General information

Types of leave

Faculty members may request three types of leave:

A) Leave of Absence (Unpaid Leave)

An absence which meets all of the following criteria:

- Unpaid
- Full days
- Continuous for 30 days or longer
- Does not have a balance of hours to track (e.g. Sick Leave)

B) Leave from the Instructional Budget (Release Time)

Faculty member continues to hold their regular appointment and is paid from non-instructional funding sources administered by the University. Includes Faculty Research Assignments (FRA) and Summer Research Assignments (SRA).

C) Time Off

Can be paid or unpaid, full or partial days, continuous or intermittent, and may involve a balance of hours being tracked. Includes Sick Leave and Family Medical Leave (FML).

General process

For all leave types (excluding paid Time Off) during the academic year September 1-May 31, the Faculty Request for Leave form must be completed and submitted, and must include the following:

- Justification explaining why the leave is in the best interests of the university
- How it will increase the teaching effectiveness or scholarly productivity of the individual
- What the faculty member will be doing while on leave
- Sources of compensation during leave, if any
- See specific leave types below for additional information and instructions

When a leave of absence without pay is requested for significant personal reasons (e.g., parental leave), the reason for the leave should be stated on the leave request form. If the leave is for health reasons, the nature of the condition should not be specified; “medical leave” is sufficient.

Requests for all types of leave must be submitted in advance to the Dean’s Office by the following deadlines:

- Fall semester: Last Friday in July
- Spring semester: Last Friday in November

Leave of Absence and Unpaid Time Off require second-level approval by the Provost’s Office. Leave from the Instructional Budget is final-approved with the Dean.

See more detailed instructions for each leave type in the section below.

Resources

- HOP 2-210: Faculty Leaves and Special Academic Assignments
- EVPP: Leave and Related Policies (Currently under review)

Processes for requesting leave by type

A) Leave of Absence (Unpaid Leave)

A period of leave during which the faculty member does not receive compensation from any source of funds administered by the University for either all or part of his or her regular appointment. Leave may be taken for personal or research reasons.
The maximum leave that can be approved is one academic year, i.e., through the end of the fiscal year in which the leave begins. Leaves without pay for up to one year are granted under most circumstances, provided the department so recommends and can make satisfactory arrangements for staffing any classes the faculty member is scheduled to teach. Except for reasons of health, continued graduate study, and public service or other activity that reflects credit on the institution and enhances an individual's ability to make subsequent contributions to the institution, a second consecutive year of leave will not be granted. Requests for extensions of a leave without pay for a second academic year must be fully justified, and in no case should a faculty member assume approval of an extension of more than one year. Except in very unusual circumstances, a third consecutive leave of absence for one year will not be granted.

University policy does not limit the number of non-consecutive Leaves of Absence that may be approved for a faculty member, but that number may be limited by a department chair or dean.

Considerations of unpaid leave:

- Probationary status: An academic year during which a faculty member is on leave without pay from the University for all of the fall and/or spring semester(s) is not counted as part of the probationary period related to the acquisition of tenure.

- Benefits: Faculty members who will be on partial or full-time leave without pay should contact the appropriate Rewards Team member in the Office of Human Resources to ascertain the effect of the leave on their medical insurance and retirement benefits (HR representative lookup).

- Principal Investigators: Faculty who will be absent from campus and who serve as Principal Investigators also should determine whether any arrangements need to be made with their funding agencies for disposition of their grant(s).

Process

Complete a Faculty Request for Leave Form (PDF) according to the instructions in “General Process” on page 1. If approved and signed by the department chair, email completed request to the Office of the Dean EA. Approval is at the discretion of the department chair, Dean, and the Provost's Office.

Resources

- HOP 2-210: Faculty Leaves and Special Academic Assignments - see section I. A. for LWOP

B) Leave from Instructional Budget

A faculty member on Leave from the Instructional Budget (Release Time) continues to hold a full-time appointment paid from a funding source(s) administered by the University.

Types of Leave from Instructional Budget include Faculty Research Assignments (FRA) and Summer Research Assignment (SRA). Successful applications for FRAs also require submission of a Faculty Request for Leave form; SRAs do not require a Faculty Request for Leave form.

This category of leave comprises research appointments to contracts and grants administered by the University, Faculty Development Program awards and other non-faculty salaries, institutional research awards, and awards from external funding agencies when the funds are administered by the University. The maximum leave that can be approved at any one time is one academic year, i.e., through the end of the fiscal year in which the leave begins. When an exception is made to the one-year maximum leave, a separate request must be submitted for extension of a leave from the instructional budget.

