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Applies to: Faculty and staff

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## **POLICY**

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Issued: 10/01/1973

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Faculty and staff may request an unpaid leave for personal, professional or medical reasons, including pregnancy.

Requests for leave are subject to approval by the appropriate administrative official within the employing unit and are approved at the discretion of the employing unit. All unpaid family and medical leave falls under this policy.

A leave implies that the same or similar position will be held open for a faculty or staff member or will be made available upon her or his return subject to the provisions set forth in Reductions in Force, Policies 9.15 and 9.20. The appointing unit must reserve funds for the position of the faculty or staff member on unpaid leave.

Being in an unpaid status does not constitute approved unpaid leave and is not governed by this policy.

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## **Policy Details**

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- I. Faculty and staff do not receive pay for holidays that occur during an unpaid leave.
- II. Vacation and sick leave credits do not accrue during an unpaid leave.
- III. Available vacation and sick leave must be used prior to the approval of unpaid leave.
- IV. Medical leave for faculty and staff
  - A. Employees may be granted unpaid leave up to six months, at the discretion of the university.
    1. For staff, one extension of up to two months may be granted to allow a decision regarding OPERS disability retirement, at the discretion of the university.
  - A. The university reserves the right to require the employee to provide satisfactory medical documentation for medical leave which indicates a projected date for return to work or reevaluation, medical verification of ability to return to work and other appropriate information.
  - B. Available sick leave and vacation leave balances must be exhausted prior to the use of unpaid medical leave, in accordance with Paid Leaves Program policy 6.27. The university may waive this requirement in workers' compensation, short-term disability and long-term disability cases. Medical leave must be designated as Family and Medical Leave ([FML](#)) and counted toward both the 12 weeks of FML and the time limit for medical leave, if applicable.
- V. Personal leave for faculty and staff
  - A. The employee must submit a written request to her/his immediate supervisor setting forth the reasons for the unpaid personal leave. Once the immediate supervisor approves the leave, the employee must submit a formal request for leave. If submitting a request via eLeave, specific information regarding the reason for the leave may be addressed in a separate communication.
  - B. Available vacation leave balances must be exhausted prior to the use of unpaid personal leave, in accordance with Paid Leaves Program policy, 6.27.
  - C. Personal leave that qualifies as FML must be so designated and counted toward both the 12 weeks of FML and the time limit for personal leave.
- VI. Staff use of unpaid medical and personal leave
  - A. If unpaid leave exceeds three months, the unit must consult with HR Employee and Labor Relations concerning approval of further leave. Approval of this leave will be based on the employee's return-to-work date, ability to perform the essential functions of the job upon return to work, operational needs of the department and additional factors as appropriate.



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- a. Denial of further unpaid medical leave must be approved by HR Employee and Labor Relations who will collaborate with HR Integrated Disability.
- B. Classified civil service staff may apply for or be placed on disability separation if approved. Factors that may be considered include: no return-to-work date can be provided, the need for leave continues beyond approved FML, ADA considerations, etc.
- C. If an unpaid leave is used for a purpose other than that stated, the leave may be canceled and the individual may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

VII. Faculty leaves

A. General guidelines

1. Faculty requests for leave without pay are subject to approval by the department chair, dean and the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA). The maximum faculty leave without pay is generally one year. In no case will it extend beyond two years.
2. The university normally grants a leave without pay only with the clear understanding that the faculty member will return to her or his university position. A leave will not be granted to accept an ongoing position at another institution or business, unless such action is considered by the appropriate administrative officials as an outstanding professional development opportunity for the faculty member, who intends to return to her or his university position.
3. Guidelines for compensated faculty professional leave are in the Office of [Academic Affairs Faculty Professional Leave Policy](#).
4. Faculty members serving on nine-month appointments are paid in 12 monthly installments; therefore, four monthly payments are withheld for each quarter of leave without pay. Faculty members serving on nine-month appointments are paid in 12 monthly installments; therefore, 5 1/3 monthly payments are withheld for each semester of leave without pay. Unpaid leave for May will result in 1 1/3 monthly payments being withheld.

