

## Chapter 13. Leaves of Absence

A faculty member on a leave of absence continues to hold their faculty appointment and to be an employee of the University. The employment relationship between the faculty member and the University is not severed during a leave of any sort: a faculty member on leave is eligible for certain benefits and services, and is expected to comply with all University policies and relevant expectations. Depending on the designation and the duration of the leave, the faculty member may continue health and dental coverage by paying the active employee premiums; contributions to the University's retirement plans are based on actual salary received from Brown.

Leaves, whether paid (sabbatical, leaves on special assignment, scholarly leave, or leave with "top-up") or unpaid (leaves of absence), may be taken for a semester or a year. Only in exceptional cases may a leave be extended beyond a single year; under no circumstances may it extend beyond two years. If a faculty member on leave with support from Brown (whether salary or top-up) requests a second year of leave, it may be granted, though only with the understanding that no support from Brown will be given.

Faculty members are expected to teach for at least four semesters between any two leaves, and no more than four semesters of leave of any kind is ordinarily possible during a seven-year period. Only in exceptional cases will leaves be granted off of the normal six- or twelve-semester cycle. Justification for such exceptions might include a request that a faculty member be on loan to a federal agency or had a personal emergency. Exceptions will not be granted simply because of available outside funding. Exceptional off-cycle leaves will generally delay the timing of future sabbaticals.

Applications for sabbatical leaves and for leaves of absence without pay for the following academic year, or any part thereof, should be sent to the Chair of the faculty member's department by the date announced annually by the dean; they should be forwarded to the appropriate divisional Dean by late-January. All leave requests should be discussed with the department Chair, who will review applications in the context of departmental needs. Each application for sabbatical leave should specify whether the leave is intended to be for one semester or a full year. Per rules of the Corporation, it should also state briefly how the leave will be spent. Under no circumstances will faculty members be granted leaves of absence from Brown University for more than two consecutive years. [Follow this link for the leave application form](#). The BioMed Faculty Leave Application Form can be found at <http://biomed.brown.edu/bmfa/forms.html>.

Opportunity for taking sabbatical or scholarly leave at regular intervals is not absolutely guaranteed by the University. Such leaves may be denied or postponed if the faculty member's performance has been substandard or if

the timing of the leave jeopardizes the integrity of the department's curriculum. Department Chairs are expected to arrange timing of leaves in such a way as to ensure the integrity of the curriculum of and service to the department.

### **13.1 Sabbatical Leave**

Sabbatical leave is granted only to regular faculty of professorial rank, and such officers of the University as the President may nominate.<sup>12</sup> It is granted in recognition of notable service through teaching and scholarly contributions and as aid and inspiration to further achievement in these areas. Tenured faculty are eligible for sabbatical leave under the terms of the policy which became effective in July 2008, as revised in 2022. Tenure-track faculty may be awarded junior faculty sabbaticals (see below) and faculty recently promoted and tenured at Brown may be awarded post-tenure sabbaticals.

As established by the Corporation, sabbatical leave is "intended to provide teachers with opportunities for scholarly development and contacts which shall contribute to their professional effectiveness and to the value of their later services to Brown University. It is not intended that such leave shall be used primarily for purposes of rest and recuperation." Sabbaticals are viewed as an investment in the faculty member's future professional contributions to the University. Accordingly, a sabbatical ordinarily may not be taken during the year prior to a faculty member's retirement or resignation. Faculty members who do leave the employment of the University within a year after a paid leave may be required to reimburse the University for compensation (salary and benefits) received during the leave.

Under the sabbatical policy applying to tenured faculty, a faculty member is eligible to request a sabbatical leave of absence for one semester at full salary following six semesters in residence. In the case where a faculty member receives a prestigious external fellowship, they may also request a one-semester unpaid leave of absence, normally in the same academic year as the sabbatical.

