

Professional Leave

Employees – Exempt Employee Code

CWU Policy 305-35

Effective: January 16, 2019

Policy Review Date: YEAR

Policy Executive: Senior Vice President – Finance and Administration

Responsible Office/Unit: Human Resources

Policy Statement:

Applicability:

Content:

Policy

Appendix A - Professional Leave Procedure

(1) Purpose:

- A. A professional leave may be granted to provide opportunities for exempt employees to study, research, or conduct creative activities for the enhancement of the university's instructional and research programs as provided under RCW 28B.10.650.

(2) Eligibility:

- A. Only employees covered under this code who have been in exempt service at the university for at least four years are eligible for a professional leave. Exempt employees with part-time appointments may qualify for a professional leave on a prorated basis. A professional leave shall not be awarded automatically nor solely upon these factors.

History:

EEAGB: 4/7/08; BOT: 6/6/08; BOT: 2/09; BOT: 6/09; Responsibility: CFO/BFA; Authority: President's Office; Reviewed/Endorsed Cabinet/PAC; Review/Effective Date: 09/05/2012; 01/16/2019; Approved by: James L. Gaudino, President

Reformatted and Assigned new Policy Number - Previous Policy CWUP 6-70-010, June 2025

Attached Procedure CWUR 6-70-010 as Appendix A, June 2025

Appendix A - Professional Leave Procedure

(1) Application Process

- A. A completed application (instructions and form available from Human Resources) shall be filed with the applicant's supervisor at least six months before the time the applicant wishes to take the absence, unless the supervisor agrees to waive the six-month notice. The application shall include the information listed in 1 through 8 below and provide assurance of compliance to the special conditions outlined in this code regarding professional leave.
1. General information including name, office, title, date of initial exempt service with the university, brief summary of purpose for leave, terms of the absences preferred, dates of previous professional leave.
 2. A detailed statement of the applicant's plans for utilizing the time requested. This statement should include such information as the time sequence for completion of any project or plan, and how the plan would enhance the-instructional or research programs of the university.
 3. Background information concerning the applicant's previous professional work, especially in the area of the proposed plan.
 4. A list of foundations, institutions, or other organizations with which the applicant will be affiliated during the absence period.
 5. A complete listing of grants and stipends other than those granted by the institution which will be available to the applicant during the absence.
 6. Justification for travel requested in terms of the proposed project or plan for study.
 7. The applicant's acknowledgement that if he/she does not return to and serve in a professional status for a period equal to the amount of the absence granted, the employee shall be liable for repayment to the university the salary and benefits paid during the period of professional leave.
 8. Supporting documentation from other appropriate individuals may also be submitted.
- B. The application, with the supervisor's recommendations, shall be forwarded through all levels of supervision to the division head with a copy to human resources. The supervisor must verify that:
1. The applicant can be released for the requested period of time from assigned duties.
 2. The applicant's responsibilities can be covered within existing institutional resources.
 3. The purpose of the absence is within the scope of the guidelines established by RCW 28B.10.650 and is consistent with university priorities and needs.
- C. Modifications may be made to the original request at the various levels of approval in consultation with human resources.
- D. Upon receipt of the application and recommendations, the appropriate cabinet member shall make the decision. Once approved, human resources will be provided with a copy of the entire application packet and approval. (Application packets that are denied at any step shall be returned

to the employee with copies to HR. The application process and the denial of professional leave are not subject to the grievance procedure.)

(2) Special Conditions

- A. The awarding of a professional leave is dependent upon internal administrative decisions involving scheduling of replacement personnel and budgetary constraints and satisfactory arrangement must be made to handle the duties of the applicant during the absence.
- B. Professional leave may be granted for a period not to exceed twelve consecutive months. Intermittent absences extending beyond a one year period require re-application and re-approval on an annual basis.
- C. Exempt employees awarded a professional leave shall receive 75 percent of the salary they would receive had they remained in their regular position with the university, subject to reductions, if any, listed in subsection (D) below . Across-the-board adjustments to salaries, and adjustments under CWU 305-24 (Salary Administration) to achieve exempt salary equity, granted during the period the exempt employee is on a professional leave shall be applied to the employee's salary.
- D. If the applicant secures external funding which is designated for salary purposes, such funds may be applied to bring the exempt employee's remuneration for the period of the absence up to full salary thereby, reducing the university's contribution. The gross salary during the period of absence combined with remuneration of other services shall not exceed 100 percent of the applicant's gross salary (no more than 75% of the original base salary as provided by CWU and the remainder from all other funding sources at CWU).
- E. If the applicant secures external or internal funding support for travel, moving expenses, supplies, etc., related to the intent of the professional leave, such funds shall be used for said expenses and not considered to be salary. Any payment/reimbursement requested and approved for such activities shall be identified in the initial application. Even if initially approved, the university shall not pay for these activities or reimburse the employee for expenses arising from these activities if and when other funding has been secured.
- F. The period of professional leave shall be counted as service time to the university, with retirement rights retained and insurance and similar benefits continued. Annual leave and sick leave hours shall not accrue during any month in which the employee is on professional leave for more than 80 hours. Further, an employee shall not be required to use accrued vacation leave or sick leave during any period of active professional leave.
- G. A professional leave, once granted by the university, shall be for a specific purpose; any changes in plans must be re-evaluated and approved by those who approve the absence. Approval by the appropriate cabinet member shall be required if the modifications are significant or alter the period of professional service required following the professional leave.
- H. A written summary report of the use of professional leave shall be submitted by the exempt employee to the employee's immediate supervisor within two months after he or she returns to the university and forwarded to the appropriate cabinet member through the appropriate levels of supervision. The report must summarize the work completed and how the experience and the new knowledge will be utilized by the exempt employee to enhance the instructional or research programs at the university.