

Occasionally Asked Questions

Sabbatical and early leave program

- Wellesley College requires faculty members to make a “strenuous effort” to secure grant support for their sabbatical projects in order to qualify for a fully paid (Plan B) leave. In practice, what does this mean?

Faculty members applying for Plan B leave should ordinarily submit at least three timely and well developed applications for external grant support. Whenever possible, the grants applied for should include salary offset.
- Does the funding I am applying for need to cover the entire period of my sabbatical?

No, as long as it includes a portion of the leave period, a grant application can be counted as one of the three that constitute a strenuous effort.
- Can grants that cover the leave period but are not put together specifically for this leave application count? For example, can you count an NSF grant application made a year ago? 6 months ago?

As long as some part of the grant applied for covers the period of the leave, it can count as one of the three required applications. If a faculty member eligible for leave in the future is making a current application for a major grant that will apply to the sabbatical period coming up, it will streamline the approval process if that faculty member informs the Office of Sponsored Research at the time the grant application is submitted.
- I have an existing grant that provides salary offset during my upcoming leave period. How should this grant be treated on my CFA leave application?

If you already have a grant in place that overlaps your leave period and contains salary budgeted for that period, you must list this as one of your three leave-related applications and turn that salary over to the College as offset. This would include any summer salary budgeted for the summer before and/or after an academic year leave. If you do not list any grant that falls during your leave as leave-related, any salary budgeted in that grant during your leave period may still be applied as salary offset. Unless your existing grant covers your full salary for the leave period, you will still be required to submit additional grant applications.
- What if a funding agency offers summer salary only – can that grant be counted as one of the required three? And in such a case is the summer salary used as salary offset?

A grant that includes only summer salary is acceptable. If the funder offers salary during the academic year portion of the leave period, that should be maximized first. If the grant includes summer salary for the summer before and/or after the leave, that salary will ordinarily be turned over to the College as salary offset. Special consideration will be given to faculty who can justify the need to budget for research assistants or other needs critical to their summer work in lieu of summer salary.
- If I miss the deadline for a major funding opportunity, can my sabbatical application still be successful?

Yes, provided that you find an alternative source that provides salary support and still present the three required applications, your sabbatical application will be eligible for a Plan B leave. Please note that NEH Fellowship applications are due in spring the year *before* the leave is scheduled (e.g., for academic year 2018-19, the application would be due in spring 2017; see <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/fellowships.html>). A faculty member applying for an NEH

grant is normally expected to apply in a timely way to maximize the amount of leave time that a successful grant might cover.

- What if none of the three grants for which I am applying provide salary support and I could have applied for a salary-supported grant?

Wellesley's generous sabbatical program relies on the willingness of faculty to make a strenuous effort to obtain salary offset and then to share that offset with the College. If a faculty member is eligible for a salary-supported grant but chooses, for whatever reason, to apply only for grants that do not offer salary offset, that fact may be held against the applicant for a Plan B leave.

- One of my grants has an application deadline in the summer before my sabbatical begins. What is the latest deadline possible to allow a grant application to count toward my leave?

As long as the grant applied for provides support for some part of the period of your leave, that grant can count as one of your three. But all applications must be submitted before June 1 preceding the academic year in which the leave will commence (if the leave begins in the fall) or before December 1 (if the leave begins in the spring). If the granting agency's own internal deadline is later than this date, you must submit an early application to them before the relevant deadline and provide a copy to the Office of Sponsored Research. The College cannot pay sabbatical salary unless all three required grant applications have been provided to the Office of Sponsored Research by these deadlines, even if the sabbatical has been provisionally approved by the CFA.

- My discipline is a collaborative one, and my grant applications are the result of work done by a team and are being filed jointly. Are there specific requirements for such applications?

The CFA, which approves sabbatical applications, understands that collaboration is the norm in many disciplines. Jointly filed applications, provided they meet all other requirements of the College's sabbatical program, are welcome. Please be very clear, however, in distinguishing your own contribution to the expected outcome of the grant when you make your application, and provide full information about the identities of your collaborators. The expectation is that the grant, if awarded, would result in salary support for each Wellesley College applicant.

- My field is not one in which salary support is ordinarily part of grant awards. How can I meet the requirements of a fully paid leave?

If, after consulting with the Office of Sponsored Research, you confirm that you are not eligible for three salary-supported grants, you may apply for a fully paid sabbatical leave by including grants that do not offer salary offset. The Director of the Office of Sponsored Research should confirm to the CFA that such a conversation has taken place and that your strenuous search has not produced the required three salary-supported grant possibilities. You should apply for as many grants as possible that include salary offset, and you should still complete three applications. If your CFA application will include one or more grants that do not include salary offset, you are encouraged to apply for grants that would afford another substantive benefit to the College by way of indirect funds, equipment, institutional or departmental programs, interdisciplinary or collaborative applications (possibly multi-institutional) and/or student support.

- What should I do if three grants are not available? Under what circumstances might a person submit only two?