If a sabbatical leave is not taken after six semesters in residence, the faculty member may continue teaching for an additional six semesters (twelve semesters total), after which time the sabbatical leave may be taken for an entire academic year at full salary. Sabbatical semesters may not be banked beyond a full year of leave, and any further time accrued toward sabbatical will be forfeit unless a prior written arrangement has been made with the cognizant Dean or the delay was the result of one of the limited number of service roles enumerated by the faculty member's Dean. Unless planned in advance as part of the multi-year academic planning process, delayed sabbaticals may not normally be taken off-cycle; that is, they may be taken after six or twelve semesters, but not normally after seven or nine semesters, e.g. In cases where such off-cycle sabbaticals are approved, they will result in loss of credit toward

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<sup>12</sup> Faculty on phased retirement are not eligible for, and do not accrue credit toward, sabbatical leaves.

future sabbatical leaves unless the change in timing was the result of one of the limited number of service roles enumerated by the faculty member's Dean.

### **Compensation while on Leave**

Faculty may not normally receive compensation from another institution or funding source while on a paid leave beyond the normal consulting policy. An exception will be made for faculty members on fully paid leave who receive supplemental funds from an outside source that are paid through Brown. In this case, payment of up to three summer months (each month being equal to one-ninth of the faculty member's base academic year salary) is allowable. External funds that are paid through Brown and are in excess of three summer months will be used to cover part of the sabbatical salary that would otherwise have been paid by Brown and the faculty member will receive a research fund equal to 70% of the salary savings.<sup>13</sup>

Faculty on unpaid or partially-paid leave may accept compensation from outside sources. In such cases, it is important to note that faculty must continue to abide by Brown's [Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy](#), the [University Code of Conduct](#), the [Conflict of Interest in Research Policy](#), and all other policies governing University employees. All outside employment and appointments (whether compensated or not) should be reported to the cognizant Dean and via the University's [Conflict of Interest Reporting process](#).

#### **13.1.1 Junior Faculty Sabbatical**

A special program of sabbatical leaves exists for non-tenured faculty (i.e., "junior sabbaticals.") Recommendations for such leaves should be made by chairs to the appropriate Dean and be accompanied by a sabbatical plan as described above. Junior faculty may request one semester of paid leave, or they may request a year's leave at half salary, or combine this year's leave with internal support (e.g. Wriston fellowship) or external support (grant or fellowship, possibly with top-up), to have the full year for research. Junior sabbaticals are normally taken in the third or fourth year.

Untenured faculty are expected to be in residence for a minimum of three semesters between any two leaves. Because leaves decrease teaching time, department chairs should advise untenured colleagues about the importance of establishing a good teaching record as well as an active research program.

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<sup>13</sup> This incentive applies only to faculty reporting to the Dean of the Faculty.

### **13.1.2 Post-Tenure Sabbatical**

Faculty promoted from Assistant Professor at Brown to Associate Professor at Brown, with tenure, are eligible to apply for a post-tenure sabbatical. The post-tenure sabbatical will normally be requested in the year after tenure has been granted and taken in the following year. The sabbatical may be taken as a semester at full salary or a year at 75 percent of salary. While the post-tenure sabbatical may be delayed for up to two semesters without affecting the timing of future leaves, it may not normally be taken early. The clock for regular sabbaticals starts in the second year after tenure, excluding any semesters that a faculty member is on leave.

### **13.2 Salary Supplement during Leave (“Top-up”)**

Faculty who receive a prestigious external fellowship may request an unpaid semester of leave, normally in the same academic year as a sabbatical semester. If the external fellowship does not cover the faculty member’s full salary for the semester, they may request a salary supplement from the office of their cognizant dean. Such supplements are not guaranteed, and are only available in conjunction with prestigious awards. Such top-ups are limited to a maximum of the size of the external award. In no case will a top-up result in total compensation (including external funds) above the semester base salary. There is one exception to this policy; faculty receiving Guggenheim Fellowships may be eligible for a top-up to full salary for the semester of leave.

