

Complete Policy Title:  
**Research Leave Policy – Permanent  
Faculty**

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**SPS C2**

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Responsible Executive:  
**University Secretariat**

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## **I Intent**

The University's system of Research Leaves is designed to contribute to the professional resources and effectiveness of faculty members, and to the value of their subsequent service to the University community. Research Leave provides time for permanent teaching faculty to pursue pedagogical research/scholarship and professional development that will result in more effective teaching at McMaster University. Research Leave would allow permanent teaching faculty who are conducting pedagogical research in parallel with their teaching to have time to prepare the results for peer-reviewed publication, or would provide an opportunity for permanent faculty to visit another institution to learn and participate in a different environment, one whose best features could then be introduced at McMaster. The system of Research Leaves is one of the most effective ways in which the University encourages and supports research and scholarship. It provides for a period free of teaching duties and other obligations, except that faculty members on Research Leave are expected to make appropriate arrangements for their graduate students, and to comment on thesis chapters, in accordance with policies approved by Senate or by Graduate Council.

## **II Eligibility**

After the first six years of full-time service at McMaster University, a full-time teaching-stream faculty member who has attained permanence is entitled to apply for a four-

month one-term (Fall, Winter or Spring/Summer) Leave. During their first Leave, 100% of salary will be maintained.

Upon completion of the first and any subsequent Leave and after six additional years of full-time service at McMaster University, a full-time faculty member with permanence is entitled to apply for another one-term Leave at 90% salary.

Part of the salary may be taken as a Research Leave Grant. For more information on this option, see McMaster University Research Grants Program Application Guidelines and Conditions of Award, or contact the Provost's Office.

### III Principles Governing Research Leave

1. Research Leave is granted only when the following conditions are met:

For all Leaves -

The number of years of service as described above must be completed prior to the leave;

The applicant must have submitted a satisfactory plan describing the research objectives and the way they will be achieved during the leave.

For Leaves Subsequent to the first –

The applicant must normally have a satisfactory record of scholarly achievement since the beginning of the previous research leave.

When these conditions are met, leaves shall not be unreasonably denied. Evaluation of scholarly achievement shall take into consideration exceptional cases in which such achievement may have been compromised because the applicant has spent time since the last leave in extensive service to the University or the profession.

2. It is the first intention of the University to support in every way possible the leave provisions in this document. To this end, faculty members, Department Chairs, and Faculty Deans are expected to work together to ensure that the instructional needs of the department can be met. **The teaching load for teaching stream faculty will be reduced in accordance with the length of the Leave.** On the basis of this consultation, the Chair and Dean may agree upon an alternate timing for a proposed leave of a faculty member. Final approval of the leave will still be based on the application as described below. The University reserves the right to limit the number of leaves granted in any one department in any one year in order to ensure that instructional needs can be met.

3. It is not normally the policy to allow banking of research leaves. When, in the opinion of the University, it would benefit the department or the University for a faculty member to take leave a year earlier or later than normal, the process for deferring a leave is outlined in Appendix A. In those instances, the faculty member will be eligible for subsequent leave as if this leave had been taken at the normal time.
4. Faculty members who for their own reasons wish to postpone taking a leave when they become eligible for one must discuss and document with their chair and Dean the consequences of the deferral. If a faculty member defers a leave, the additional years before the leave is taken are not counted in the eligibility period for any subsequent leave.
5. Faculty members on Research Leave shall be entitled to salary increases (ATB and CP/M) and consideration for promotion as are all other faculty members. Leave recipients will not be penalized in promotion deliberations for the absence of teaching or University service activities during the leave period. ATB increases will be based on the faculty member's full salary, not on a reduced salary received during the leave.

For permanent faculty, CP/M is based (wholly and partially) on performance in two categories (teaching and service) over a calendar year which cannot be measured during a leave. Two CP/M scores will be generated. One score will be the average of the faculty member's last three CP/M par increments. The other score will be calculated by the Chair in the normal manner for the non-leave eight months. The final merit increment will be the weighted average of these two scores - **1/3 for the average of CP/M over the past 3 years and 2/3 for the 8 non-leave months.**

6. For purposes of pension contributions, insurance, and medical and disability benefits, a faculty member on Research Leave will be regarded as a full-time member of the academic staff on regular salary. The University and the faculty member will continue to contribute their normal shares of the costs involved.
7. A faculty member's pregnancy or parental leave may overlap the period of an approved Research Leave. The usual practice is that the unused portion of the Research Leave is taken immediately following the end of the pregnancy or parental leave. Any departure from this practice requires the approval of the Research Leaves Committee.

#### IV Procedures

1. Written application for Research Leave is to be made by the faculty member to the Faculty Dean no later than 31 October of the academic year preceding the leave. The application is to include a description of the planned program of research activity and the way in which it will enhance the applicant's subsequent

scholarly contribution to the University, and of the arrangements that have been made for continued supervision of any graduate students while the faculty member is absent from campus. Should the resources of another institution be essential to the planned activity, documentation indicating the support of that institution is needed before final approval can be given.

