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UNC Charlotte Academic Procedure: Professional/Scholarly Leave

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This procedure describes the eligibility requirements, related obligations, and process for Professional/Scholarly leave for 9-month faculty. The terms "professional leave" and "scholarly leave" are both used at UNC Charlotte to refer to the type of leave articulated in this procedure. Colleges and departments may determine whether to use the term "professional leave" or "scholarly leave" within their particular context.

II. PROCEDURE STATEMENT

Eligible faculty may be extended professional/scholarly leave for job or career-related work study, scholarship, or fellowship programs. Reassignment of duties (RDs) is a separate category of professional/scholarly leave with its own **policy**.

Professional/Scholarly leave is granted to give tenured faculty opportunities for research, advanced study and/or professional growth. This may include faculty members accepting competitive awards in programs such as the Board of Governors, Doctoral Assignment Fellowship, Fulbright Fellowship, Fogarty Fellowship or other recognized programs that support research and advanced study opportunities. During this leave, faculty members are

allowed the opportunity to pursue new knowledge, techniques, and experiences that are judged by the faculty member's supervisor and dean to facilitate or enhance the faculty member's ability to contribute to the University. Professional/Scholarly leave does not include instances that reside within the faculty member's job responsibilities (e.g. teaching similar subject matter at another post-secondary institution for which you are currently assigned, providing similar administrative duties at another post-secondary institution for which you are currently assigned). Professional/Scholarly leave should not present a conflict of interest for the University.

Eligibility: These procedures apply to tenured faculty. Applications for a Professional/Scholarly leave from tenure-track faculty members in their last probationary year may also be considered, but the leave will be contingent upon the applicant receiving tenure. Faculty members are eligible to apply for a Professional/Scholarly leave any time during the year, subject to the approval of the Dean and Provost. An **AA-32 Leave of Absence Request Form** is required for processing Professional/Scholarly leave.

Conditions:

- Faculty on a Professional/Scholarly leave are eligible for consideration for merit salary increases, promotion, and one-time payments or any other salary adjustments approved by the General Assembly, the Board of Governors, or UNC Charlotte.
- For faculty who are on a Professional/Scholarly leave, this period will be considered as an approved leave of absence for professional/scholarly purposes, but professional/scholarly leaves are not considered Reassignments of Duties (RD).
- Faculty members on Professional/Scholarly leave are expected to devote full-time to the approved activity.

Duration and Compensation:

- ***Duration***. Professional/Scholarly leaves can be requested for one semester or a maximum of two semesters.

- ***Compensation***. Compensation is defined in terms of salary and benefits. There are three categories of professional/scholarly leave compensation options: full pay (semester only), partial pay, or without pay.

- Professional/Scholarly leaves with full pay (One Semester Only)
- Professional/Scholarly leaves with partial pay (One or two Semesters)
- Professional/Scholarly leaves without pay (One or two Semesters)

Note: Klein College of Science (KCOS) and College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences (CHESS) have special case requests for the full Academic Year with full pay. Example: Fulbright award. Consult your respective Dean's Office for more information.

University Obligations and Return to Service:

- Faculty on a professional/scholarly leave should agree to take leave or resign from campus obligations such as department, college, and campus committees during the time of the leave. However, faculty may be expected to maintain contact with graduate advisees or make other arrangements to ensure that students' progress will not be disrupted.
- Faculty may also participate in the department faculty evaluation process (for annual reviews or hiring) if the department bylaws provide this opportunity.
- Faculty members who are Principal Investigator (PI's) and Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PI's) are required to notify Grants and Contracts regarding their leave plans and are expected to provide a Management Plan for how the funded research will be handled during the time on leave.
- Faculty who receive the professional/scholarly leave are required to return to full time service at UNC Charlotte equal to the period of leave or to repay any expenditures received during the period of leave unless another leave is requested and approved.
- A faculty member on a professional/scholarly leave who accepts a position at another postsecondary institution or any other paid employment that was not included in the proposal or approved through the External Professional Activities for Pay policy will be considered to have abandoned his or her contract and would be terminated.

Application Process:

1. Faculty members should consult with the Benefits Office prior to applying for leave, so the full financial impact and post leave decisions are understood by the employee. The faculty member will indicate the date they discussed their options with the Benefits Office on Section C of the **AA-32 form**.
2. When applying for a Professional/Scholarly Leave, the faculty member must complete/sign the AA-32 form and include a plan of coverage for their University duties during the time period.
3. For professional/scholarly leave requests where a faculty member is teaching/working while away from campus, an **AA-43 (Faculty Duty Attestation Form)** is required. If a faculty member is teaching/working out of the country an AA-43 is always needed. An **Out of State Work Form** may also be required.
4. The AA-32 form should be forwarded to the College Business Officer for review and to obtain the necessary Dean, Chair, and Business Officer signatures.
5. The expectation is the college will provide funding support for course coverage. If funding support for course coverage from Academic Affairs is needed then there

must be a memo from the Dean/Chair included with the AA-32 request form. The memo should clearly list each course being covered and the amount requested.

6. Once all signatures have been applied, the College Business Officer will forward the PDF of the AA-32 to the Office of Academic Affairs email address.
7. After processing, the Business Officer will be provided with an approval letter from Academic Affairs to distribute to the faculty member for signature. The Business Officer will send the signed approval letter back to Academic Affairs.

Benefits Continuation:

- Professional/Scholarly leaves with full pay (One Semester Only) : All leaves with full pay mean health insurance and retirement are continued automatically during the leave period.
- Professional/Scholarly leaves with partial pay: Health insurance will either need to be continued or discontinued.
- Professional/Scholarly leaves without pay: Employees may elect to continue retirement contributions subject to the Benefits Office approval. Benefits will assist faculty members with the application process when faculty members contact Benefits to discuss their planned leave. This should be discussed with Benefits prior to applying for leave. Employees do have the option to: 1) continue health insurance with the full cost (both employee and employer portion) being paid by the faculty member, or 2) discontinue their coverage.
- Note: All questions regarding retirement and insurance benefits should be directed to the Human Resources Benefits Office.

III. DEFINITIONS

There are no definitions related to this policy.

IV. PROCEDURE CONTACTS

- **Authority**: **Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs**
- **Responsible Office**: **Academic Affairs Human Resources**
- **Other:** **Office of the Dean, Klein College of Science**, **Office of the Dean, College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences**

V. HISTORY

- **Established:** February 28, 2025

- **Revised:** February 25, 2026 [Updated eligibility statement to align with UNC Policy Manual]

VI. PRIOR VERSIONS

- **February 28, 2025 – February 25, 2026**

VII. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND RESOURCES

- **UNC Charlotte Academic Policy and Procedure: Reassignment of Duties**
- **The UNC Policy Manual 300.2.6[R]**
- **Table on Difference Between Professional/Scholarly Leave and Reassignment of Duties**

VIII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

There are no Frequently Asked Questions for this policy.

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