



## Sabbatical Leave Policy

*(Updated December 2019)*

### ELIGIBILITY

Faculty members with standard professorial titles (Full Professor/Associate Professor/Assistant Professor, regardless of tenure status), are eligible to take a sabbatical leave after each period of at least 12 full semesters of full-time service at Boston University. Any semester that includes a paid or unpaid leave, including bonding leave, medical leave, sabbatical leave, or junior scholar leave does not constitute full-time service to the University and does not count towards the minimum 12-semester eligibility requirement.

Faculty members are not eligible for sabbatical leave during the final year of their tenure review process, or during a terminal appointment year following tenure denial. In the event a tenure-track faculty member accumulates more than 12 semesters of full-time service prior to a positive tenure decision, a maximum of 2 semesters may be carried forward toward the next sabbatical.

Although faculty may be eligible to take a sabbatical, this is a privilege, not a right. Eligible faculty should discuss their candidacy with department chairs, not only to develop a meaningful scholarly development agenda, but also to ensure continued coverage of important teaching and service assignments during the sabbatical period. When approving applications at the Dean's Office, the faculty member's sabbatical proposal and department situation are factored in when making individual decisions.

### APPLICATION PROCESS & DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted to Faculty Actions by **the beginning of the spring semester** of the academic year before the sabbatical leave will be taken (if approved). **Exact deadlines are confirmed annually.** Applications must include the following:

- **Leave of Absence/Sabbatical Request Form** signed by candidate & Department Chair.
- **Sabbatical Leave Proposal** detailing the faculty member's plan for scholarly work or other activity leading to professional growth.
- **Chair Evaluation Form**, including a plan for adjustments to teaching/service coverage to account for the faculty member's absence.

Please note that in addition to the above elements, the research, teaching, and service records of the candidate are considered in Dean's Office decisions.

### POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Multiple faculty are often qualified to take sabbatical in a given year. The Department Chair manages these requests in the context of department needs and teaching/service activities, as well as the relative scholarly merit of the different cases under consideration. No more than two faculty in one department can be on sabbatical in a given academic year.
- If, in the opinion of the Chair and the Dean, department responsibilities are unable to be adjusted to take account of a faculty member's absence, the proposed sabbatical will be denied for that year. Denial on this basis may not occur for more than two consecutive years. Chairs requesting to defer a faculty member's sabbatical must submit a brief explanation of reasons for the deferral to the Dean's Office to ensure proper accounting.
- Additionally, the Dean's Office will allow voluntary sabbatical leave deferrals for up to 4 semesters when it is determined that a deferral would either contribute substantially to the professional development of the faculty member or would be beneficial to department teaching and/or service needs. Faculty requesting to defer a sabbatical must submit a brief explanation of the reasons for the deferral to their Department Chair and the Dean's Office to ensure proper accounting.
- In the event that a sabbatical is deferred on the basis of departmental or personal needs, the semester or year(s) of denial will be credited toward eligibility for the subsequent sabbatical.
- Approved sabbatical leaves may consist of either one-half academic year at full salary or one full academic year at half salary. The Dean's Office does not typically approve calendar year sabbaticals.
- The Dean's Office will normally not approve more than two consecutive semesters of leave of absence or sabbatical. Additionally, the Dean's Office will normally not approve more than four semesters of leave or sabbatical in any six-year period.
- In line with the philosophy that sabbatical is a time away from normal research and teaching for purposes of professional development, faculty are not allowed to earn compensation in executive education programs during sabbatical.
- Sabbaticals are intended for the engagement of scholarly activities that enhance the professional development and reputation of professorial faculty. Sabbatical proposals are approved based on their scholarly merit and faculty development benefits. Upon completion of the sabbatical, work products proposed in the application are shared with the Department Chair and Dean's Office.
- Except in extraordinary circumstances and by prior arrangement, acceptance of a sabbatical leave funded in any part by the University commits the faculty member to return to the University for a minimum of one year. **Faculty who do not return from an approved leave/sabbatical will be required to reimburse the salary paid by BU (and not supported by external sources) during the time of leave/sabbatical. Any exceptions must be approved by the Office of the Provost.**
- The Boston University Faculty Handbook provides additional information on sabbatical leave:  
<https://www.bu.edu/handbook/leaves-absences/sabbaticals-and-leaves-of-absence/>.