



Policy Number: IV.15
Policy Level: Operating Policy
Originally Issued: January 13, 2016
Reviewed: May 23, 2018
Revised: May 7, 2019
Reviewed: November 1, 2021
Policy Owner: Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs
Policy Implementation: Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

SABBATICAL LEAVE

I. Policy Statement and Purpose

In accordance with Athens State University's mission, this policy establishes the standards for requesting Sabbatical Leave (with or without pay) and the requirements upon returning from an approved Sabbatical Leave.

The purpose of the sabbatical leave program is to enable faculty members to pursue their scholarly interests, free of their normal duties. It is awarded on the basis of merit.

II. Eligibility

Only full-time tenured faculty members that have (a) attained the ranks of Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor; and (b) completed six (6) years of continuous full-time service since their initial appointment as a faculty member or since their last sabbatical leave, are eligible to be considered for sabbatical leave with or without pay.

III. Sabbatical Review Committee (SRC)

The Sabbatical Review Committee (SRC) will consist of seven (7) tenured faculty members (two from each college and one librarian). The Elections Committee shall conduct an election within each College to select two faculty members to serve on the SRC. The Elections Committee shall conduct an election with the Library to select a librarian to serve on the SRC.

Committee members will serve three-year staggered terms to ensure continuity between those SRC members that approve an application and those that conduct the Post-Sabbatical Leave Report.

IV. Application Process

A faculty member wishing to take sabbatical leave must first submit a complete [Sabbatical Leave Application](#) to the appropriate College Dean no later than July 1 for either spring or fall of the next calendar year. This timeline gives the University adequate time to assess the impact of leave requests on finances, instruction and other University functions. A sabbatical leave request may be approved or denied. Approval/denial sequence of the [Sabbatical Leave Application](#) is as follows:

1. College Dean – reviews the application, and may deny or, upon finding it merits further consideration, may forward to Provost.



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2. Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs – reviews the application, and may deny or, upon finding it merits further consideration, may forward to Sabbatical Review Committee.
3. Sabbatical Review Committee –reviews and makes recommendation for approval or disapproval to President.
4. University President – reviews for final approval or disapproval. The President may approve the sabbatical leave request, deny the sabbatical leave request, or approve it conditionally (such as, for examples, an approval of sabbatical leave but for a time period or duration that is different than that which was requested by the faculty member.)

The University President will transmit a letter to the applicant, with copies to the Dean, Provost, Sabbatical Committee and Human Resources, indicating if the sabbatical leave was approved or denied, and whether the sabbatical leave will be paid or unpaid

In determining whether or not to approve a request for sabbatical leave, University personnel may consider the impact of the requested leave on University finances, instruction, or other University functions; the merit and value of the sabbatical experience to the University's current or planned academic programs; and the merit and value of the sabbatical experience to the faculty member's scholarly work and research. No employee has any vested rights with respect to sabbatical leave. No employee has any expectation or right that such sabbatical leave will be approved or offered to the employee.

The [Sabbatical Leave Application](#) must include the following:

1. A full description of planned activities during the leave period including specific expected outcomes to be achieved.
2. An explanation of how these activities will benefit the University and the faculty member's professional and personal growth.
3. A description of arrangements to cover the faculty member's instructional responsibilities, supervision of advisees, and other duties for which the faculty member is responsible.
4. A plan for dissemination of results to the University community.



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V. Pre and Post Requirements

College Deans may ask that faculty members postpone requests for sabbatical leave when such absences would make it difficult for the department or the college to meet its instructional obligations, although applications may still be forwarded through the entire process.

Faculty on sabbatical leave for **one semester** will be paid the full salary at the current rank at the time of the approved sabbatical.

Faculty on sabbatical leave for **one academic year** (Fall and Spring) will receive 50% of the salary at the current rank at the time of the approved sabbatical. No sabbatical leaves will include or be awarded for summer semester.

During sabbatical leave, the faculty member must continue to make contributions to insurance and other benefit programs for them to remain in effect. Contributions normally made by the University to the faculty member's and other benefit programs shall be continued during the leave period. Faculty on sabbatical leave will receive credit for time in rank for promotion.

Sabbatical leave is not a vacation or time off from University obligations. Instead, sabbatical leave is a time for a faculty member to fully engage in scholarly work for the benefit of the faculty member's academic career and the overall benefit of the University in having capable and experienced faculty members. A faculty member on sabbatical leave is expected to use such period of time to engage full-time in the planned activities discussed in his/her application for sabbatical leave and any approval. If a faculty member engages in any secondary employment during the period of sabbatical leave, that secondary employment must not interfere with the employee's planned activities during the sabbatical leave and must comply with the [Guidelines – Faculty Expectations](#).

A faculty member granted sabbatical leave with or without pay must submit a written [Post-Sabbatical Leave Report](#), within 90 calendar days of the conclusion of the sabbatical leave period, of all activities and accomplishments.

Recipients of sabbatical leave are expected to return to the service of the University for a minimum of one (1) academic year after the completion of the leave. If a faculty member renders less than one (1) year of service to the University, then the compensation paid by the University to the faculty member during the sabbatical leave period must be repaid to the University by the faculty member in one (1) payment or prorated monthly payments until the balance of the paid leave is zero.



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VI. Guidelines for the Post-Sabbatical Leave Report

Within 90 calendar days after returning to the University, each sabbatical leave recipient shall forward the [Post-Sabbatical Leave Report](#) to include a description of activities and achievements, any variation from the original plan and recommendations to the appropriate College Dean.

Approval sequence of the [Post-Sabbatical Leave Report](#) is as follows:

1. College Dean
2. Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs
3. Sabbatical Review Committee
4. University President

The written sabbatical report shall be reviewed, by each of the aforementioned, as either meeting or not meeting the expected outcomes as listed in the [Sabbatical Leave Application](#).

The Chair of the Sabbatical Committee may send the sabbatical report back to the faculty member for revisions with written feedback. The faculty member must revise this report within 30 calendar days and resubmit it to the Sabbatical Committee. Once any revisions are approved, the report must move forward in the approval process.

The consequences of not achieving the expected outcomes following a sabbatical leave shall be that the faculty member is ineligible to submit a future sabbatical leave proposal until the faculty member achieves or produces an outcome acceptable to the appropriate College Dean and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. The timeframe for eligibility of a future sabbatical will not begin until a satisfactory product has been completed from a previous sabbatical leave.

Additionally, within the fall or spring semester following the completion of an approved sabbatical leave, faculty may give or display a professional presentation to the University regarding the outcomes associated with the approved project (or be required to do so by the University President).

VII. Responsibility for this Operating Policy

Policy Owner

As part of the initial approval of this policy by the President and subsequent to the original dissemination of the policy, the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs is the policy owner for



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the ongoing evaluation, review, and approval of this policy. Subsequent reviews and revisions to this policy must be in accordance with approved operating policy procedures and processes.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or more frequently as needed by the Policy Owner. Revisions will be reviewed/affirmed by the Faculty Senate and the Cabinet and approved by the University President. This policy will be updated/published in the University's Policy Library.

Responsibility for Policy Implementation

The President has assigned the responsibility of implementing this policy to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.