

Term Faculty Study Leave Program AY 2026-2027

According to the new Mason [Faculty Handbook](#) update in section 3.6.2 Leave Program for Instructional Faculty, eligible term faculty are now provided with an opportunity to apply for a study leave to advance their scholarly research, teaching, and/or creative activity, including the development of innovative teaching approaches and methods. Leaves are for one semester at full pay and full benefits or an academic year at half pay. Full academic year leaves may begin in either fall or spring semester. Applicants should clearly communicate the specific semester and years for which they are applying for leave.

The College of Science developed the following guidelines for term faculty study leave requests to provide transparency in how and when a study leave can be requested as well as how those requests are reviewed. These guidelines are intended to allow for a coordinated, proactive, and fair review process across the entire College.

Eligibility

In addition to the other eligibility requirements, terms, and conditions listed on the [Provost website](#), faculty members must be in good standing with their home academic unit and the college to apply. Term faculty with six years of service at Mason and who have completed at least six years of service after a previous study leave are eligible to apply to participate in the study leave program. Years of service as an adjunct may be considered on a case-by-case basis. An applicant may apply in year 6 for a study leave in year 7 (with year 1 being the first year back from the completed study leave). In some cases, time spent on leave of absence, leave without pay, or time worked at another agency or institution may count towards the 6 years, but only if authorized by the Dean. A faculty member who receives a study leave must agree to remain a full-time employee of the College for at least one academic year after the conclusion of the leave.

Evaluative Criteria and Requirements

The number of applications that will be approved each year is dependent upon the number and caliber of applications received and the amount of teaching replacement funding provided by Central Administration. Favorable consideration will be given to proposals that span a full academic year; are focused on a collaborative project with specific outcomes and where the faculty member is improving pedagogical methods via a funded medium. The timing of a leave may be delayed if, in the judgment of the Chair of the faculty member's department or Dean of the College, the faculty member's services are essential and necessary for the requested leave period. In this case, the Chair or Dean will include a clear rationale for their decision in their recommendation and decision letters.

At the completion of the approved study leave, faculty members must submit a report of accomplishments and plans for continuing activities related to the study leave (maximum 2 pages). The report should be emailed to the department chair or director, with copies sent to deancos@gmu.edu and coshr@gmu.edu. A copy of the report will be maintained in the faculty member's College of Science personnel file.

Study Leave Process Timeline

Note: these deadlines do not align with those posted on the [Provost Office](#) website.

- **December 1, 2025:** Deadline for faculty to notify their department Chair of their intent to apply for a study leave. Faculty should discuss with their Chair whether leave will have a significant teaching and/ or financial impact on the department.
- **January 12, 2026:** Deadline for faculty to submit their proposals via the [Term Faculty Study Leave form](#). The College HR office will forward it to the respective Chair/Director for their review.
- **February 2, 2026:** The Chair's letter(s) of recommendation is/are due and should mention whether the faculty leave will have a significant teaching and/or financial impact on the department. When multiple faculty members from the same department submit a proposal for the same semester, the Chair must prioritize the proposals based on merit and include a statement for how the routine operations of the department can be continued if both faculty members are awarded a study leave.
- **February 3, 2026:** The College Faculty Matters Committee receives applications and meets to review proposals.
- **February 23, 2026:** The Dean reviews recommendations from the College Faculty Matters Committee, reviews proposals, and makes final decisions.
- **March 1, 2026:** Applicants are notified of the Dean's decision on their proposal.
- **If Study Leave is Approved:** Faculty whose proposals are approved are responsible for working with their Chair/Director, college HR team, and Benefits Administrator in central HR (for full AY leaves) to initiate the appropriate transaction forms.

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Required Application Materials

Application Form: The [Microsoft form](#) supplied by the college for the application cycle that contains summary information about the faculty member's proposal. The remaining documents are uploaded to the form and submitted for consideration by pressing the Submit button at the bottom of the form.

Curriculum Vitae (*maximum 5 pages*): The CV should be current and include the faculty member's most notable accomplishments in research, teaching, and service activities to date.

Project Proposal (*maximum 3 pages*): The proposal should describe the objectives and anticipated final work products of the study leave. The proposal may include several types of activities such as research, book writing, course and courseware development. Term instructional faculty should seek specific Chair approval for research-related activities due to P&T considerations.

Prior Study Leave Report (*If applicable; maximum 2 pages*): Brief report on products and outcomes from previous tenured faculty study leave.

Host Institution Permission (*if applicable; maximum 1 page*): If the proposed study leave is to be spent in residence at another institution, the faculty member must submit a letter of support from an appropriate official at the host institution.

In addition, if the faculty member will be appointed to a salaried position while in residence at another institution, the appointment must be to a non-tenured temporary position (e.g. Visiting Scholar) AND: For a two-semester leave (one academic year) at half pay, the amount of additional salary is limited to one-half of the faculty member's current academic-year salary.

For a one semester leave at full pay, no additional salary may be accepted. Any exceptions to this provision must be approved by the faculty member's Dean and must comply with the other Mason personnel policies.

Chair's Letter of Support (*maximum 2 pages*): This letter should explain the importance of the contributions of the applicant and address whether the leave would have a significant teaching and/or financial impact on the department. It should also provide enough information about the applicant's teaching activities (or other scholarly activity) so that reviewers outside the discipline can judge the relative importance of the activities.

- If more than one faculty member from a department applies for the same time period, the Department Chair will prioritize the applications based on merit for subsequent levels of review to consider if there are insufficient study leaves available for that cycle. Describe how the unit's operations will be continued if more than one proposal is approved.
- After the term faculty member submits their application materials to via the Microsoft Form, the College of Science will compile the applicant's study leave materials into a OneDrive folder to be shared with the respective department chair for their consideration.