B. Professional leave

1. Professional reasons include the opportunity to take a temporary paid position outside the university that will enhance professional development and increase the faculty member's value to the academic unit on her or his return.
2. A copy of the letter of offer to the faculty member setting forth the terms and goals of the temporary position must be attached to the faculty member's request for approval.
3. Leaves are not granted in the following circumstances:
  - a. Untenured faculty in their terminal year of employment and
  - b. Faculty who have accepted new permanent employment.
4. Faculty on an unpaid leave may not be compensated by the university during the period of the leave. Supplemental compensation is not available during an unpaid leave.
5. Faculty members may not cancel or change the timing of an unpaid leave without submitting a written request for the change through the same approval levels listed above.
6. At its discretion and in rare circumstances, OAA may approve a one-year unpaid leave for a truly exceptional faculty member (e.g. a member of a national academy) who has accepted new permanent employment, if there is a reasonable chance that providing the leave will facilitate the faculty member's return to the university at the conclusion of the leave.



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C. Entrepreneurial leave

1. A faculty member may request an entrepreneurial leave when a company offers her/him a regular paid position because of her/his expertise with a particular technical problem or process.
2. The procedures for an entrepreneurial leave are identical to those of a professional leave.
3. The letter of offer from the prospective employer must include:
  - a. Statement of terms and goals of appointment,
  - b. Statement of understanding and concurrence with faculty member's status on unpaid leave from the university and
  - c. Statement of affirmation that appointment of the faculty member to this position is deemed crucial to the success of the company.
4. The faculty member's request letter must include the following:
  - a. Explanation of the reason for the request, timing of the leave and potential benefits of the entrepreneurial experience to her/his professional development and to the tenure-initiating unit, college and university;
  - b. Suggested arrangements for meeting her/his responsibilities during the entrepreneurial leave;
  - c. Statement that she/he understands and will comply with requirements to:
    - i. Observe college and university entrepreneurial leave policies and procedures,
    - ii. Observe university conflict of interest policies and procedures and
    - iii. Observe university guidelines governing faculty participation in companies commercializing research that faculty have performed as an employee of the university; and
  - d. Statement to the Office of Technology and Licensing that discloses any discoveries, inventions, designs, know-how, software and/or any other intellectual property that she/he has developed while a faculty member of the university and that may be related, either directly or indirectly, to her/his activities with the company while on entrepreneurial leave.

VIII. Benefits

Faculty and staff will be billed for benefits contributions while on unpaid leave. Refer to Continuing Benefits While on Leave for benefits information while on unpaid leave.

IX. Retirement service credit for unpaid leave

- A. STRS members – A member of the State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio (STRS) may be allowed to contribute to the retirement system to obtain service credit for the leave period. Eligibility requirements, procedures and terms and conditions are outlined on the STRS [Purchasing Service](#) web site.
- B. OPERS members – A member of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) may be allowed to contribute to the retirement system to obtain service credit for the period of leave. Eligibility requirements, procedures and terms and conditions are outlined on the OPERS [Purchase of Service Credit](#) web site. Members may be able to obtain service credit for any period during which they were off payroll because of an injury/illness for which an award through Workers' Compensation or the disability carrier was received. Terms and conditions are outlined at [www.strsoh.org/actives/retire-prep/service-credit.html](http://www.strsoh.org/actives/retire-prep/service-credit.html)



