
GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAVES

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To advance the mission of the College of Geosciences, faculty members need opportunities to have their teaching and service duties reduced to initiate new projects, complete significant projects, or participate in off-campus professional development activities that would not otherwise be possible. In the College of Geosciences these opportunities include:

- **Faculty Development Leave (FDL) Program**
 - Administered by the Dean of Faculties
- **Professional Development Leave (PDL) Program**
 - College supplement to the University-level FDL program
- **Departmental Leaves**
 - Tenured or tenure-track faculty may be granted departmental leaves and course releases, typically in conjunction with an externally funded fellowship, a faculty fellowship, or fieldwork and/or cruises at the discretion of the Department Head
- **Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Agreements**
 - Governed in part by guidelines for return of faculty after IPA at Dean of Faculties

Normally, the number of faculty members who are released from teaching at least one class as a cumulative result of the programs outlined here will not exceed **14% (1/7)** of the total number of tenured and tenure-track faculty in the department in any given semester. For the purpose of this calculation, faculty members on half-pay will be considered pro rata as 0.5 FTE. Jointly appointed faculty will be considered under their departmental affiliation as 1 FTE. Faculty members on leave without pay and Department Heads taking a development leave after completing their term are not included in this calculation. The Dean, however, may authorize exceptions to the cap.

This document sets out policies and procedures for awarding and administering Professional Development Leaves, Departmental Leaves, and Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Agreements. Governing principles that guide decisions on all types of leaves or course reductions will include the recognition that leaves and course reductions are:

- Not an entitlement or an expectation;
- Awarded on a competitive basis;
- Administered transparently with a selection process and accountability for progress on work identified as the reason for the leave;
- Evaluated in the context of departmental curricular, teaching and service needs;
- Evaluated in the context of a faculty member's record of productivity during previous leaves.
- Documented in annual appointment letters and tracked by faculty member within each department.

Professional Development Leave

The Dean of the College of Geosciences or their designee administers a College-level PDL program to supplement the University-level FDL program, with a coordinated application process for both programs.

Eligibility

Eligibility for the PDL program mirrors the requirements of the university FDL program, and only those faculty who have applied for a FDL can apply for PDL if the FDL is not awarded. Only tenured faculty members who will have been on the TAMU faculty for at least two years at the time the leave begins may apply. Eligible faculty will also not have participated in the FDL or PDL programs within the previous five years. Academic Professional Track (APT) Faculty are not eligible for a PDL.

Application

FDL applications will serve as applications to the PDL program. Faculty who apply for, but do not receive, an FDL are automatically entered into the internal competition for a PDL. In order to be considered for a PDL a faculty member applying for an FDL must supplement the project narrative with the information below:

- Project-related travel plans, if any;
- How the development leave project will enhance the applicant's classroom teaching;
- A list of courses taught over the previous 3 years, with a brief explanation of any semesters in which the applicant did not teach at least one course;
- A commitment to return to TAMU for at least 1 year after support from the PDL;
- A commitment to provide a written report to the Department Head and Dean on accomplishments achieved during the leave.

Duration

In both the FDL and PDL programs, faculty may apply for one semester at full pay or a full year at half pay. Department Heads and other College Deans (ie. Associate Deans) who have completed a full term of service (4 years) may apply for a Development Leave at full pay, a full year at half pay in lieu of 3 months summer salary in the year following their return to the faculty.

Approval

Faculty leave applications from a particular academic unit will be reviewed and ranked within that unit, with the exception of applications submitted by Department Heads and College Deans who have completed their terms, which will be reviewed by the Dean or their designee. All applications will subsequently be evaluated at the College Tenure and Promotion Committee. Applications that are not forwarded to the university FDL program, will be reviewed for the PDL program by the Dean or their designee, in consultation with the applicants' Department Heads. In forwarding a prioritized list of development leave applications, department heads are expected to have weighed the teaching implications for their units.

Funding

Salary for those on PDL will be funded by the College of Geosciences. FDL salaries will be funded by the college as outlined in the FDL policy on the Dean of Faculties website.

In general, faculty taking leave through the FDL or PDL programs are expected to fund activities and incidentals through their own resources (i.e. IDC, salary savings, endowed chairs/professorships, etc.). In exceptional circumstances, and with consultation with the department head, the college will consider some additional support for the experience, normally not to exceed \$2,500. A match from the department would be expected. Any unused balance

will be returned at the conclusion of the FDL or PDL term at a pro-rata basis to the college and/or department.

Any prior policies regarding college or departmental support for FDL or PDL programs are superseded by the adoption of this policy.

Reporting and Accountability

Faculty awarded leave will be expected to make substantial progress on a significant project. Each faculty member receiving support through either the FDL or PDL program must prepare a final report within 3 months of the end of the leave. This report, not to exceed 1 page, should explain activities undertaken while on leave, how those activities enhance the faculty member's research and classroom teaching as well as the institution generally, and identify the anticipated outputs from the leave.

The department will review final reports from both FDLs and PDLs and forward an assessment along with the faculty member's final report to the Dean. Only final reports from FDL awardees will be forwarded, per university policy, to the Office of the Dean of Faculties and Associate Provost.

Departmental Leaves

A Department Head may request leave on behalf of individual faculty members from the Dean or their designee. A typical circumstance would be award of an externally funded fellowship, a faculty fellowship, or fieldwork and/or cruises.

It is expected that faculty on Departmental Leaves will be granted a significant reduction in service responsibilities. It is also expected that faculty who supervise graduate students will continue to supervise those students during the leave. The Department Head must approve alternative arrangements.

Memos requesting departmental leave should explain the circumstances of the leave and how it will benefit the faculty member, department, and college. The memo should explain how the faculty member's teaching and service will be covered during the leave, how teaching support will be funded, and include statements regarding the overall number of faculty who are expected to be on leave during the relevant semester and the expected impact of the leave on the teaching needs of the program and the production of SCH and WSCH.

Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Agreements

IPAs are agreements whereby faculty members may serve or cross train, full or part time in federal agencies. While continuing to be considered TAMU employees, some or all of their salary and benefits are paid by the federal agency.

As faculty members begin to pursue an IPA appointment, they should engage their Department Heads immediately so that department can plan for their absence, transitioning details can be negotiated and approvals submitted via a memo from the Department Head, through the Dean, through the Associate Provost and Dean of Faculties, and to the Provost and Executive Vice President. This step must be completed and approvals obtained prior to finalization of IPA agreements.

Faculty members who leave the campus to work under an IPA agreement and are away from the University for at least two semesters are given the opportunity to transition and re-engage with their regular departmental duties upon return in accordance with the Dean of Faculties' [Guidelines](#).