

Faculty Parental Workload Reduction GUIDELINES and PROCEDURE

6 September 2019 (Revision 13, 2 February 2022)

Intent and Principles: Academic Affairs supports faculty in balancing their academic and personal lives. The division strives to help faculty coordinate the needs and timing of an academic career and balancing the sometimes-competing priorities of their academic and personal lives. We are committed to creating an environment that supports faculty when the responsibilities of a newborn or adopted child are particularly demanding by allowing a faculty member to take time away from work during such special circumstances. This guideline provides a mechanism for faculty parental reduction of workload (PRW). This guideline is motivated, in part, by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which requires that eligible employees are entitled to:

“Twelve workweeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period for (among others):

- the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;
- the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;”

Institutional support of faculty reduction of workload with pay is possible, but contingent on the availability of funding.

It is the intent of this guideline that all parties (AA, the department, and the faculty in question) contribute significantly to enable, support and plan the reduction of the workload. These contributions may include, but are not limited to:

- Faculty: Will generally try to make a good-faith effort to help the department meet its needs by continuing to stay active in research and service, possibly at a lower level, perhaps teach an extra course before or after the semester in question, and help organize/support any classes that departmental faculty are covering as overload.
- Department Chairs: Will attempt to accommodate class schedules during the workload reduction with existing faculty, whether that means departmental faculty doing extra teaching for one semester OR the department temporarily reducing the number of electives offered.
- Academic Affairs: Will plan financially for the contingency of parental workload reduction and will support the salary of the faculty member during the period of reduced workload. Funding for additional part-time instruction may also be available.

Scope and Eligibility: The scope of these guidelines and procedures is limited to the regular full time faculty of Academic Affairs. However, to the extent that these guidelines and procedures are useful or adaptable in or for other contexts, such use is encouraged.

If both parents are faculty members, both are eligible for parental workload reductions. If both faculty members are in the same department, they should discuss with the Chair how to best meet the needs of the department and the family. Should both parents be eligible faculty members, the allowed PWR is a total of one semester for each faculty member. If both parents wish to take PWR, whether consecutively or concurrently, then both will be reimbursed. Whether by birth or by adoption, parents (mothers, fathers, spouses) are eligible for equal PWR, as are parents accepting a long-term foster placement or fostering toward adoption.

For all faculty parents, this is a negotiable agreement that may not be possible under certain circumstances, especially concerning the availability of funds and department capabilities. The PRW may not be used for outside work, whether part-time or full-time, for pay. A faculty member taking PRW must also agree that they will return to work at NMT following the PWR for a length of time equal to or greater than the PWR time taken. Failure to abide by this agreement will result in a formal demand for the return of any salary provided during the PRW period

Procedure:

1. The faculty member makes the request for a reduction of workload to the department Chair. They should discuss the need well in advance, when possible, to allow the Chair to plan ahead and make alternative teaching or other academic arrangements. When research and advising are part of the duties, it is normally expected that these activities will continue during PWR, although possibly at a reduced rate. Teaching relief for one semester can be full or partial relief, depending on the circumstances.
2. The faculty member and the department Chair work together to develop a plan for reduction of workload that meets both the needs of the faculty member and the needs of the department. The Chair will address the issues and impacts of program course delivery and faculty workloads within the department. The plan should minimize the impact of PWR on students, grantors, and other beneficiaries of the academic program.
3. The department Chair will make the recommendation, along with a plan to cover necessary courses, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for approval. Regardless of whether the Chair supports or opposes the PWR request, that request must be sent to the VPAA.
4. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will review the recommendation and the plan, ask for revisions if necessary; and budgets for any additional teaching needs that may be required, if justified. The VPAA will then inform the faculty member and the Chair of his/her decision. Institutional support for faculty reduction of workload is contingent on the availability of funding.
5. The tenure clock will be paused, unless otherwise requested in writing, when a faculty member is on PWR. Vice presidents, deans, department chairs, and program directors should help faculty members to make informed decisions about extending the probationary period.
6. Committees for reappointment, tenure, and promotion reviews shall not allow tenure clock extensions to have a negative impact in the evaluation of any candidate.
7. The period of reduction in workload will not count towards time worked to earn a sabbatical. In the case of full semester of workload reduction with pay, the faculty will restart earning time for his/her sabbatical after completion of the workload reduction.
8. Extraordinary circumstances may necessitate additional reduction and/or flexibility in contractual workload, and shall be referred to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for a determination. These situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine how best to meet the additional needs of the faculty member and the department. Academic Affairs will make a good-faith effort to ensure that these decisions will be applied consistently to ensure equitable treatment of faculty.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requirements: “The FMLA entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave. Eligible employees are entitled to: Twelve workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for (among others):

- the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;
- the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;”

Link to frequently asked questions about FMLA: <https://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/fmla-faqs.htm>