

Policy: STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE

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Last Revision: 04/15/02

Last Reviewed: 02/21/13

References: HRS Procedures

A staff member of the University of Montana who has served a minimum of five (5) consecutive years of full-time service or its equivalent may apply. Following completion of a leave, the staff member must remain with the University of Montana for at least two (2) consecutive years of additional full-time service before becoming eligible to apply for another *Staff Professional Development Leave*.

“Staff” refers to an employee who is employed in either a classified or skilled craft position.

CONDITIONS

The number of Professional Developmental Leaves granted each year will depend upon the impact on the welfare of the University and the University’s financial ability to meet the cost of Professional Developmental Leave requests. Depending upon available funding, a specific number of staff leaves will be identified prior to the beginning of each academic year.

Staff members are eligible to apply for a professional developmental leave for a maximum of six (6) consecutive months with an extension request up to an additional six consecutive months (not to exceed 12 consecutive months).

In addition to a proposal, the staff member must also submit a signed agreement to return to the University upon completion of the leave for at least two years of full-time service or refund to the University the full salary and institutional costs of fringe benefits employee received while on leave. If the staff member returns, but fails to perform the full two-year return-to-service obligation, then the repayment obligation will be prorated and will be due within one calendar year from termination. An employee who cannot perform return-to-service obligations due to death, permanent disability, or reduction in force will be released of all repayment obligations. Determination of whether an employee is to be considered disabled will be made by Human Resource Services on the basis of appropriate documentation.

Within three (3) months following completion of the Professional Developmental Leave, the staff member must present to the department head and the appropriate executive officer a report of the activities engaged in during the leave period. This report is to include a summary of the work completed during the leave (with specific reference to the plans submitted at the time of application), specific benefits that the University will derive from the application of the new knowledge, and any other University benefits derived from the leave.

Decisions on Staff Professional Development Leave awards are not grievable.

The University reserves the right to postpone, cancel, or revoke the Professional Development Leave approval at any time based on budgetary and/or operational issues. Upon cancellation or revocation of leave, the return-to-service obligation will be pro-rated. Repayment obligations will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The base stipend for approved Professional Developmental Leaves will be at full salary for leaves up to six (6) months. If a leave is extended beyond six (6) months, the extended period of time will be as leave without pay. Staff regularly employed on a basis other than 12-months are eligible to receive the stipend only during the time period the employee is normally scheduled to work (i.e., a 10-month academic year

employee is eligible to receive a stipend for a maximum of 10-months). Any costs associated with the leave (e.g., course fees, books, or travel expenses) remains the responsibility of the staff member. Proposals which involve salaried or compensated employment by an employer other than the University may not qualify for Professional Developmental Leave but may be approved as leave without pay. An employee may assign other earned compensation to the University and receive the full allowable stipend.

Vacation and sick leave will accrue during the paid professional development leave period. Other employer-paid benefits provided for and offered to staff during the time of paid leave will be continued. Seniority, when applicable, will continue. Leave without pay policies will apply if the Staff Professional Development Leave exceeds six (6) months.