2. The Dean will ask for comment on the proposal from the chair of the faculty member's department. All applications for Research Leave, whether supported by the Department Chair or not, shall be submitted by the Dean to the Research Leaves Committee. Research Leave is granted by the Research Leaves Committee, which consists of the Provost, the Faculty Dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies. If all supporting documents are included with the application, a decision on the request will be given by 31 January. If supporting documents are still needed, a response in principle will be given by that date, to be confirmed after the necessary documents have been received by the Provost through the Faculty Dean. Approved leaves will be reported to the Senate for information.
3. The salary to which a faculty member is entitled while on leave may be paid in part as a research grant, in accordance with the requirements of Revenue Canada and the University's policy for awarding such research grants.
4. A faculty member on Research Leave may accept fellowships, honorary visiting professorships, or the like, provided that the duties associated with these do not detract from the research plan described in the application for leave.
5. The University's Consulting Policy applies during Research Leave. Specifically, a faculty member on Research Leave is permitted to engage in consulting activities comparable in extent to those permitted during non-leave periods. The University insists only that the time expended on consulting activities should not interfere with the time that Research Leave makes available for research. Also the faculty member must report to the Faculty Dean any consulting or teaching carried out during the leave. In addition to the requirements of the Consulting Policy, which calls only for reporting the time spent, in consideration of the salary being paid by the University during the leave, any additional employment income received during the leave must also be reported to the Faculty Dean. The report should provide sufficient detail about the additional employment to show that it is consistent with the application for leave. If total employment income does not exceed 115% of regular salary, the report may be submitted on completion of the leave. Anticipated employment income in excess of 115% of regular salary must be approved by the Dean before taking up the employment.
6. Within four months of completion of the leave, the faculty member is required to submit a written report to the Dean of the Faculty on the accomplishments during the research leave. The report allows for proper evaluation of the faculty member's accomplishments while on leave, and becomes part of the material considered for CP/M assessments. The Dean will ask the Department Chair to

assess the report, and to take it into account in making a merit pay recommendation; both the assessment and the report will be made available to the members of the Research Leaves Committee.

7. A faculty member who wishes to appeal a denial of Research Leave may invoke the procedure outlined in Appendix B.
8. The Administration will provide MUFA with the number of research leave denials by Faculty each year by May 1.

## **V Special Leaves and Leaves of Absence**

1. In exceptional cases Special Leave may be approved on the normal financial terms for a Research Leave although the faculty member may have served fewer than the required number of years of full-time service. Such leave may be granted by the Research Leaves Committee in consultation with the Department Chair. It is understood that only a small number of such leaves, if any, will be approved in any one year. Normally, a Special Leave shall be counted as a Research Leave for purposes of determining the time of eligibility for the next Research Leave.
2. Leave of absence without salary may be granted in special circumstances by the University to any member of the faculty. Any such leave taken primarily for the purpose of research shall conform to the principles and procedures of this document. A faculty member on a Leave of Absence without salary is normally required to continue paying for fringe benefits. It would be expected, however, that the University's share would be absorbed by any outside employer. This matter should be discussed with the Faculty Dean and the Provost.

A decision to stop the clock for promotion consideration must be confirmed in writing via a letter from the President, and signed back by the faculty member.

## APPENDIX A – DEFERRAL OF LEAVE

In those instances where deferring a leave might be of potential benefit to the department or University, in accordance with section III 3. of this policy, the following procedure will apply. Such a request to defer Research Leave may be initiated either by the department chair or by a member of faculty.

In order to consider if a Research Leave is to be deferred and the faculty member still be eligible for subsequent leave as if this leave had been taken at the normal time, the Research Leaves Committee must be provided with the following documentation:

- A letter from the relevant Department Chair(s) requesting the deferral without penalty and outlining the institutional benefit of the deferral, or alternatively supporting or opposing such a request initiated by a faculty member;
- A letter from the faculty member initiating a deferral request or indicating their position on the proposed deferral by the Chair, which could indicate their interest in or willingness to defer leave for the benefit of the department or University or their reasons why they oppose such a deferral
- Written response to the above from the Faculty Dean(s).

After a review by the Research Leaves Committee, the faculty member will be informed in writing by the Faculty Dean of the Committee's decision. Such notification to the faculty member should also explicitly indicate that, notwithstanding the approved deferral of a Research Leave, the Research Leaves Committee has made no determination regarding the merit of any subsequent request for leave. Any decision regarding a future research leave will be made by the Research Leaves Committee at the appropriate time and will include an assessment of the complete Research Leave Application, in accordance with Section III.1 of this policy.

The procedure outlined above should commence no later than October 1 each year. In the case of a faculty member-initiated request for deferral without penalty, should this request be denied the faculty member will be given 10 business days from notification of the decision (or until October 31, whichever is later) to submit a proposal for Research Leave.

## APPENDIX B – APPEAL OF DENIAL OF RESEARCH LEAVE

A faculty member shall be entitled to appeal a Research Leave decision only if she/he has satisfied the service requirement for eligibility set out in Section II of this policy.

A faculty member who has been denied a Research Leave and wishes to appeal this decision should first request, within 20 business days of the denial of the leave, a meeting with the Faculty Dean for an informal review of the decision. The Dean will convey the concerns of the faculty member, along with a recommendation as to whether the original decision to deny leave should be overturned, to the Research Leaves Committee. The Research Leaves Committee decision will be conveyed to the faculty member within 15 business days of the meeting between the faculty member and Faculty Dean.

If, after such consultations, the member remains dissatisfied and wishes to appeal the decision of the Research Leaves Committee, she/he may ask the Vice-President (Research) to appoint a Review Committee to review the decision. Such a request shall be submitted within 10 business days from the date of the letter communicating the decision of the Research Leaves Committee to uphold the denial, and must include a written statement on why the decision should be overturned, along with a copy of the original Leave Application and the decision letter.

The Review Committee shall consist of the Vice-President (Research), who will serve as Chair, and two faculty members, normally from the same Faculty but not the same department as the faculty member requesting the review. The two faculty members, one of whom may be a Chair or former Chair, will be appointed by the Vice-President (Research) in consultation with the faculty member requesting the review. The decision of the Review Committee, which should be communicated in writing to the faculty member within 30 business days of the initial request to the Vice-President (Research), shall be final.