### **13.3 Scholarly Leave**

Scholarly leave may be granted to Lecturers, Senior Lecturers and Distinguished Senior Lecturers. Again, according to the Corporation, the purpose is “to enhance scholarship and/or teaching through a plan of study, research, or other appropriate activity as approved by the Dean of the Faculty.”

Lecturers, Senior Lecturers and Distinguished Senior Lecturers who are regular faculty members are eligible for scholarly leave (one semester at full salary) following twelve semesters of full-time teaching. Those with contingent appointments are not eligible for scholarly leave.

### **13.4 Leave on Special Assignment**

“Leaves on Special Assignment” are defined as leaves with salary from the University. Such leaves in which the source of funds is the instructional budget are rare and must be arranged directly with the appropriate divisional Dean.

A Leave on Special Assignment is viewed as an investment in the faculty member's future professional contributions to the University. Accordingly, a Leave on Special Assignment may not ordinarily be taken during the semester prior to a faculty member's retirement or contract expiration date. Faculty members who do leave the employment of the University immediately after a Leave on Special Assignment may be required to reimburse the University for compensation (salary and benefits) received during the leave.

### **13.5 Unpaid Leaves**

A leave of absence is without regular salary from Brown. Faculty may normally only take a leave of absence for academic reasons when they would otherwise be scheduled to take a sabbatical, or in the second semester of a year in which they are taking a sabbatical.

### **13.6 Illness and Medically Defined Disability**

All University employees are covered by the Family Medical Leave Act and by relevant Rhode Island laws. Details regarding terms and eligibility may be obtained from the Human Resources Office.

Regular faculty who must be absent for illness or other disability retain their salaries from the University for up to six months, or until the time that they may be eligible for long-term disability payments under the University's insurance plan, if that is sooner. The period of such medical leaves will, where possible, coincide with the dates of the fall (July 1–December 31) or spring (January 1–June 30) semester.

In order for a medical leave to be granted, the faculty member's physician should provide documentation attesting to the need for the leave; returning from a medical leave also normally requires supporting documentation. No more than one six-month medical leave will ordinarily be granted within a two-year period.

No extension of a paid medical leave beyond this maximum six-month period should be anticipated, and any faculty member whose medical condition is likely to persist beyond that period is advised to consult with the Benefits Office regarding initiating an application for long-term disability insurance.

During any University-paid medical leave, the department is expected to arrange for coverage of the faculty member's responsibilities without recourse to making new appointments to the faculty.

Note: in the case of an untenured, tenure-track faculty member, medical leaves are not counted as part of the probationary period.

In the case where a regular faculty member takes a leave of absence to care for a member of their household, they will be eligible for 40 hours of paid time off under Rhode Island law. They should work with their dean's office to arrange for this paid time. Sick time, regardless of accrual method, is not paid out upon termination.

In cases in which the faculty member is supported by grants or contracts, the duration of the medical leave will vary according to medical need as determined by the physician, but should not exceed six months. Salary while on medical leave continues to be paid from these sources, in proportion to effort and subject to the availability of funding.

Postdoctoral scholars receive paid medical leave under a plan described on the website of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs. All other term faculty will receive a bank of 40 hours per year of paid sick time, which is the maximum amount required by Rhode Island law.

### **13.6.1 Parental Leave**

Term faculty members (excluding Postdocs, see below) who average 75 percent effort or greater and who are on a contract of a year or more or who have been at Brown continuously for at least a year, who become natural or adoptive parents and are the primary caregiver of a newborn or newly adopted child, are automatically eligible for six weeks' leave with salary. In cases in which the faculty member is supported by grants or contracts, the salary while on parental leave continues to be paid from these sources when possible, in proportion to effort and subject to the availability of funding. In cases where the faculty member averaged less than full time before the leave, salary will be adjusted in proportion to average effort over the prior year. The weeks of leave must be taken consecutively and must be taken within 12 weeks of the birth or placement for adoption.

