

## **Frequently asked questions about the Sabbatical Leave Programme**

### ***What is the sabbatical leave programme?***

The Sabbatical Programme is an opportunity for staff members to:

- add value to their contribution to the Organization and enhance their intellectual growth through research on issues relating to the work of the UN;
- enhance dialogue and contacts between the UN and other organizations and institutions engaged in related work worldwide; and
- gain exposure to state-of-the-art research and practices on issues on the international agenda.

The sabbatical leave programme is leave with full pay that can be approved for up to four months, subject to release of the staff member by the head of department or office. It is one of the career development tools that the Organization provides

### ***Who is eligible to apply for the sabbatical leave?***

Staff members with at least five years of service with the United Nations Secretariat under continuing, permanent or fixed-term appointments, and who are expected to serve for at least two years after the completion of the sabbatical leave are eligible to apply.

### ***I am a staff member under General Service category, am I eligible to apply for the sabbatical leave programme?***

Yes. The sabbatical leave programme is open to all staff members who meet the eligibility requirements.

### ***Is Special Leave Without Pay (SLWOP) exceeding one month counted towards the five years of service with the Secretariat?***

No. Staff members shall not accrue service credits towards sick, annual and home leave, salary increment, seniority, termination indemnity and repatriation grant during periods of special leave with partial pay or without pay exceeding one month. Following the same logic, staff members on SLWOP for a period exceeding one month do not accrue service credits towards the five-year requirement for eligibility to the sabbatical leave programme. Continuous periods of special leave with partial pay or without pay exceeding one month or service on a loan or secondment outside the Secretariat are not considered as breaking the continuity of service, but are not counted towards the five-year continuous service requirement.

### ***If I am selected, can I defer my sabbatical leave to the following year?***

Under exceptional circumstances, such as exigencies of service or illness, the Office of Human Resources Management may authorize the deferral of sabbatical leave to the following year. A request for deferral has to be submitted by the staff member in writing with the endorsement of the head of department or office.

### ***Are weekends and official holidays counted in the four months sabbatical leave?***

Yes, the four-month period of the sabbatical leave includes weekends and official holidays. Travel days are also included in that period.

### ***Will my post adjustment change to reflect amounts paid in the country I am travelling to?***

No, you will continue to receive the post adjustment for your official duty station.

***What do I need in order to apply for the sabbatical?***

The Information Circular (IC) on the sabbatical leave programme, available on the HR portal (<https://hr.un.org/page/sabbatical-leave-programme>) in the section 'important documents', describes the details of the application process. The application includes:

- a. An application form, contained in annex I to the IC;
- b. Proposal form, contained in annex II to the IC;
- c. Endorsement form, contained in annex III to the IC, completed by the head of department/office/mission or Director/Chief of Mission Support responsible for the work of the applicant during the proposed research or study project;
- d. Official written correspondence between the applicant and the proposed sabbatical institution confirming acceptance;
- e. The signed declaration contained in the annex to ST/AI/2015/5; and
- f. Application checklist contained in annex VII to the IC.

***How do I select my sabbatical institution?***

Interested staff members are responsible for identifying the institution or organization in which they propose to carry out their study or research project. In addition to universities and independent institutions worldwide, including participating research and training centres of the United Nations University and institutions that are members of the Academic Council on the United Nations System, research or study projects may also be pursued in other relevant organizations and institutions. Staff members are also responsible for securing their acceptance by the selected institution and for ascertaining the type of support services and facilities that the institution is willing to provide. This information has to be included in the application.

***I have all the documentation, where do I send my application?***

All applications must be sent to [sabbatical@un.org](mailto:sabbatical@un.org) with copy to the direct supervisor of the staff member.

***How are the proposals evaluated?***

The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, assisted by a selection committee, reviews the proposals submitted and makes a final selection in accordance with the criteria set out in the relevant Administrative Instruction.

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- Relevance of the project of study or research to the Organization and to the current functions or potential career path of the staff member;
- The potential benefit and impact to the Organization's work;

- Feasibility of the project of study or research including whether it can be completed within the proposed period;
- Appropriateness of the planned methodology;
- Quality of the proposal including demonstrating awareness of the latest developments in the area of the project of study or research; and
- Suitability of the staff member and the proposed institution to carry out the project of study or research.

***How is the selection committee established?***

The selection committee consists of senior staff members and experts nominated by various Departments/Offices. A Staff Development Officer from OHRM serves as ex-officio.

***Is the selection decision final?***

The decision made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management based on the recommendations of selection committee is final and not subject to appeals.

***When will applicants be notified of the selection decision?***

It normally takes around two months after the end of the application period for the selection committee to make a decision, depending on the number of applications received. Each applicant will be informed of the selection decision, regardless of the result of their application.

***Does the Organization provide any additional financial payment during the sabbatical leave?***

Selected staff members are placed on special leave with full pay for the sabbatical leave period. Staff members on sabbatical leave continue to receive their salary, post adjustment and all related entitlements, such as rental subsidy and education grant, applicable to their regular duty station. No additional payments are made by the United Nations to the staff member during sabbatical leave. Staff members may receive scholarships or stipends for room, board or travel expenses to support their sabbatical leave from an entity other than the United Nations with the pre-approval of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management.

***When do I have to submit the report on the research conducted during the sabbatical?***

All sabbatical participants are required to submit a report within two months of the end of their sabbatical leave. The report must follow the format provided in the Information Circular.