



## The College of Idaho

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Academic Leave of Absence Policy
<b>Responsible Department/Preparer:</b>	Academic Affairs
<b>Approved By:</b>	President's Direct Reports
<b>Approval Date:</b>	May 4, 2015
<b>Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Related Policies (if any):</b>	Faculty Handbook Section XI, Sabbatical Policy; Medical and Personal leave policies; ALOA Procedures

**Summary/Purpose:** To define the terms associated with academic leave of absence that occurs outside the framework of sabbatical leave, and as distinct from leave of absence for medical or personal reasons.

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*Overview: to provide clear guidance regarding what the College can support, what terms are negotiable, and when they must be negotiated for many different situations involving externally funded scholarship, teaching, and research.*

*In general, goals are 1) to enable beneficial solutions to emerge on a case-by-case basis, and 2) to recognize the prestige associated with some fellowships (e.g., NEH, but not necessarily every other grant or fellowship), and 3) to strike a fair balance between the needs of the College and the needs to the faculty member.*

*Additional details are available in the separate "ALOA Procedures" document.*

The main document sections are as follows:

- Academic leave of absence (ALOA) –definition and distinction from other types of LOA (medical, personal...) or leave (sabbatical);
- General conditions of "typical" ALOAs, including salary guidelines;
- Risk mitigation–pre-authorization and negotiation of case-specific terms of ALOAs
- Relationship between ALOAs and sabbatical
- Required paperwork–detailed letter of agreement that spells out the rationale, including faculty person's duties during and after the ALOA

### Academic Leave of Absence

An academic leave of absence (ALOA) is defined primarily by the purpose of and incentive for the leave of absence: to advance scholarship in such a manner that the person is temporarily relieved of all or most institutional duties, in favor of an extended period of study or research, or

in rare cases, teaching at a different institution. Typically an ALOA is supported by significant external funding (see below).

If the main purpose of an LOA is to recover from illness, or receive extended medical treatment, leave for personal reasons, or family (FMLA) leave, then that absence from campus does not constitute an ALOA, and the leave is covered by other College policies.

### Typical Conditions of ALOA

In general, the College does not encourage applications for full-year fellowships except when they coincide with a planned sabbatical, but exceptions can occur, and those are negotiated with "win-win" in mind: that is, the terms of the ALOA do not place hardship on either the faculty person or the institution. Recognizing that some fellowships are very competitive and prestigious (for example, NEH Fellowships), the College supports and endorses applications for those awards. Even though only a small percentage of these fellowship applications are awarded, planning for a successful review must take place before the application is submitted.

Satisfactory terms for an ALOA typically require careful planning and negotiation to ensure that the needs of both the faculty person and the institution are met. Thus, the terms of any ALOA must be negotiated ahead of time, no later than when an application for external funding is being prepared. Before such application can be submitted, a written agreement must be in place, signed by the faculty person, the VPAA, and the President of the College.

If an award (external funding via fellowship, grant, or contract) is made, and the plan for the ALOA moves forward, the faculty person's College contract will be rewritten to include the specific arrangements outlined in the letter. This modified contract is a binding legal document.

The above requirements do not apply to NEH Summer Fellowships, since they do not disrupt a faculty member's institutional duties.

### Case-by case Negotiation of Terms for an ALOA

Most often, the terms of an ALOA involve hiring of a visiting assistant professor (VAP) to cover the absent faculty member's teaching responsibilities. The faculty member requesting an ALOA must assess, in consultation with the VPAA, the actual costs to the faculty member and to the College of various scenarios, to orchestrate a "win-win" plan of action.

External funding, then, provides a mechanism to offset the budgetary impact of hiring a VAP. Without external funding, the College would need to either cancel all of the courses scheduled for the faculty person on ALOA, or provide sufficient funds to cover the VAP's salary and benefits from internal sources. In general neither of these solutions is acceptable. Instead, partial budget offset generated by the awarded fellowship (or other grant) can be combined creatively with schemes of reassignment and limited internal funds to generate a solution deemed acceptable by all concerned parties. All of the faculty person's institutional responsibilities must be accounted for in the plan. This includes advising, committee work, teaching, and other duties.