Regular faculty members are eligible for Parental Teaching Relief in lieu of parental leave. See below, 13.7.

Postdoctoral Fellows, Postdoctoral Research Fellows, and Postdoctoral Research Associates are covered by the policies described on the [Postdocs at Brown website](#).

### **13.6.2 Time Off for Postdoctoral Researchers**

Postdoctoral Fellows and Postdoctoral Research Fellows Because Postdoctoral Fellows are not employees, the University does not provide them with vacation time. While Postdoctoral Research Fellows are employees, they are not benefits eligible. It is best practice for both categories of fellows to plan some personal time during the year and an allocation of ten days is recommended to align with the time away for Postdoctoral Research Associates. Fellows should arrange their work schedules with their PI and department, and ensure their time away is consistent with the terms and conditions of their funding source. Brown assigns ten vacation days in Workday to each fellow at the start of their appointment, though these are intended for tracking purposes only and do not signify that the University

provides vacation as a benefit. If fellows or PIs need assistance in establishing an equitable plan for time away from work, they are encouraged to contact the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.

Postdoctoral Research Associates All Postdoctoral Research Associates who work 50 percent time or greater and are exempt employees begin their appointment with 10 vacation days available to them. (Vacation days for part-time postdocs are paid in proportion to effort.) Vacation plans should always be arranged in advance with the PI or sponsoring department. Vacation time must be requested through the *Time Off* application in Workday.

Vacation days are provided on an annual basis. If the appointment is renewed, the vacation balance will be reset to 10 days on the first day of the month of the reappointment date, regardless of the number of vacation days remaining from the prior appointment. Postdoctoral Research Associates (but not fellows) who have been employed by Brown for a year or more will receive a pay-out for unused vacation days when their employment at the university ends. This pay-out will come from the sources from which the postdoc is paid if and to the extent allowable (in proportion to the effort devoted to each source). For that reason, postdocs and PIs are encouraged to plan for postdocs to use their vacation time during their employment. Unlike staff, postdocs may choose to take vacation days at the end of their appointment.

### **13.6.3 Unpaid Personal Leave**

Faculty may be eligible for unpaid family and medical leaves under federal and state law due to personal illness or disability; childbirth and/or care of the employee's newborn; placement and/or care of a newly adopted or foster child; or care of a spouse, same-sex domestic partner, child, or parent with a serious health condition.

Federal and state law provide for up to 12 weeks of leave during a 12-month period (FMLA) or 13 weeks of leave during a 24-month period (RIPFML). If an employee is entitled to a leave benefit under both federal (FMLA) and state laws, the leave periods will be served concurrently. To be eligible, the employee must have been employed for 12 months and worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 month period immediately preceding the leave.

Please contact the Benefits Office for further information.

### **13.7 Parental Teaching Relief**

Brown University provides one semester of classroom teaching relief for faculty members who are primary caregivers for newborn children or newly adopted children. This is not considered to be a leave, and the faculty member's responsibilities to conduct research, advise students, and participate in University and departmental affairs remain unchanged. This policy is intended to provide sufficient time to faculty members coping with the demands of being primary caregiver to an infant or newly adopted child. See Chapter 7.8.3.

### **13.8 Benefits During Leave**

During sabbatical leave, benefits and salary, though not charged to the department, do continue as for other active faculty. During other leaves, the University's usual contributions to medical and dental premiums continue, with the faculty member responsible for making arrangements to pay their premiums. If the insurance is to be canceled during leave, the Benefits Office should be notified of both cancellation and reinstatement. For paid disability and parental leaves the University continues to pay those portions of health, dental, life insurance, and disability insurance for which the faculty member is ordinarily eligible. Contributions to retirement accounts are based on actual salary received from Brown.

For questions concerning benefits while on leave, faculty should contact the Benefits Office or the Office of the appropriate divisional dean.