

Faculty Policy 107 – Sabbatical Policy

Approvals: Faculty Senate, Faculty Association, President, Board of Trustees

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 12, 2025

Purpose

As a teaching-focused institution, National Louis University hires faculty into a Professional Practice Track, Teaching Track, or a Tenure Track, which are equally valuable with different foci and expectations. The University values the contributions of all faculty and therefore extends opportunities for professional growth to faculty in all tracks. The purpose of a sabbatical award is to provide time and support for a faculty member to take advantage of unique educational opportunities and engage in projects to expand their knowledge and skills in relation to teaching, professional practice, and thought leadership. These awards are limited and competitive and are offered based on eligibility, faculty contributions to the University, and the strength of the proposal. The gains through this process are intended to support student learning, service, and leadership to the institution and enhance the reputation and prestige of the University through scholarship activities and representation in professional organizations.

After faculty submit their proposals, the Faculty Development Committee (FDC) reviews each submission and offers their recommendations to the Provost with statements to support their recommendations. Sabbatical awards are granted based on the support of the academic unit leader (e.g., dean, executive director, etc.) and the recommendation of the Provost and the approval of the President and the Board of Trustees.

Eligibility

All full-time faculty at the minimum rank of associate professor or its equivalent can take a sabbatical after six years of full-time employment. At the earliest, applications can be submitted and reviewed during a faculty member's sixth year to go on sabbatical during the seventh year.

A faculty member who has previously been awarded sabbatical must wait six full years before taking their next sabbatical. Applications can be submitted during the sixth year, by the Sabbatical deadline, and if awarded, will be taken during the seventh year after their previous sabbatical. Leaves of absence will be excluded in determining years of service counted towards eligibility for sabbatical leave(s) and priority will be given to faculty applying for their first sabbatical award. Faculty members who are promoted or appointed to staff positions, and who may subsequently return to a faculty role, will not have the time spent in the staff position counted toward sabbatical leave eligibility.

Faculty members on sabbatical leave shall be given the same consideration as to time accrued toward rank, promotion, salary, and retention, unless the faculty member and the University waive in writing this provision at the time the sabbatical leave is granted. An eligible faculty member who submits a proposal but is not granted a leave or does not take the sabbatical leave retains eligibility to apply in a subsequent academic year.

Sample Table of Sabbatical Eligibility

First eligibility

Hired in September Academic Year 0 - Not eligible
Academic Year 1 - Not eligible
Academic Year 2 - Not eligible
Academic Year 3 - Not eligible
Academic Year 4 - Not eligible
Academic Year 5 - Not eligible
Academic Year 6 - Eligible to apply for sabbatical for following academic year

Subsequent eligibility

Sabbatical year is Academic Year 0 - Not eligible
Academic Year 5 - Eligible to apply for sabbatical to take during the Academic Year 6

Sabbatical Leave Options

Any sabbatical leave must be taken in a single academic year, and applicants must select only one of the following options.

Faculty on quarters choose from these options:

1. One academic quarter at full annual contract salary.
2. Two academic quarters at 75% annual contract salary.
3. Three academic quarters at 50% annual contract salary.

Faculty on semesters choose from these options:

1. One academic semester at full annual contract salary.
2. Two academic semesters at 50% annual contract salary.

For the academic year a faculty will go on sabbatical, they should reduce their annual base workload by 9 semester hours/15 quarter hours per sabbatical term. A faculty member spending the entire appointment duration (i.e. 10-months, 12-months) on sabbatical will allocate their entire annual base work-load to sabbatical for the academic year.

Determination of the budget for sabbaticals will include consideration of issues such as numbers of projected eligible faculty in a given year and estimated replacement costs.

Compensation, Benefits and Conditions

Full fringe benefit coverage will be provided for faculty members on sabbatical leave based on the salary rate that the individual would have received while on full-time faculty contract. In keeping with the purpose and spirit of a sabbatical leave, the applicants are expected to inform National Louis University of any other salaries, grants, fellowships, or other financial support expected or received during the sabbatical period derived as a result of the sabbatical leave.

Notification of such funding must be provided to the University before the sabbatical leave is granted or within a week (7 days) of the award notification, if not known before sabbatical approval. Any individual who is granted a sabbatical may receive additional remuneration from National Louis University during the term of the sabbatical leave only upon approval by the Provost.

Sabbatical leaves are granted on the condition that the recipient signs an agreement to return to the University for any remaining quarters within the same academic year and one full academic year thereafter. If the recipient fails to return to the University to meet this condition, the salary paid by the University for the period of the leave must be reimbursed on a quarterly basis over a period of time not to exceed two calendar years from the beginning of the term the recipient is scheduled to return.

Upon recommendation of the Provost, the President may waive the reimbursement requirement, extend the period for reimbursement, or by mutual agreement with the faculty member, permit an exception to the requirement that the faculty member return immediately to the University after the end of the sabbatical leave.

If the University terminates the employment of the sabbatical recipient before the returning residency requirement may be met, the faculty member shall not be required to reimburse the University for salary paid during the sabbatical period. The granting of a sabbatical can be revoked when a faculty member is unable to fulfill the conditions of a sabbatical.