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**PROCEDURE**

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**Responsibilities**

Position or Office	Responsibilities
<b>Faculty Leave</b>	
Faculty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Request a leave by completing the eLeave form, along with the required documentation outlined in this policy.</li> <li>2. Submit the form and documentation to the tenure-initiating unit (TIU) head prior to the beginning of the leave, including a summary statement of information required in the dean's letter.</li> <li>3. Submit a request for personal leave at least 90 days prior to the beginning of the leave.</li> <li>4. Submit a request for medical leave as far in advance as possible.</li> <li>5. Arrange for benefits and/or purchase of retirement service credit as appropriate.</li> </ol>
TIU head and department staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve or deny the request.</li> <li>2. Inform the faculty member of the decision upon approval by OAA.</li> <li>3. Send approved requests to the college.</li> <li>4. Enter the leave into the HRIS as appropriate.</li> <li>5. Reserve funds for the position of the faculty member on leave.</li> </ol>
Dean and college staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Approve or deny the request.</li> <li>7. Inform the chair of the decision upon approval by OAA.</li> <li>8. Submit a letter of request to the provost, including complete information regarding the proposed leave, statement of duties vacated, how duties will be covered during the absence and the faculty member's address during the leave.</li> </ol>
Provost and OAA staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Approve or deny the request.</li> <li>10. Inform the dean of the decision.</li> </ol>
<b>Staff Leave</b>	
Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Request a leave by completing the eLeave form. Leave requests should have a definite starting date and definite date of return. Neither of these dates should be a holiday or scheduled day off.</li> <li>2. Submit the form to the appropriate administrative official within the employing unit prior to the beginning of the leave. Include a specific starting and return date, neither of which may be a holiday or scheduled day off.</li> <li>3. Arrange for benefits and/or purchase of retirement service credit as appropriate.</li> <li>4. Pay for benefits when billed.</li> </ol>
Employing unit	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve or deny the request.</li> <li>2. Inform the staff member of the decision.</li> <li>3. Enter the leave into the HRIS as appropriate.</li> </ol>

**Resources**

- Unpaid Leave Frequently Asked Questions, [hr.osu.edu/public/documents/policy/resources/645faq.pdf](http://hr.osu.edu/public/documents/policy/resources/645faq.pdf)
- Benefit Continuation During Military Leave Election Form, [hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/form-benefit-continuation-unpaid-leave.pdf](http://hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/form-benefit-continuation-unpaid-leave.pdf)
- Benefit Eligibility by Appointment, [hr.osu.edu/benefits/eligibility](http://hr.osu.edu/benefits/eligibility)
- Classified Civil Service Rules, Chapter 73 – Unpaid Leaves, [hr.osu.edu/policies-forms/rules-for-ccs/](http://hr.osu.edu/policies-forms/rules-for-ccs/)
- Continuing Benefits While on Leave, [hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/leave-absence-benefits.pdf](http://hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/leave-absence-benefits.pdf)
- eLeave, [eleave.osu.edu](http://eleave.osu.edu)



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- Faculty Professional Leave Policy, [oaa.osu.edu/assets/files/documents/facultyprofessionalleave.pdf](http://oaa.osu.edu/assets/files/documents/facultyprofessionalleave.pdf)
- Family and Medical Leave, Policy 6.05, [hr.osu.edu/public/documents/policy/policy605.pdf](http://hr.osu.edu/public/documents/policy/policy605.pdf)
- Medical Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee’s Serious Health Condition (FML), [hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/form-fml-employee-health.pdf](http://hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/form-fml-employee-health.pdf)
- Medical Certification of Health Care Provider for Family Member’s Serious Health Condition (FML), [hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/form-fml-family-health.pdf](http://hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/form-fml-family-health.pdf)
- Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS), [opers.org](http://opers.org)
- State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio (STRS), [strsoh.org](http://strsoh.org)

**Contacts**

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
Faculty leave	Office of Academic Affairs	614-292-5881	<a href="http://oaa.osu.edu">oaa.osu.edu</a>
Staff leave	Human Resources Employee and Labor Relations	614-292-2800	<a href="mailto:hr-elr@osu.edu">hr-elr@osu.edu</a> <a href="http://hr.osu.edu/services/elr/">hr.osu.edu/services/elr/</a>
Policy interpretation for Health System employees	Employee Relations, Health System Human Resources	614-293-4988	
Benefits	Human Resources Benefit Services	614-292-1050 800-678-6010	<a href="mailto:hr@osu.edu">hr@osu.edu</a> <a href="http://hr.osu.edu/benefits">hr.osu.edu/benefits</a>
Short or long term disability or Workers’ Compensation	Human Resources Integrated Disability	614-292-3439	<a href="http://hr.osu.edu/services/disability-benefits-leave-services/">hr.osu.edu/services/disability-benefits-leave-services/</a>

**History**

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