Sabbatical Proposals: FAQ

How do I find out when I'm eligible for sabbatical leave?
Check with the Human Resources Office. By March 15 each year, the Human Resources Office provides the academic deans with the names of faculty members eligible to apply for sabbatical at the beginning of the upcoming Fall semester. The deans then send a notice to each eligible person as a reminder, indicating sources of assistance and relevant information.

How often can I apply for a sabbatical?
Sabbatical leaves may be granted after six cumulative years of full-time service. If you previously had a sabbatical at Grand Valley, your eligibility will be calculated from the semester the Provost received and accepted your required sabbatical report.

How do I apply for a sabbatical?
Apply online at [www.gvsu.edu/sabbatical](http://www.gvsu.edu/sabbatical). Click on “Apply for Sabbatical” and follow the directions. A template for the Sabbatical Leave Request is available at the same site as is “Guidelines for Writing a Successful Sabbatical Proposal.”

When are sabbatical proposals due?
You may submit your proposal at your convenience, but the absolute deadline for submitting your proposal is **11:59 PM on September 1.**

How should I write my proposal (especially the Project Plan)? Can I get help?
Try to write clear, easy-to-understand prose that is specific but not overly technical. Remember, as your proposal goes through the system, readers of your proposal will include colleagues who may not be familiar with your discipline or with the particular focus of your study. There are two useful resources you should consult, both found on the sabbatical website: “Guidelines for Writing a Successful Sabbatical Proposal” and “Sample Proposals” that you can review. It also makes good sense to share drafts of your proposal with your colleagues and/or with someone at the Writing Center.

Does my proposal have to address all three of the objectives listed in the Board of Trustees Policies?
No, the language says “one or more.” The list of objectives actually may help sharpen your thinking about your own project. Your proposal should explicitly address which objective(s) your project will meet.

Does my proposal have to address all seven criteria of the Sabbatical Leave Request?
Yes, you must address all seven criteria in your proposal.
Does the scope of my project fit the time commitment expected of a sabbatical leave? How is this considered?
As with any sabbatical application, significance, scope and dissemination are critical factors. As the Board of Trustees Policies states: the scope of the sabbatical project should require the faculty member to have one or two (or three in the case of faculty with 12-month contracts) semesters of continuous release from normal teaching and service responsibilities. The sabbatical project should not be accomplishable in shorter intervals with other forms of assistance available. A request for sabbatical leave must be accompanied by a well-developed proposal for use of the leave time.

It is expected that the project include a strong and timely dissemination plan at an academic venue, and that the work clearly has an impact within, as well as beyond the University. Finally, it is necessary for the proposal to have support that it can be implemented in the department(s) it is intended to serve.

I have a rough draft of my proposal ready. How long can I continue to edit it?
You can continue to edit your proposal until September 1 and/or until you click “Submit Application” on the www.gvsu.edu/sabbatical site. Once you click “Submit Application” the system will not permit you to modify your application unless your Unit requests changes (see below).

What role does the Unit review play in the process?
The Unit first decides whether or not to recommend your proposal. In its review, the Unit may identify issues that should be addressed and request that you make certain changes to your proposal. Their request allows you to go back into the system to make the necessary changes before the proposal is sent to the College review committee (see above).

My proposal hinges on my getting a grant, but I will not know whether or not I will get it until after the deadline. Now what do I do?
Write your proposal assuming that you will receive external funding. Email early and often with your Unit Head (who will be trying to work out contingency plans for your replacement) and reference the communication between the two of you in your proposal. Include in your proposal the date by which you will know the outcome of the funding request.

