

DRAFT 12 10/21/24

D. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

1. General Leave Policies

a. Eligibility for Leave

1. Academic Leaves: Only members of the faculty holding full-time appointments are eligible for the academic leaves described below. Such faculty members' eligibility is not based on the source of the funding for their position, unless the funding source or a contractual obligation of the university precludes the approval of such a leave. In the event of ambiguity, the Provost, on authority delegated by the Bylaws of the Board of Visitors, shall determine a faculty member's eligibility for a requested leave.
2. Non-Academic Leaves: Full-time faculty members may be eligible for the non-academic leaves described below. In limited circumstances, part-time faculty members who have accumulated sufficient hours in the past twelve months of employment may also be eligible for certain non-academic leaves, pursuant to university policies.

b. Benefits

The university provides benefits to full-time and part-time faculty based on their employment status. Those benefits can be found on the [University's Human Resources website](#). Full-time faculty with reduced workload but who are working for at least 50% of their contracted salary remain eligible for medical insurance, life insurance and retirement benefits. However, the university's employer contribution to those benefits may be decreased or eliminated depending on the percentage reduction in workload.

c. Instructional Program and Faculty Responsibilities

When an instructional faculty member takes leave of any kind, the unit and the university will ensure continuity of the instructional program. The Dean or their designee, in consultation with the Provost and the affected faculty member, will develop a plan for dealing with the faculty member's absence from the classroom, which may include provisions for substitute instruction. When substitute instruction has been secured for the term or balance of the term (thereby relieving the faculty member of teaching responsibilities), the faculty member, when he or she returns to work or until he or she begins leave, shall be expected to fulfill all non-teaching responsibilities, and may be assigned to other appropriate duties or teach a one or two credit course for a portion of the semester.

2. Academic Leaves

The university encourages academic leaves because such leaves offer opportunities for faculty to develop professionally and to acquire new ideas to share with the university community. The primary purpose of academic leaves is to benefit the university by enhancing the scholarly and/or teaching skills of the faculty member. Some academic leaves follow standard calendars (described below).

a. Scheduled Semester Research Leave

The university offers regularly Scheduled Semester Research Leave with pay to full-time tenured faculty members who are “research-active” according to the definitions adopted by the faculty member’s program, department, and/or school, and these guidelines are subject to approval by the Faculty Research Committee. In the normal course of events, research-active faculty members will receive a Scheduled Semester Research Leave every seventh year of continuous employment. For further information on the application and approval process, see “Scheduled Semester Research Leave Policy,” which is incorporated here by reference.

b. Other Academic Leave

An academic leave may involve such things as teaching at another institution; employment in a government or comparable agency; research supported by a grant, by another institution or by the faculty member; and/or specific courses of study related to the academic work of the faculty member. It may be with pay, at reduced pay, or without pay. It is the university’s policy to continue medical insurance, life insurance, and retirement plan payments for those receiving at least 50% of their contract year salary from the university. For further information, see “Academic Leave Without Pay or At Reduced Pay.”

c. Restrictions

With the exception of leaves taken as part of the university’s Scheduled Semester Research Leave program, all academic leaves require the approval of the Provost. Academic leaves must be at least one semester in duration. Full-time tenured/tenure-eligible faculty may normally take no more than two consecutive years of academic leave. No academic leave shall be granted unless the faculty member has clearly indicated that they are committed to returning to the university for at least one academic year immediately following the leave.

3. Non-Academic Leaves

a. Fully Paid Leaves

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In certain situations, the university provides fully paid disability leave and fully paid family or medical leave. The extent of any fully paid leave is based on the election of benefits a faculty member entered into at the time of their initial employment, as well as governing law and University Human Resources policies. Faculty members should work with University Human Resources to determine whether they are eligible for paid leave and, if so, the length of such leave.

Although the need for extended leave is often unanticipated, faculty members shall notify the Office of Provost, through the appropriate Dean(s), of their request for paid leave, as soon as reasonably practicable.