During a faculty's sabbatical, the faculty may not engage in overload work, including teaching, curriculum design, or any compensated additional duties other than dissertation advising and support. Additionally, the faculty member is not expected to engage in service, committee work, or program, college, or university activities including meetings and faculty performance review. Performance review timelines can be arranged with the Academic Unit Leader. Exceptions may be granted with approval by the Dean or designee and Provost.

Application Procedures

The applicant shall notify the Department Chair or Program Director and Dean of the intent to apply for sabbatical and confirm this notification on the application form.

Applicants must submit the completed application form signed by the Dean with a narrative proposal and a curriculum vitae by September 15 to sabbatical@nl.edu. The narrative proposal, no more than 4 pages, must describe plans for the sabbatical and its value to the individual's professional growth, to NLU, and to the profession. The curriculum vita should detail the applicant's prior service to the University and to the profession. Applicants should submit only one proposal; multiple proposals will not be reviewed.

The Faculty Development Committee will consider only complete applications submitted by the specified deadline. In September, the Office of the Provost will provide the Deans a list of the applicants and the length of leave requested.

Faculty Development Committee Role

Faculty Development Committee (FDC) is charged by Faculty Senate to review sabbatical applications, submit a letter detailing recommendations for sabbatical leaves to the Provost and provide reports of meetings and actions to the Senate.

FDC meetings addressing sabbatical applications will be closed meetings, and details regarding Committee deliberations and specific proposals will remain confidential. All eligible faculty proposals submitted will be reviewed. The FDC Chair or designated FDC member will keep a central file of Committee decisions and will submit a summary report of those decisions to the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Development Committee shall leave a record of its procedures in the general file of minutes of the Faculty Senate at the end of each year.

The FDC's composition is specified in the Faculty Association Constitution.

Evaluation Criteria

The FDC is dedicated to a consensus decision-making process and will evaluate only those applications that meet the stated application and proposal guidelines. Each proposal will then be reviewed and rated on the basis of the quality of the proposal (i.e., sufficient information, clarity of written presentation, completeness), the potential for professional growth, and the following:

- Quality of the application and its clarity as a project plan to carry out a sabbatical project with a clear outcome (purpose, objectives, activities)
- Potential of the sabbatical project to benefit the faculty member's professional and/or scholarly growth
- Quality and relevance of the sabbatical project to NLU mission
- Potential of the sabbatical project to benefit NLU
- Potential of the sabbatical project to contribute to the faculty member's field of practice
- Potential of the sabbatical project to benefit the faculty member's teaching, thought

leadership, and/or service

Sufficient evidence must be presented to the Committee to indicate meeting each of the above criteria.

Any sitting FDC members who have applied for a sabbatical leave may remain members of the Committee but must recuse themselves from the review, discussion, and results of the sabbatical review process. Any faculty member sitting on any governance committee, who has been awarded a sabbatical leave, should notify the Chair of all committees on which they serve to request a replacement.

After Completing the Sabbatical

Every recipient of a sabbatical award will submit a written report to the Provost 90 days after the completion of the sabbatical to sabbatical@nl.edu. The report should outline the activities conducted during the leave, the skills and knowledge gained, and a plan with a timeline to implement and share such gains with the college and the rest of the university and professional community. The Office of the Provost will provide digital access to the written reports for up to 5 years. The FDC will work with the Office of the Provost to ensure there are opportunities for faculty to share the results of their effort.

Sabbatical Process Timeline

1. The Office of the Provost generates a list of faculty eligible for sabbatical and sends the list to the Deans for review and corrections by May 1.
2. The Office of the Provost, on behalf of the Faculty Development Committee, informs the faculty community of Sabbatical application procedures and deadlines for the upcoming academic year.
3. Sabbatical application materials are submitted by the faculty member to the Office of the Provost by September 15 to sabbatical@nl.edu.
4. The Office of the Provost acknowledges receipt of material to faculty members and Deans.
5. The Office of the Provost forwards the applications to the Faculty Development Committee chair and Deans by September 30. The Deans begin preparing the impact report.
6. The Provost reviews roles, responsibilities and the timeline with Committee members in September.
7. The Faculty Development Committee submits its recommendations in the format of a ranked list to the Provost of the University, not later than November 30.
8. The Provost Office will prepare a budget impact report and share it with the academic unity leaders.
9. The Provost, after consultation with Deans, makes recommendations to the President. These recommendations will be based on the Faculty Development Committee's ranked list of eligible proposals and other factors, such as budget, impact on departments and programs, and relevance to the mission and strategic plan of the institution.

10. The Provost, with approval from the President, makes sabbatical recommendations to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, who then recommend a slate of sabbatical awards to the full Board of Trustees at the March meeting.
11. The President's Office notifies the Faculty Development Committee, Deans, Office of the Provost, and Human Resources decision.
12. A letter is sent from the Office of the Provost to faculty notifying them of decision. Should the request be denied, the letter should include the reason for that denial.
13. Sabbatical recipients must return the Verification of Intent form back to the Office of the Provost within 5 business days of notification.
14. A copy of the letter and Verification of Intent are sent to Human Resources and Deans.
15. By June 30, the Office of the Provost follows up with recipients requesting a detailed written report be submitted by September 1.