

Guidelines for Preparing a Sabbatical Application

Sabbatical applications will be reviewed on the basis of the following criteria, as stated in the Indiana State University Handbook (page III-15):

“The dean reviews each sabbatical leave proposal forwarded by a department chairperson for the following: the overall quality of the proposal, how the proposal contributes to the overall professional development of the applicant, and how the proposal contributes to the mission of the college.”

The following additional guidelines are offered to assist you in creating a clear proposal.

I. A bit of perspective:

1. Think of a sabbatical application as a grant proposal. If you were making an application for a grant for that amount, what activities and outcomes would you have to propose?
2. A sabbatical is an investment on the part of the university in the future of a faculty member (as opposed to a ‘reward’ for a job well done or “rest” for years of teaching). Sabbaticals are awarded on a competitive basis in response to a proposed project that furthers the goals of the faculty member’s department, college, and Indiana State University. Sabbatical awards are made with the commitment from the faculty member of a return of investment in the form of a deliverable or set of deliverables (e.g., usually in the form of scholarship/creative activity).
3. Sabbatical projects may involve a project within a faculty member’s current research area. A project may also be done in order to “re-tool” one’s academic skill set (teaching or scholarship). For example, it might be to learn a new research technique, or engage in new research with colleagues at another institution.
4. Without imposing strict quotas, the number of sabbaticals approved at the college level needs to take into account a reasonable breadth of departments in the college.

II. To consider as you create your application:

1. Is the project one of substance? Although a ‘substantive proposal’ is difficult to describe, the project needs to have a firm basis in the discipline. The project needs to be something that you would need to have an extended period of uninterrupted time to do or complete.
2. Does the project have a defined deliverable? What will be the end product? Is it a series of articles? Is it a book? Is it a grant proposal?

3. Is the project actually do-able in the timeline of the sabbatical? Sometimes sabbatical proposals are too ambitious, and all deliverables cannot be attained. What is a realistic product that can be achieved?
4. What is the timeline for the activities and the deliverables? What will be done, when, and with whom (if travel and visiting with other colleagues, places involved)? What is the timeline of the deliverables? For example, if you are working on a book, when do you estimate the book will be finished?
5. What is the likelihood of success of the project? If you are writing a book, do you have a letter of interest or intent to publish from a publisher? If you are writing a grant, are there pilot data that support the basis for the larger proposal? Of course, the project needs to have a high probability of success.....so, what is the evidence that the project will be successful? The applicant's prior track record (publication record) is part of the evidence.
6. If you had a sabbatical previously, what was the outcome? Did you file a report in a timely fashion? Did you produce the deliverables that were proposed, in the proposed timeline? If not, why not? Any future sabbaticals need to be considered in light of the success of prior sabbaticals.