During an approved ALOA, a faculty person working at least half-time (50% effort) is eligible for benefits according to College policy.

In many cases an external fellowship offers less salary than the awardee makes in a 9-month academic year. In that case, the College may provide a small supplement or "top-off" so that the awardee does not experience a significant salary reduction during the ALOA. The limit of salary

supplement that the College may provide is two ninths ( $2/9$ , or 22.22%) of the faculty person's salary. This limit is not a guarantee, but a maximum amount that may be negotiated in favorable circumstances. If the ALOA period of research extends into the summer months, then the College policy for summer faculty effort and pay applies to the summer salary.

Below are some of the strategies that may be explored during negotiation:

- Devise a funding plan and basic coverage of other responsibilities
- Coordinate with other faculty members scheduled for sabbatical leave during all or part of the proposed ALOA
- Schedule the ALOA to be asynchronous with sabbaticals (calendar year, not academic year ALOA)
- Shift the budget offset created by fellowship dollars into the most useful internal budget categories to make the ALOA feasible
- Shift some of the awardee's institutional responsibilities into the pre- or post-ALOA year to balance out college needs.

#### Relationship between ALOA and Sabbatical Leave

An ALOA is not the same as a sabbatical leave, but any ALOA must be evaluated as to whether any, part, or all of the ALOA period counts toward future sabbatical leave. The relevant College policy on sabbatical Leave is covered in Section XI of the Faculty Handbook.

Consistent with the Faculty handbook, sabbatical leave is typically granted every seven years to allow a full-time tenure-track faculty member relief from institutional responsibilities and enable immersion in research and scholarship. Thus, years that count toward sabbatical leave are years in which the faculty member's primary responsibility is teaching.

Accordingly, if the ALOA involves complete immersion in research, then the ALOA does not count toward future sabbatical leave. If an ALOA involves some teaching, then (all or part of) the ALOA may be counted toward future sabbatical leave, according to the guidelines in the Faculty Handbook; if so, specific terms must be negotiated ahead of time along with other terms of the ALOA (see above).

Other Faculty Handbook guidelines associated with sabbatical leave apply as well to ALOA:

- "Sabbatical projects should culminate in final products in an appropriate field of study that are externally reviewed by peers. Review will typically occur through scholarly publication, conference presentation, exhibition, or public performance." Thus, research during an ALOA must adhere to these same standards.
- "Faculty members are expected to share the enhancements to their knowledge and skills provided by the sabbatical experience with the campus community; thus, faculty members taking a sabbatical are required to return to full teaching and administrative duties for at least one year following the sabbatical." In this regard, a person on ALOA must return to his or her institutional duties for at least one year following the ALOA.
- "Faculty members are expected to have made satisfactory progress toward fulfilling their prior sabbatical proposals, or other comparable scholarship, before another will be awarded." Here, "other comparable scholarship" includes scholarship during ALOA.

- “A semester's leave of absence moves that person down the priority list two positions, and a winter session's leave of absence moves the person down the list one position. There are no penalties for leave qualifying under the Family Medical Leave Act.” These rules apply to any ALOA.

#### Required Paperwork

As an outcome of negotiations regarding the terms of any ALOA, the faculty person, in collaboration with the VPAA, must prepare a detailed letter of agreement that spells out the rationale for the ALOA, and includes that faculty person's duties during and after the ALOA. This letter must be prepared before any grant application for external funding during the ALOA is submitted. The terms of the ALOA must be acceptable to the faculty person proposing the ALOA, the VPAA, and the President of the College; all three must sign the letter for it to be valid.

If an award is made and approved plans for the ALOA move forward, the Human Resources Office must prepare a modified contract that reflects the specific terms of agreement during the LOA, and any special arrangements required beforehand or afterward. This document replaces the standard contract that would be issued if the ALOA does not materialize.