If my sabbatical involves human or animal subject research, do I need additional approvals?
Yes. If the project involves human or animal subject research, the project must be approved by the appropriate Institutional Review Board. For human subject research, contact the Human Research Review Committee (HRRC); and for animal subject research, contact the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

Part of my work involves collaboration with colleagues in another country. What evidence of collaboration is required?
You should provide the names, titles, and institutions of your collaborators as well as a written statement from each of them that acknowledges their understanding and agreement of the collaboration and the dates that you have proposed.
What if my proposal is not recommended by my Unit? Or the College Sabbatical Review Committee? Or the University Sabbatical Review Committee?
An applicant whose proposal received a negative recommendation may appeal the decision to the next level of review; thus, for example, a negative recommendation by the Unit would be appealed to the College level review committee. If, on appeal, the next level of review overturns a negative recommendation, they must provide their rationale for overturning the negative recommendation made by the previous level of review. They must also present their rationale for recommending the proposal in light of the requirements outlined in the criteria and objectives of the Board of Trustees Policies. However, if a proposal receives negative recommendations at two stages of review (Unit, College, Dean, University Sabbatical Review Committee, or Provost), it dies for that academic year and may not be considered by higher levels of review.

What if my proposal is recommended by the University Sabbatical Review Committee but there are not enough funds for all of the recommended proposals?
The Unit, College, Dean, and University review the proposals and recommend those with sufficient merit. The University Sabbatical Review Committee is required to rank the proposals they recommend to the Provost. The Provost determines which of the recommended proposals will be approved. When there are not enough funds to approve all the recommended proposals, the Provost will make the final funding decisions based on the tiered classifications provided by the University Sabbatical Review Committee. Applicants whose sabbatical proposal were recommended by the University Sabbatical Review Committee but not approved by the Provost due to inadequate funding are invited to reapply the following year.

What if my Unit Head asks me to delay my approved sabbatical?
The decision to delay an approved sabbatical because of staffing problems will be made by the Dean after consultation with the appropriate Unit Head (see Board of Trustees Policies). Applicants whose approved sabbaticals are delayed because of staffing problems will receive a written explanation from the Dean. If an applicant’s approved sabbatical is delayed because of staffing problems, the applicant will be awarded a sabbatical the following year without reapplication or review.

If my project was delayed a year due to staffing problems, doesn’t that alter the time of my future eligibility for a sabbatical?
No. A faculty member whose approved sabbatical is delayed because of staffing problems will not be required to wait an additional six years from the later date before becoming eligible to apply for another sabbatical, but will be eligible to apply six years from the original eligibility year, provided an approved sabbatical report is on file for the delayed sabbatical.

What if my project, delayed due to staffing problems the previous year, has changed?
If there are alterations in the sabbatical proposal or delays beyond one year, then the applicant must seek approval of alterations as outlined in the Board of Trustees Policies.
How does my salary get paid and health coverage work when I’m on sabbatical? How are grant dollars figured in?
Benefits continue as usual. Faculty receive full salary when on leave for one academic semester and fifty percent of base salary when on leave for two academic semesters. Applicants for sabbatical leave must specify other salaries, grants, fellowships, or financial support they expect to receive (or do receive) during the period of the leave. The combined incomes from such sources and the sabbatical grant shall not exceed the faculty member's normal salary plus expenses incurred because of the sabbatical leave.

What if I have to change the focus of my approved sabbatical?
If a faculty member finds it necessary to alter the original project approved for the sabbatical leave by the Provost, then three months before the sabbatical would have commenced the faculty member must submit a revised proposal to the appropriate College Dean for review as outlined in the Board of Trustees Policies.

What are my obligations to GVSU when I return from sabbatical?
- Regular appointment with GVSU for at least one full academic year after the sabbatical period.
- Submission of a Sabbatical Report no later than the end of the first semester after your return to campus to www.gvsu.edu/sabbatical.
- Dissemination of the results of your sabbatical. In the year after your leave, you are to disseminate the results of your sabbatical to an audience of your colleagues in an appropriate venue within your college or the University.

Where can I find the full GVSU policy for sabbaticals?
The full policy is posted in the Board of Trustees Policies. You can access the Board of Trustees Policies at https://www.gvsu.edu/policies/.