. 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.
- g. 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
- h. In all cases, it is expected that the faculty member will attempt to secure salary support for 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 limited to one year. The

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.

application procedure is the same as for an academic leave, with a memorandum from the faculty member to the Department Chair describing the motivation for the leave, the value to the Department, McCormick and Northwestern, and suggesting a disposition of duties.

The Chair will review the request, define the disposition of duties, making reasonable use of salary breakage funds, 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. Breakage funds during the period of the leave are retained by McCormick, but can be applied to paying substitute instructors.

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 continuing graduate students on their research, filing appropriate effort and progress reports to the University and funding agencies, and securing ongoing funding of graduate student advisees.
- A second year of absence for an entrepreneurial leave places extra burdens upon the teaching and administrative loads of the Department and may result in lost opportunities for development of the Department. Thus, it is necessary for the absent faculty member or his/her company to compensate the Department at least 20% of the faculty member's last 9 months of salary to hold the position open for a second year and cover adjunct teaching costs.
- 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.

PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A personal leave of absence releases a faculty member from on-campus teaching and service responsibilities for a specified period of time. A personal leave may be granted because of *maternity/paternity/adoption, personal/family crisis*, or for the purpose of satisfying *military* obligations. All leaves taken for maternity, paternity, childcare, adoption, faculty member's illness or for faculty member to care for an ill family member will be counted toward faculty member's Family and Medical Leave Act entitlement.

Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave of Absence

1. **Description:** A maternity/paternity/adoption leave of absence releases a faculty member from on-campus teaching service and responsibilities for *one academic quarter*.
2. **Eligibility:** Any faculty member is entitled to a one-quarter leave of absence due to the birth or adoption of a child. If a medical disability arises in connection with pregnancy or childbirth, then additional sick-leave benefits may be provided (see Paid Sick Leave in the Northwestern University Faculty Handbook).
3. **Procedure:**
 - a. The faculty member submits a leave request at least 60 days in advance or as soon as practical to the Dean through the Department Chair indicating which quarter the maternity/paternity/adoption leave of absence is requested. (In the case of adoption leave, this request should give a "best guess" of the time window within which adoption is expected).
 - b. The Department Chair forwards the faculty member's request to the Dean with a recommendation and stating how the duties of the requesting professor will be covered. Ideally, the Department Chair should reorganize the teaching schedule so that teaching is covered at no incremental cost to either McCormick or the Department. If this is not possible, McCormick will cover up to 50% of the cost of substitute teaching for one course during the leave of absence with the Department covering the remaining 50% of the cost.
4. **Salary and Benefits:**
 - a. Maternity/paternity/adoption leave provides full salary and benefits.
 - b. For purposes of all university benefits that depend upon the number of years of "continuous full-time service," time away for maternity/paternity/adoption leave will count in full.
 - c. A faculty member may not earn extra pay from Northwestern University for teaching or other activities during the period of the leave.

5. **Timing:** The timing of the one-quarter leave is normally as follows. If the birth/adoption of the child is during the first half of a given quarter, then that quarter is taken as leave. If the birth/adoption of the child is during the second half of a quarter, then the remainder of that quarter, together with the entire next quarter is taken as leave. If the birth/adoption of the child is during the summer, then the fall quarter is taken as leave.

Since the timing of a birth is fairly predictable, provisions for the timing of the leave are normally straightforward. In the case of adoption, timing of reception of the child is often unpredictable. The School will be as flexible as possible in scheduling leave for adoption situations.

6. **Teaching Load:** The teaching load during the academic year of a maternity/paternity/adoption leave will be two-thirds of the load the faculty member would otherwise have had.
7. Maternity/Paternity/Adoption leaves do not affect eligibility for academic or personal leaves of absence.
8. The tenure clock may be extended in the case of Maternity/Paternity/Adoption if requested and approved as per the guidelines in the Northwestern University "Policy on Extending the Probationary Period."

Child-Rearing or Personal/Family Crisis Leave of Absence

1. **Description:** A *full leave* of absence releases a faculty member from all on-campus teaching and service responsibilities for a specified period of time not to exceed one year. A *partial leave* of absence reduces to a specified level a faculty member's teaching and service responsibilities for a specified period of time no greater than three years.
2. **Eligibility:** Any faculty member is eligible to apply for a full or partial leave for personal/family reasons.
3. **Procedure:**
 - a. Faculty member submits a leave request to the Dean through the department chair indicating:
 - Personal leave of absence is being requested.
 - The period of time and the fraction of leave requested.
 - The purpose or justification of the leave. (A medical certification will be required if the faculty member or a family member is ill. Human Resources has a form for this purpose.)

- Faculty seeking child rearing leaves must certify in writing that they are at least an equal partner in caring for the child.
 - Salary and benefits requested during the leave.
- b. The Department Chair forwards the faculty member's request to the Dean with a recommendation and stating how the duties of the requesting professor will be covered. Ideally, the Department Chair should reorganize the teaching schedule so that teaching is covered at no incremental cost to either McCormick or the Department. If this is not possible, McCormick will cover up to 50% of the cost of substitute teaching for one course during the leave of absence with the Department covering the remaining 50% of the cost.
 - c. If the Dean approves the request, he/she makes a recommendation to the Provost.
 - d. The Provost reviews and makes the final decision on the leave request.
4. **Salary and Benefits**
- a. For a partial leave level of half time or greater, the faculty member will continue to receive full benefits and partial salary. Retirement contributions will be based on partial salary.
 - b. For purposes of all university benefits that depend upon the number of years of "continuous full-time service," time spent on part-time leave will count as "continuous service." Time will accrue toward the "service requirement" in proportion to the level of service.
 - c. A faculty member may not earn extra pay from Northwestern University for teaching or other activities during the period of the leave.
5. **Note:** When child-rearing or personal/family crisis leaves of absence are requested, the requesting faculty member will be asked to declare his or her intention to return to full-time status following the leave.

Leave of Absence for Military Service

McCormick follows the policy as stated on page 24 of the 2001 Edition of the Northwestern University *Faculty Handbook*:

"Leave without pay is granted for qualified military service, as provided by law. According to policy established by the Board of Trustees, faculty members serving in the United States armed forces will be rehired at their former academic ranks upon returning from service."

AGREEMENT TO THE POLICY

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

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