University Human Resources will consult with the PPC and Faculty Assembly about any upcoming changes to the paid leave plans.

i. Disability Leave

Faculty members may be eligible for paid disability leave for medical inability to work due to illness, injury, or pregnancy. The length of the available disability leave will depend on the benefits plan the faculty member has entered into as well as governing law and any applicable University Human Resources policies. Faculty should consult with University Human Resources, which will work with the faculty member to explain the coverage provided by the policy they elected. No severance payments will be made for unused paid disability leave. See also Section III.D.3.d. below (Long-term Disabilities).

ii. Paid Family/Medical Leave

The university may provide paid family/medical leave in order for a faculty member to care for a dependent. The qualifying circumstances depend on governing law as well as the benefits plan the faculty member has entered into and any applicable University Human Resources policies. Faculty should consult with University Human Resources, which will work with the faculty member to explain the available coverage. Depending on their leave balances, eligible faculty on the University Sick/Disability and Paid Dependent Leave plan are entitled to a maximum of one academic semester or up to 696 hours of paid family leave. Eligible faculty on the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program are entitled to a maximum of 320 hours of paid family leave, depending on their leave balances.

For further information, see “[9-month professionals, faculty & postdocs](#)” or “[12-month professionals, professional faculty, instructional faculty leave.](#)”

b. Unpaid Leaves and Reduced Responsibility Contracts

i. Unpaid Disability or Family/Medical Leave

In addition to the paid leave described above, faculty may be eligible for unpaid disability or family/medical leave. To understand the situations when unpaid leave may be taken and the applicable steps to request the leave, faculty should work with University Human Resources. Requests for unpaid leave may require the approval of the Provost. Full-time instructional faculty who fall below 50% of their contract salary may lose benefits (see III.D.1.b. above). See also Section III.D.3.c. below (Long-term Disabilities).

ii. Reduced Responsibility Contracts for Disability or Family Reasons

A faculty member who becomes partially disabled, or who wishes to care part-time for an ill or injured family member may be entitled to negotiate a reduced responsibility contract under which the faculty member, in return for reduced teaching, research, and/or governance responsibilities, will accept a corresponding reduction in salary. Because reduced responsibility contracts may implicate the Family and Medical Leave Act and/or other governing laws, and because a reduction in responsibilities below 50% of full-time responsibilities will affect availability of benefits, faculty should consult with University Human Resources promptly in order to maximize their opportunities for unpaid leave.

A reduced responsibility contract, if sought, will be granted at the sole discretion of the Provost, after consultation with the affected faculty member and the faculty member's Dean or their designee.

iii. Unpaid Leave or Reduced Responsibility Leave to Pursue Other Work

Provided that they meet their primary duties to the university, full-time instructional faculty members may apply for unpaid leave or negotiate reduced responsibility contracts to pursue other work. If granted, such leave must be for a predetermined amount of time. If granted, the terms of such leave of absence will be set forth in writing, and the leave will not affect unfavorably the tenure status of a faculty member, except that the time spent on such leave will not count as probationary service unless otherwise agreed to by both the faculty member and the Provost in writing. Faculty requesting leave to pursue other work shall apply to the Provost. The granting of such leave is not an entitlement; it is within the discretion of the Provost.

c. Long-term Disabilities

The university provides tenured and tenure-eligible faculty members (as well as NTE faculty members whose contract specifies as such) with the option to elect a [long-term disability policy](#). The terms of those policies are governed by the plan

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the faculty member selected. For further information, see the “Long Term Disability Policy.” Additionally, faculty may be entitled to an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. *See* [ADA Accommodation Requests](#). Faculty should work with University Human Resources to make an accommodation request.

d. Other Leaves

In certain situations, faculty may be entitled to other leaves of absence not specified in the sections above. If a faculty member believes they may be entitled to a leave of absence not described above, please review the policies’ webpage on the [University Human Resources website](#) and/or contact University Human Resources directly.