

UB-VI-6.8, Policy on Professional and/or Research Leave for Faculty Members Engaged Exclusively or Primarily in Library Services

Approved by LFS 3/6/2025

Reviewed UFS 9/3/2025

Reviewed by AG 7/10/26

Approved by President 7/20/26

I. Background

As an important component of ongoing library faculty development, professional and/or research leave provides opportunities for enhancing the quality of teaching, scholarship, and service within the University by allowing library faculty members to expand their skills, abilities, and experience.

The University president grants professional and/or research leaves to librarians whose proposals clearly demonstrate how the leave (1) provides an opportunity for conducting scholarly or creative work which would increase their contribution to the mission of the university; (2) enhances their standing in the discipline or profession; and/or (3) advances the quality of research instruction and the student experience.

II. Required Status

To be eligible for professional and/or research leave, a librarian faculty member must hold permanent status and have been in active full-time service with the institution as a librarian for a period of at least six (6) years prior to an initial leave being granted. A full-time librarian must remain on active service with the institution for an additional period of at least six (6) years to become eligible for a subsequent professional and/or research leave. A part-time librarian shall have been granted permanent status and shall have completed six (6) or more years of at least half-time service to become eligible for a subsequent professional and/or research leave. Ordinarily, a leave of absence without pay shall not be regarded as service to the institution for purposes of determining eligibility for professional and/or research leave. Librarians with questions regarding whether a specific leave will count as service should consult with the Office of the Provost.

III. Request Procedure

- a) A librarian, applying for professional and/or research leave, shall submit a formal written proposal to the director of the appropriate library, stating clearly the nature of the proposed professional and/or research leave project and their reasons for believing that the activity to be performed during the leave will be beneficial to the university and to them. The request must also include the specific dates for which the leave is requested and must fall within the faculty member's annual contract period. (A librarian may request any 6- or 12-month period.)
- b) Proposals for professional and/or research leave shall be submitted to the appropriate library director at least six (6) months prior to the start of the proposed leave period, or no later than December 15 of the academic year preceding the requested leave period. Research and/or professional leave requests will be reviewed by the appropriate library faculty and department, as applicable, and then sent to the appropriate library director.

- c) The library director shall review all proposals and determine which proposals will be submitted, with their endorsement, to the Provost. The library director's endorsement of the professional and/or research request should include a statement that the librarian can be spared during the leave period without any disruption to academic programs and that sufficient funds are available in the operating budget of the library for the appointment of a temporary replacement if required.

IV. Approval

The President will review and approve proposals based on the criteria set forth in this Policy. The President, in considering the request, shall also be guided by the recommendations of the appropriate library director and the appropriate library faculty.

V. Operations

The librarian applying for research and/or professional leave shall agree, as a precondition for accepting same, to return promptly to the university upon termination of the leave period and to remain in service for at least one academic year immediately subsequent to their return, except under unusual circumstances in which the President may decide otherwise. Unless otherwise approved by the President, if the librarian fails to return or fails to remain in service for at least one year following the leave, they shall be liable for the repayment of the whole or a proportionate share of the salary paid to them during the professional and/or research leave period.

VI. Length

Professional and/or research leave will be granted for one-half of the recipient's annual contract period at their normal compensation or for the full annual contract period at one-half normal compensation for both full- and part-time librarians. Since librarians are generally on 12-month contracts, professional and/or research leave may be granted for shorter periods (i.e., three months) or divided into shorter periods (i.e., two summers rather than a full six months).

VII. Benefits

All benefits and privileges of a librarian on professional and/or research leave shall continue in effect as if they were not on such leave (i.e., salary merit increases, opportunity for promotion, retirement benefits, etc.) Certain benefits may be pro-rated according to policy during full-year leaves. Librarians considering a full year of professional and/or research leave should consult the Office of Human Resources. The leave period shall not be regarded as service to the University for purposes of determining eligibility for a subsequent professional and/or research leave.

VIII. Outside Employment During Professional and/or Research Leave

Full-time outside employment by the librarian on professional and/or research leave is prohibited. During the period of professional and/or research leave, the recipient will be permitted, with the approval of the President or designee, to accept, in addition to the compensation they receive from the institution, such grants, awards, contracts, fellowships, or other compensation or stipends as may be related to the approved leave project. Further, while on professional and/or research leave, the recipient may accept compensation for consulting services rendered during the leave, provided that

such services shall not exceed those allowed by and are in compliance with the [USM Policy on Professional Commitment of Faculty, II-3.10](#) and the [UBalt Policy on Professional Commitment of Faculty, vi-8.1](#) and that they do not interfere with the approved leave project.

IX. Professional and/or Research Leave Report

A report summarizing the activities and accomplishments of the professional and/or research leave shall be submitted to the appropriate library director and to the Provost in the semester immediately following completion of the leave period. The report should describe how the activities of and accomplishments derived from the professional and/or research leave will contribute to the mission of the University, library, and relevant programs.