

NTNU's Sabbatical Guidelines

Type of Document	Regulations
Document Manager	HR and HSE Division
Approved by	Rector 18 February 2025
Applicable from	February 2025
Ref. governing documents	
Archive reference	Case 2024/12682
Remarks	

1. Purpose

Sabbaticals are strategic periods dedicated to research, artistic work and professional development work in accordance with NTNU's strategic goals, the needs of the academic community, and the professional interests of the academic employee in question. The aim of the scheme is to facilitate skills and career development by providing academic employees with uninterrupted time for academic specialisation and development.

NTNU uses the scheme to promote:

- quality in research, artistic and professional development work, including quality development in education and knowledge-based innovation and dissemination.
- networking and external collaboration nationally and internationally with research communities and partners in the private and public sectors.

Sabbaticals are incorporated into the faculties' and departments' long-term professional strategies, staff plans and budgets.

Sabbaticals are normally granted for one year or one semester.

Facilitation of academic specialisation and short-term external stays are managed through other staff policy measures in dialogue with the academic employee's immediate manager.

2. Who can apply

Permanent employees in a full-time position such as:

- Associate professors
- Professors

Academic employees can apply for a one-year sabbatical after five years of employment or after 5 years have passed since their last sabbatical, or for a half-year sabbatical after half that time. Allocation will depend on the quality of the application and available resources for the purpose.

Academic employees with sideline employment, in tenure track positions, and fixed-term appointed managers are not covered by the sabbatical scheme. The right to professional development after completing a term as a fixed-term appointed manager shall be included in their employment contract.

3. Application requirements and assessment criteria

The academic employee must develop a sabbatical plan that maintains a high academic standard and aligns with the department's academic priorities and NTNU's strategic goals (cf. the purpose of the scheme).

The application should contain:

- A professional plan for the sabbatical period (project plan) which also includes a description of expected results for the applicant and how these outcomes will benefit the academic community.
- A plan for and a letter of intent regarding a stay at an external university and/or organisation, either nationally or internationally, where applicable.
- A plan for financing, including external funding, as well as any mobility grant applications for extended academic stays abroad.
- A plan for managing teaching and supervision duties during the sabbatical, developed in collaboration with the department.
- The results and benefits from any previous sabbatical(s).

Criteria for assessing sabbatical applications

- The department's assessment of the academic quality and feasibility of the plan.
- Assessment of the application in light of the department's professional development needs (cf. strategic purpose of the scheme).
- Development of external networks with universities and research institutions, private and public organisations, both nationally and internationally.
- Extended academic stays abroad and/or in external organisations in Norway.
- The academic employee's professional activity and results relevant to the application for a sabbatical.

Other factors that may be considered important

- Time since the previous sabbatical/since the employee was appointed. A one-year/two-semester sabbatical will normally not be granted more frequently than every six years, or after half that time for a one-semester sabbatical.
- Any previous rejection or postponement due to teaching capacity or staffing situation in the subject area.
- Particularly demanding administrative tasks or academic leadership responsibilities.
- Prioritisation of academic employees early in their careers who need career development, networking opportunities and international experience.
- Career development for the underrepresented gender in the academic community (cf. [gender equality and diversity at NTNU](#))

The head of the department, in consultation with the academic staff, may determine which criteria should be emphasised when prioritising applications within their department.

4. Extended academic stays abroad – funding and guidance

NTNU is internationally oriented and a significant contributor to global knowledge development. Internationalisation is integrated into the academic activities of all our research communities.

The faculty/department shall facilitate extended academic stays abroad for employees granted a sabbatical. Academic employees can apply for a mobility grant of 3 to 11 months based on the Research Council of Norway's rates through their faculty/department.

NTNU will provide practical guidance and enter into agreements with outgoing academic staff.

5. Application deadlines and decisions on sabbaticals

Decisions on sabbaticals are normally made by the faculty based on a recommendation from the head of department.

The faculty may delegate decision-making responsibilities to the head of department who has overall HR and budget responsibility for the academic employee in question.

Rejections must be justified and communicated in writing to the applicant.

6. Rights and obligations

The academic employee receives full salary during the sabbatical but is exempt from teaching, clinical and administrative duties. Supervision of PhD students continues during the sabbatical.

The professional plan must be approved by the head of the department. The academic employee cannot be assigned tasks other than those included in the professional plan (project plan) for the sabbatical, nor take on other tasks or engage in secondary employment during the sabbatical unless approved by their HR manager.

Before the sabbatical, the academic employee must agree on the use of holidays with their HR manager.

7. Results and reporting

The academic employee must submit a brief professional report to the HR manager/department, with a copy to the faculty, no later than two months after the sabbatical ends. The report must describe how the sabbatical was used in relation to the professional plan, as well as the results from the sabbatical and how these will contribute to the academic/professional development of the academic employee's research community/department/faculty.

The academic employee must submit a financial settlement for reimbursement of additional expenses related to the sabbatical no later than one month after the sabbatical ends.

Upon returning home, the academic employee must share experiences and results from the sabbatical with their colleagues at appropriate meeting arenas within the academic community, or as the department deems suitable, to ensure that the results benefit the academic community.