



## **Guidelines for Writing a Successful Sabbatical Proposal**

### **Overview**

The sabbatical is a focused time for faculty scholarship or creative exploration in your field. It provides the opportunity for the faculty member to learn, develop or enhance understanding or skills that will improve the applicant's teaching, scholarly/creative and/or professional competence beyond their significant focus. A successful sabbatical energizes the faculty member and pushes scholarship or creative goals forward in ways that are not possible during a normal semester. To make the most of this time the focus should be on good planning, well in advance of your application. Since this is a scholarly endeavor for which the university is providing salaried support, the faculty member is required to demonstrate in the application planning, preparation, and the potential for a successful outcome.

The goal of the university is for all eligible faculty members to be able to take advantage of this privilege that we, as academicians, share. This document highlights the elements of a well-prepared sabbatical proposal. By offering full transparency into how the college and university sabbatical review committees will read the proposals, we hope to make the application process as straightforward as possible. A well-planned, good idea makes it easier to write a successful proposal.

When you are preparing your proposal, keep the following **general guidelines** in mind:

1. Demonstrate that you have planned in advance to reach your sabbatical goals.
2. The proposal itself should be well written and geared toward a general audience of non-specialists. The faculty members reading your proposal come from a wide variety of disciplines. This is your idea; convey the story and its relevance to a general academic audience.
3. Be sure to address completely all of the elements of the application in the order listed. (Following directions is an important step in a successful proposal.)
4. Your proposal should not exceed 10 pages, excluding references and other supporting documents.

The college and university sabbatical review committees wish you success in crafting an excellent sabbatical proposal and will be glad to answer any questions you have.

## **Criteria-by-Criteria Guide**

### **1. Descriptive Title for the Project (self-explanatory)**

### **2. Goals and Objectives**

Applicants occasionally mix together elements of criteria 2, 3, 4 and 5 and the clarity of the proposal has suffered. Criteria 2 is the part of your proposal where you should present the big picture written for a general audience. In writing this section, keep the following points in mind:

- What is your idea and what is it that you propose to do?
- What are your goals and/or desired results or outcomes of the proposed work?
- Explain clearly how your proposal addresses one or more of the objectives listed in this section. This appraisal should be realistic; your project need not address all of these objectives.

### **3. Background and Significance of Project**

This section should provide the relevant background information for a non-specialist to understand your project. We offer the following guidelines:

- Why is this scholarship, pedagogy, creative exploration, expansion of skills, or retraining interesting/significant in the context of your field or professional development? Specifically, discuss scholarship beyond your own work.
- Depending on the standards of your discipline, this section can take the form of a literature review, a comparison to similar projects, a description of how this fits within the broader dialogue or artistic tradition, or how it will improve your professional competence.

### **4. Relevant Preparation**

This section should outline and/or demonstrate the planning and preparation that has already been done toward the completion of your sabbatical project. We offer the following guidelines:

- Show that you are/will be ready to do the work. Speak to the preparations (prior experience, expertise, connections that you have established, etc.) that you have made to this point. If a book is being written, append an outline or table of contents to demonstrate that groundwork has been laid.
- Sabbaticals may be used to move into new areas or initiate larger projects, but in these cases it is necessary to explain briefly how you will approach this change from your previous work. If the proposed line of scholarship, pedagogy, or creative activity represents a new focus from previous work/accomplishments as evidenced in your CV, please explain how you are prepared for this new endeavor. Our intent here is only to compare the scope of the project to the previous scholarly output as a way to assess if the project is reasonable as proposed.

- Do you need approval from IRB (governing work with human subjects), IACUC (governing work with animals) and Biosafety in order to conduct your work? Please indicate this at the appropriate prompts within the sabbatical portal (no special pre-review required for IRB, as in previous years). Approval for your sabbatical is on the condition that approval from relevant committees will be obtained prior to the start of your sabbatical.

## **5. Project Plan**

In this section you will explain how you will actually do the work. This section may include detail relevant for experts in your field, but try to keep the non-specialist reader in mind. A key point is to explain why the scope of this project requires time away from teaching and service responsibilities. Many successful proposals will specifically address the following (as appropriate):

- How will you do what you propose?
- What specific activities will you engage in?
- Be sure to relate this plan directly to the goals and desired outcomes presented under Goals and Objectives.
- Explain how you will obtain external funding, if required.

## **6. Timeline**

This section is often neglected but it need not be a burden on the applicant. An artificial timeline (e.g., “I will write xx many pages per day”) is not a valuable exercise for the applicant or the reader; however, it is reasonable to assume that various aspects of the project will take different amounts of time. This section should demonstrate that you have thought about how long these activities should take in the context of your field. Use the following guiding ideas:

- Be sure to include this element; we need to see your timeline. Feel free to use a table or line representation depending on what makes sense for your project.
- Describe to people unfamiliar with your work how long you anticipate certain activities will take.
- How does your project plan fit into the available time?
- Indicate clearly what, if any, portions of the proposed timeline have already been achieved, and what will be done during the sabbatical.

It can be helpful to the reviewers to include the planned activities of any “bookend” summer semesters in your timeline to demonstrate the long-term planning/preparation for your project.

## **7. Benefit to one’s own or other units.**

In a short paragraph, tie your project into other aspects of your work on campus. A clear relationship between the proposed sabbatical leave and a proposer’s academic unit shall be demonstrated. These connections are often easily made and the applicant need not write extensively here. The connection may be (but is not limited to) one of the following:

- Does the proposed work connect to your teaching or pedagogical development?
- Does it connect to your current or a developing scholarly trajectory?
- Does it have a positive impact on other units in an interdisciplinary way?

## Supporting Documents

### a. *Curriculum Vitae* (not to exceed 5 pages)

Attach a condensed copy of your CV focused on your scholarly or creative accomplishments, especially those most relevant to the nature of the proposed work. If your normal CV exceeds 5 pages, please condense it to this length by eliminating some of the information not relevant to your sabbatical application.

### b. Arrangements with people at other institutions

If your project depends on the help of collaborators, is occurring at another institution or location, or involves the use of facilities at another location, you must provide a letter from the parties involved to document any agreement about these arrangements. This letter (or these letters) should:

- If possible, be on letterhead; if not, they should come from a verifiable professional email address.
- Demonstrate that the writer understands the proposer's expectations. This should align with your expectations that you have detailed in the project plan and demonstrate a broad understanding of what the project entails. A letter that only acknowledges that you are coming to an institution does not demonstrate that it will be able to provide what you need to succeed.
- If the letter is not in English, please provide translation.

### c. Other supporting documentation

Supporting documents *may* include:

- Book outline or table of contents in support of criteria 5
- Bibliography or reading list

You are not required to solicit additional letters of support for your proposal. However, if there is some extraordinary circumstance that you feel requires additional supporting letters or documentation it could be included here. This is not a place to attach reprints of papers, scholarly writings or past creative works.