When a leave from the instructional budget is funded using institutional sources (e.g., Faculty Development Program), one of the factors considered in awarding the leave is the benefit that will accrue to the University. Therefore, the recipient of such an award is expected to return to his or her normal duties at the University for the period of at least the academic year following the leave. If the recipient elects not to return, he or she shall have an obligation to reimburse the institution for University funds expended in support of the leave.

University policy does not limit the release time (percent time or frequency) that may be approved for a faculty member, but that amount may be limited by a department chair or dean.

Important information for Instructors and Assistant Professors:

A period during which a faculty member with the academic rank of Instructor or Assistant Professor holds a full-time appointment in the University for both the fall and spring semesters of an academic year while on leave from the instructional budget (i.e., is appointed full-time from any combination of funding sources administered by the University) shall be counted as part of the probationary period related to the acquisition of tenure.
Process

Complete a Faculty Request for Leave Form (PDF) according to the instructions in “General Process” on page 1. If approved and signed by the department chair, email completed request to the Office of the Dean EA. Approval is at the discretion of the department chair and Dean.

Resources

- HOP 2-210: Faculty Leaves and Special Academic Assignments - see section I.
  B. for Leave from the Instructional Budget

See additional information on FRAs and SRAs:

- COE: Faculty Research Assignment (FRA)
- COE: Summer Research Assignment (SRA)

C) Time Off

Time Off may be paid or unpaid, full or partial days, continuous or intermittent, and may involve a balance of hours being tracked. Types of Time Off include Sick Leave and Family Medical Leave. Information about each type is below.

Sick Leave

Per state law, faculty at an institution of higher education must submit sick leave taken if the absence occurs during the normal workday for regular employees, even when no classes were missed.

Sick leave may be used for the following:

1) Employee's Medical Condition. Sick leave may be taken when an employee is prevented from performing duties because of sickness, injury, or confinement due to pregnancy.

2) Care of Immediate Family. Sick leave may be taken when an employee needs to care for an immediate family member who is actually ill because of sickness, injury, or confinement due to pregnancy.

   Immediate family member is defined as those individuals who live in the same household as the employee and are related by kinship, adoption, or marriage; or are foster children certified by the Texas Department of Child Protective and Regulatory Services; and an employee’s minor child regardless of whether the child lives in the same household.

   a) Care of Family Who Do Not Reside in the Same Household. An employee’s sick leave used to care for family who do not reside in the same household is strictly limited to the time necessary to provide care to the employee’s spouse, child or parent who needs such care as a direct result of a documented medical condition.

   b) Parent-Teacher Conferences. An employee may use up to eight (8) hours of sick leave each calendar year to attend parent-teacher conferences for the employee’s children who are in pre-kindergarten through the twelfth grade.

Use of sick leave does not affect the tenure clock.

Sick Leave is accrued proportionally to an employee’s appointment. (e.g. full-time (40 hours) = 8 hours a month. Faculty accumulate unused accruals throughout all years of service.

If all available paid leave has been exhausted due to a "catastrophic condition", eligible employees may apply for up to 720 additional hours through the university Sick Leave Pool.

When a faculty member retires or resigns with a remaining sick leave balance, the balance can be donated to the university Sick Leave Pool or to a colleague. If hours are donated to an individual, there may be tax implications for the recipient.

If an active faculty member passes away, either 336 or half of their accrued sick leave hours, whichever is smaller, is paid to the family’s estate.

Process

Sick Leave taken is submitted via Workday. See the Workday Instructional Guide (W.I.G.) “Request Sick Leave – Faculty”
Family Medical Leave (FML)

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is an unpaid leave which provides job protection and insurance premium sharing for eligible employees for serious medical conditions, childbirth, adoption, or care for family members. FML is used concurrently with Sick and Unpaid Leaves. Up to 480 hours (12 weeks per year) may be awarded, which may be used either continuously or intermittently.

Family and Medical Leave may be used for the following conditions:

- A serious health condition
- Birth and care of your child
- Adopting or fostering a child
- Care of spouse, child, or parent
- Qualifying exigency
- Military caregiver leave

If an employee with approved FML runs out of paid Sick Leave hours, FML provides premium sharing to cover health insurance.

Process

See Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) on central HR’s website for additional information and application forms.

Resources

- EVPP: Family and Medical Leave Act
- HR: Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Includes online application and related forms
- HOP 5-4310: Family and Medical Leave
- HOP 5-4330: Parental Leave
- HOP 5-4320: Foster Parent Leave

Please send suggested additions to this page and notifications about broken links to COE-HR@austin.utexas.edu.