If, after consulting with the Office of Sponsored Research, you determine that you are not eligible for three grants, you may apply for a sabbatical leave with just two. The Director of the Office of Sponsored Research should confirm to the CFA that such a conversation has taken place and that your strenuous search has not produced the required three grant possibilities.

- I am eligible for one semester of sabbatical leave, but many of the grants for which I might apply require a year-long commitment. Can I count such grants toward my required three?

You should apply only for grants that you are able and willing to accept. It defeats the purpose of our program if you decline successful grant awards. If you are eligible for only one semester of leave, you should therefore apply only for grants that can be held for a single semester or you should request to take unpaid leave to meet the year-long commitment required. If you decline one of the three grants on which your sabbatical approval was based, the CFA may retroactively deny Plan B sabbatical support.
- I am applying for a calendar year leave. May I apply for grants that require me to be on leave for the full academic year?

Again, you should apply only for grants you are able and willing to accept. If your leave is planned for a calendar year and you would not be able to reschedule it across an academic year, whether due to your eligibility or to department staffing needs, you should not apply for academic-year grants.
- Some grants for which I am eligible require successful applicants to relocate and be in residence at a distant location. Can I count such an application as one of my three?

Yes, as long as you are willing to relocate. Again, you should only apply for grants you would be willing to accept. As indicated above, if you decline one of the three grants on which your sabbatical approval was based, the CFA may retroactively deny Plan B sabbatical support.
- In my field, one often has to make a pre-application in order to be selected to submit a full grant application. Do such pre-applications count as one of the three proposals required for a strenuous search?

Typically these pre-applications can be done well in advance of the leave application deadline, giving you time to find out if you are selected to submit a full application. The CFA expects you to do this if at all possible. If it is not possible, the CFA decides whether or not to count pre-applications on a case by case basis, depending on the availability of other grants, the apparent likelihood the grant will be successful, and the fullness of detail in the pre-application letter or form(s). In some science fields a sequence of preliminary, followed by full, invited proposals is starting to be the norm; in such fields, where a panel of experts reviews the preliminary proposal, the CFA will normally regard a preliminary proposal as one of the required three applications.
- Can the Mellon New Directions Program be one of the three funding sources?

Yes. The Mellon New Directions Program does provide salary offset, and so an application to this program can be included as one of the three required proposals.
- I received a grant from an institution to attend a semester-long workshop during my leave that includes a stipend that is strictly for reimbursement of local expenses (rent, food). Will I be required to share this portion of my grant with the College as salary offset?

The answer to this question is determined on a case-by-case basis, but normally, since such a stipend is not salary but rather a per diem for reimbursement for local expenses, it will not be used as salary offset.

- I was awarded one of the three grants listed on my application. Do I still have to apply to the other two agencies?
Yes, unless the grant you were awarded is for full salary, you must still apply for the remaining grants listed in your application.
- If I apply for additional salary-supporting grants beyond those listed on my CFA leave application, and one or more of those grants are successful, will I be required to share any portion of those grants as salary offset with the College?
Normally, any salary offset awarded during the leave period should be shared with the College, even if the relevant grant application was not specifically required by the CFA.
- If I am not ready to apply for grant support, can I still have a fully paid sabbatical?
Yes, if you "cash in" two semesters of leave eligibility, you can take a one-semester fully paid sabbatical under a modified Plan A (half pay) without making strenuous attempts to secure funding.
- I am eligible for sabbatical leave but uncertain as to whether I will be returning to the College after my leave. Can I still take the sabbatical leave for which I qualify?
Leaves with pay (sabbatical or early leaves) are provided as an investment in a faculty member's future professional contributions to the College. Accordingly, a faculty member on paid leave is required to return to active teaching for at least two years following completion of the sabbatical leave (one year in the case of an early leave) unless the Provost indicates otherwise in writing to the faculty member.
- I am currently on sabbatical leave, and an opportunity elsewhere has arisen that I find so attractive that I am considering not returning to the College. What are my options?
As stated above, a faculty member is required to return to the College after sabbatical leave for two years or be subject to a penalty, calculated in the amount of 65% of his/her base salary.
- I am getting ready to apply for my last sabbatical leave before retirement. Am I still required to make a strenuous search for outside funding in order to qualify for a Plan B leave?
The College operates a "last leave" policy for faculty who are close to retirement. Under the terms of this policy, a faculty member who has indicated in writing to the Provost the date of his/her retirement may apply for a Plan B sabbatical without meeting the requirement of a strenuous search for outside funding. A faculty member who has applied for and received a last leave under this policy is not eligible to apply for any further sabbatical leaves from the College.
- I've just taken my last College-supported sabbatical leave. Am I required to return to teach at the College for a specified period of time?
Yes, normally. The Provost encourages faculty taking last leaves to meet with him at the time the leave application is due to discuss expectations about returning to the College. Unless a special agreement is reached to waive this requirement, you must return to the College for two years after taking your last leave.