

Sabbatical Eligibility and Process FAQ's

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The questions below are the common questions related to sabbaticals. Where possible and appropriate COFS is quoted as part of the answer.

NOTE: “**Clarifications**” are added to provide additional clarity in areas where COFS does not directly provide an answer and context for how current NAU administrative review will interpret and review proposals.

Who can apply for a sabbatical?

NAU COFS 1.7.1: “To be considered for sabbatical leave, an **eligible** faculty member (see below for clarification on eligibility) may submit a sabbatical application no earlier than the sixth (6th) year of **full-time service to Northern Arizona University**. For sabbatical leave eligibility, time on an unpaid leave of absence may or may not be counted as provided in COFS 1.7.5.”

Clarification: Since COFS specifies only FT employment at NAU counts, prior credit towards promotion awarded at the time of hire does not apply to sabbatical eligibility.

NAU COFS 1.7.1: “Sabbatical leave is not to be used for efforts that are primarily commercial.”

NAU COFS 1.7.1: “The sabbatical leave shall be either for one or two semesters or, for a faculty member on a fiscal year contract basis for six or twelve months. If the sabbatical leave is for two semesters or one fiscal year, the amount of the compensation will be three-fifths of the recipient's salary; if the sabbatical leave is for one semester, or six months, it will be full pay for that period. Faculty on sabbatical leave may supplement their compensation through fellowships, scholarships, employment, or grants-in-aid to cover expenses such as travel, secretarial assistance, tuition, research, and publication. A person on sabbatical leave may not receive supplemental pay from Northern Arizona University for teaching or administrative responsibilities during the period of leave.”

Clarification: Faculty may supplement their compensation through “**non-NAU funds** (i.e., fellowships, scholarships, Provost office pre-approved outside employment...)”

A faculty member may not juxtapose one semester of sabbatical-relevant activities, for example a paid fellowship, scholarship, or other externally funded activity with a one-semester sabbatical in order to circumvent the three-fifths salary rule. One year of sabbatical-relevant activities will be designated as a one-year sabbatical, regardless of external funding for individually defined activities.

Eligible faculty who are serving in any administrative capacity may be eligible to apply, but the review process will include consideration of the institutions ability to meet the administrative needs. Also, return to the administrative role after the sabbatical cannot be assumed or expected nor can it be made part of the sabbatical proposal.

Are NTT faculty eligible to apply for Sabbatical?

Clarification: NAU COFS states that NTT faculty are not eligible for sabbatical (see COFS reference and explanation below). In fact, this has been the experience and understanding for a majority of NTT faculty at NAU. That said, however, there has been a history under previous administrations where some NTT faculty have been allowed to apply and receive approval for sabbaticals. Since this history has occurred more consistently in some units, a perception that NTT sabbaticals were something NAU officially affords became common, but those perceptions remain inaccurate.

COFS 1.3.1-5e “Non-tenure eligible appointments shall also state: "time served under this appointment does not accrue time toward sabbatical or tenure unless approved in writing by the Provost."

And COFS 1.7.1 “To be considered for sabbatical leave, an **eligible** faculty member may submit a sabbatical application no earlier than the sixth (6th) year of full-time service to Northern Arizona University. For sabbatical leave eligibility, time on an unpaid leave of absence may or may not be counted as provided in COFS 1.7.5 below.

Resulting interpretation and current NAU administrative position: Letters of offer should include this statement, but often do not. If the original letter of offer does not directly state sabbatical eligibility, then the position is not eligible.

During AY 18/19 , a plan to discontinue such exceptions was implemented and was announced at Faculty Senate, at ACC, and at PALC. **As of AY 19/20, the NAU administration will no longer consider exceptions to COFS.**

Clarification: **This is not a change in policy, but rather a new commitment to enforce existing policy consistently across campus.** This is a reinstatement of COFS policy to create a fair and equitable environment for all NTT faculty.

What is a sabbatical and how does the current administration review them?

NAU COFS 1.7.1: Sabbatical leave will be for research and other creative endeavors, or professional development.

Clarification: Sabbatical leaves are not a “right” or owed benefit to any NAU faculty member.

NAU COFS 1.7.1: Approval of Sabbatical leaves at the Provost Office level occur only if the following criteria are met:

- 1- The proposal describes activities and outcomes that are mutually beneficial to NAU as an institution and the faculty member’s professional development.
- 2- The current budget and capacity at the unit level and the NAU university level can support the leave.

NAU COFS 1.7.1: A review and evaluation of the sabbatical application shall take place by each of the following committees and administrators.

