

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING**

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE
POLICY**

Proposal

A leave of absence is a temporary separation of a faculty member from the University during which the faculty member is not paid from funds administered by the University except for such fringe benefit programs as may be permitted by State regulations (*FPP 7.20*). Leaves of absence may be full-time or partial time.

For probationary faculty, a distinction is made between leaves during which the tenure clock is extended and leaves during which the tenure clock continues; this distinction is discussed in Section B, below.

Additional policies apply when leaves are requested by faculty members who have accepted outside offers; please refer to Section C, below.

Faculty members who continue to be pay-rolled through the University are not considered to be on leave of absence even though they are not being paid on 101 funds. Departments are expected to report such funding shifts to the Dean as soon as they are aware of the change. Such reporting is crucial if the College is to maintain accurate financial projections which affect decisions such as short-term staffing.

- A. Tenured Faculty.** Leaves for tenured faculty members are granted by the Dean and require the affirmative recommendation of the departmental executive committee. Requests for leaves of absence for tenured faculty should be sent to the Dean and must include a covering memo which explains why the department supports the request and how teaching duties will be covered during the period of absence and a copy of the faculty member's request for the leave. A separate request for each faculty member for whom a leave is requested must be submitted to the Dean.
- B. Probationary Faculty.** As noted above, leaves for probationary faculty are divided into those during which the tenure clock is stopped and those during which it continues. A true "leave of absence" for a probationary faculty member is one during which the tenure clock is interrupted; such leaves must be approved by the Provost in consultation with the University Committee as well as by the Dean. "Temporary assignments" are similar to leaves of absence but do not extend the tenure clock. Normally, if the activity to be undertaken during the leave will serve to promote the probationary faculty member's achievements for tenure, the leave will be considered a "temporary assignment." When a department requests that a probationary faculty member be granted a true "leave of absence," the reasons for doing so should be clearly explained in the request letter. Extension of the tenure clock as a result of a leave of absence is not automatic. The faculty member requesting the leave must request in writing the extension of the tenure clock. When appropriate, the Dean will then forward the request along with an

endorsement to the Provost and University Committee for approval.

C. Departing Faculty, Outside Offers and Leaves of Absence. Under normal circumstances, leaves of absence will not be granted to members of the faculty who have accepted outside offers from academia, industry or research laboratories. Only in special cases, where it is compelling that the leave of absence could benefit the department, college and university, will leave of absences be considered. In these cases, the department, in their supporting letter, must explain why such a leave could be beneficial to the department, college and university, and they must include a plan to cover teaching assignments as well as how the teaching assignments will be financed. In this situation, the faculty position reverts immediately to the College, and no additional positions, i.e., faculty, lecturer, teaching assistant, etc., will be assigned to the department by the college to cover teaching shortages caused by this leave. Departments are encouraged to develop guidelines to help assess the kinds of situations that warrant a request to the college for a leave of absence. These could include such activities as NSF/DARPA program directorships and entrepreneurial activities. For entrepreneurial activities emerging out of a faculty member's research program, leave of absence approval will require a solid plan that describes how the faculty member can return to the University within a year while the business successfully continues its operation.

Departments and programs concerned about continuity in graduate student advising and supervision are reminded that UW-Madison faculty members who resign may continue as members of the Graduate Faculty for one year after their departure. [FP&P 3.05 \(c\)](#) states that, *“Members of the graduate faculty are automatically permitted to retain graduate faculty status for one year after their retirement or resignation. Annual extensions of graduate faculty status for a retired or resigned faculty may be granted by the dean or the dean's designee on the affirmative recommendation of a departmental executive committee and with the approval of the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee.”* During this period, resigned faculty can continue to oversee the work of students nearing completion of their degree programs. In other cases, it may make more sense to work with the department to ensure that students who need to do so can make the transition to supervision by members of the faculty. In all cases, it is the expectation of the institution that the faculty and department will develop an appropriate plan to meet student needs.

Members of the tenured faculty who leave UW-Madison are allowed to return to the university without a tenure review within two years of their departure ([FP&P 4.20\(C\)](#)). When faculty members who have resigned wish to return, there must be a position available, the department must endorse the request, and the dean must approve it.

Contact the Dean if you have questions regarding Leave of Absence requests.

Academic Staff Leave

Leaves of absence may be granted to academic staff whose appointments are deemed by the appointing department and the Dean or his designee to be continuing appointments, and when it is clear the leave will be in the department's and the College's interest, as well as the individual's. A copy of the [Request for Leave Without Pay or Temporary Assignment](#) should be signed by the

employee and the department chair and sent to the Dean's office for approval. If approved, the request is sent on to the Office of Academic Personnel for review.

Length of Leaves (Faculty and Academic Staff)

The normal maximum length of a leave of absence or temporary assignment is one year. Failure to return to the UW-Madison at the conclusion of the approved leave period may constitute a "constructive resignation." Faculty members must sign an explicit agreement concerning leaves beyond one year; requests to extend an already approved leave beyond one year, or initial requests for leaves longer than one year, must be approved by the Provost in consultation with the University Committee as well as by the Dean.