- a. Department Faculty Status Committee (FSC) (in non-departmentalized colleges this is the college Promotion and Tenure Committee);
- b. Chair (no review at this level in non-departmentalized colleges);
- c. Dean of the college;
- d. Provost (**see additional context provided above**)

NAU COFS 1.7.1: At each level of review, the applicant's proposal must be reviewed and evaluated as to whether it has merit according to one or more of the following criteria:

- a. Enhancing the teaching or scholarly work of the academic unit;
- b. Enhancing the applicant's effectiveness as a faculty member;
- c. Adding to the reputation of the institution;
- d. Contributing to knowledge in the subject field;
- e. Providing outstanding public or professional service at a local or national level.

NAU COFS 1.7.1: At each level, a positive recommendation that the sabbatical leave be granted may be forwarded if the following conditions are met:

- a. The proposal is judged as having merit;
- b. There is a high probability that the faculty member will successfully carry out the proposal; and

c. Sufficient resources exist to maintain the department (or area) program during the faculty member's leave. Documentation of coverage is required from the Chair or Dean.

d. **The Provost will make the final decision on sabbatical leave.**

What if I need to change my approved proposal?

NAU COFS 1.7.1: If a faculty member finds it necessary to revise the time frame, goals, or activities of the original sabbatical proposal, this revision must be submitted to the Chair in a timely manner. Normally, this would be March 1 of the academic year in which the application is approved. Such revisions are not automatically granted but are considered in light of {current} Academic Unit and college needs. The Chair makes a written recommendation to the Dean who makes a written recommendation to the Provost. **The Provost provides the final decision and approves the change in FAAR/Budget Office records**

Clarification: If the original sabbatical plan is made and approved for a full year (at 60% pay from NAU), changes to a semester long sabbatical will not be approved unless it was clearly part of the original plan and both the unit (dept/college) and the Provost office approved and planned for this change in advance.

It may sometimes be necessary for units or the provost's office to limit all sabbatical proposals to only full year proposals. Similarly, changes from full year to semester sabbaticals may also be limited or restricted.

If I am eligible, when do I need to apply?

COFS 1.7.1: "The procedures for review and evaluation of faculty for sabbatical leave are as follows:

1. **By April 1 in the academic year preceding the application**, a pre-application request for sabbatical leave must be provided by the faculty member to the Chair of the department.
2. During the fall semester in the year preceding the proposed sabbatical, and in accordance with the Personnel Action Calendar, the faculty member must file a formal application for sabbatical leave. The components of the application must include:

- a. pre-application request (copy of the original letter of intent approved by the chair in the previous April)
- b. faculty review routing form (N/A Faculty 180 does the routing)
- c. detailed plan, goals, and timetable
- d. current curriculum vitae
- e. list of courses taught for the last two years
- f. documentation of advance arrangements
- g. copy of report from last sabbatical

More detailed instructions can be found on the Provost's web site at <http://nau.edu/Provost/Sabbatical-Information/>."

Clarification: Requests for applications submitted after April 1 in the academic year preceding the application but before the Fall sabbatical application deadlines, may be considered **IF** the Chair, Dean, and Provost's office designee agree to allow the application **AND** the current NAU budget, capacity and future planning context allows adequate planning or preparation for the requested leave, and all other conditions for review and evaluation have been met. The April 1 deadline is designed to allow department planning (i.e. class scheduling, budget planning, other workload decisions...) for the proposed leave. Failure to express intent by April 1 will impede this need for planning.

Can I make money from somewhere other than NAU while I am on Sabbatical?

NAU COFS 1.7.1: Any expected compensation in addition to the University salary must be fully explained in the sabbatical application and approved before the leave is granted. Should opportunities for supplemental compensation develop after the sabbatical leave has begun or after the application has been submitted and approved, such opportunities must be submitted to the Chair for review and approval, and copied to the Dean and the Provost at the earliest opportunity.

Clarification: NAU does not provide institutional funds (i.e. "top up" funding) for full year sabbaticals where a Fulbright or other similar experience is being conducted during the sabbatical period.

What do I “owe” NAU after I have been granted the benefit of a sabbatical leave?

NAU COFS 1.7.1: A faculty member granted a sabbatical leave is required to return to the University as a faculty member for one year following the leave. Failure to return may result in a requirement that the faculty member refund to the University the amount of pay received during the sabbatical leave.

During the semester following completion of the sabbatical leave, the faculty member must do the following:

- a. File a written report (using the template from the Provost’s office and documenting that the purposes of the sabbatical leave were met) with the Provost, with copies to the Chair and Dean; and
- b. Present a seminar or lecture on the results of the leave. The intent is to contribute knowledge to the NAU community by sharing the results of the sabbatical in an appropriate public forum available to that community.

Clarification: The written report must be submitted to the Provosts office **AND** attached within the Faculty 180 system as part of the Annual review process for that year. Failure to attach the final report as part of the annual review process for that review period will result in an “unsatisfactory” rating for that review period. If the final report is submitted late but during the annual review process, the rating may be changed to satisfactory, but not higher.