

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION STUDY-RESEARCH LEAVE POLICY****A. Purpose:**

The Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education's Study-Research Leave policy is intended to enrich faculty professional and scholarly development, critical elements in maintaining a vibrant and productive university. The Study-Research Leave is broadly designed to refresh, invigorate, and renew intellectual work and contributions of individual faculty. The leave is an opportunity for faculty to engage in projects that could not be accomplished under the typical workload. Ultimately, Study-Research Leave may result in a broad range of creative activities and/or products related to the faculty member's academic discipline and the goals of the Department, School, and University.

**B. Duration:**

Faculty members meeting the criteria are eligible to apply for a maximum of one contract year for leave at one-half of their regular full-time salary or one-half contract year at full salary. Departments and faculty members may support the remainder of the salary (up to but not exceeding full pay) from non-state or external sources including grant buyouts.

**C. Procedures:****1. Eligibility for Study-Research Leave.**

The faculty member must be tenured with six years of prior continuous VCU service. If a previous Study-Research Leave was granted and utilized, faculty must complete an additional six years of continuous service before reapplying.

**2. Return Commitments with Study-Research Leave.**

There must be a written commitment to return to the University and the faculty member must serve a period of employment equal to one full academic year. If the return-to-work commitment is not honored, the individual must reimburse to the University the salary received during the leave period, plus interest, regardless of the source of funds (E&G, grant, external, etc.). The faculty member and the Dean must complete a Study-Research Leave Agreement and Promissory Note at least thirty days prior to the scheduled leave. The leave is not authorized until all signatures have been obtained on the promissory note.

**3. Application for Study-Research Leave and Review.**

3a. The faculty member must submit a 3 page single-spaced application (minimum 11-point Arial or Times New Roman font, margins of 1 inch on all sides) for a Study-Research Leave to the Department Chair by September 15 for a Study-Research Leave the following fall; February 15 for leave the following spring. The written request will describe the proposed leave activity/activities with respect to the following criteria:

3a i) purpose of the proposed leave, the nature of the work to be accomplished during leave, and the significance of the proposed project to research, policy, and/or practice.

3a ii) short- and long-term products and outcomes (e.g., publications, presentations, grant applications, fellowship applications, new collaborations or partnerships)

3a iii) the benefit to the department, School, and/or University from the proposed projects (e.g., enhancements to teaching, reputational impacts, international collaborations and visibility, new interdisciplinary relationships and collaborations for the department or School, potential new funding sources, community relationships for the department or School, enhanced opportunities for students).

3b. An explanation of how the leave period is necessary to accomplish these goals, which would not be possible to achieve with the faculty member's standard workload.

3c. A current CV must be attached to the application.

3d. The faculty member will submit the application to their Department Chair. The Department Chair will add their recommendation to the application and submit the application packet (including the faculty member's materials and the Chair recommendation) to the Chair of the School of Education Faculty Organization by October 1 for leave the following fall; March 1 for leave the following Spring. In evaluating the request, the Department Chair should also consider the effect of the faculty member's absence on the Department/School. If the request is endorsed, then the Chair must indicate how the faculty member's responsibilities (e.g., teaching, advising, administrative activities) will be covered by the Department, and if other resources are needed. If the department chair does not endorse the request, then they must explain why in writing and forward to the Dean and applicant.

3e. The Faculty Organization Chair and Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development will convene tenured faculty representatives selected from each department (the committee) to review the merits of the application. Each application will be scored independently using a rubric that reflects the application criteria listed on the application (see 3.a.). The committee will meet to discuss their evaluations, determine the final score of each application, and forward the entire list to the Dean. The committee will indicate which applications they deem meritorious.

3f. The Dean will review the applications and recommendations and will make their recommendation to the Provost by December 1 for leave the following fall; May 1 for leave the following Spring. The dean's recommendation will take into account the School's financial situation. In the event that multiple applications from the same department/program are deemed meritorious, the Dean will negotiate the timing of leave with faculty members. The Dean will notify applicants of the recommendation in writing.

#### **D. Report upon Return:**

Faculty members must submit a report detailing the results of their Study-Research Leave within 90 days of returning from leave. The report should be first submitted to the Dean, who will acknowledge receipt in writing. Additionally, the report may need to be submitted to the Provost.

A concise 2-3 page single-spaced report (minimum 11 Arial or Times New Roman font, margin of 1 inch) should include the following: 1) Detailed account of travel itineraries, institutions and locations visited, individuals consulted or collaborated with extensively, and/or any formal lectures delivered, 2) progress made relative to the original proposal, including any significant changes to the project, 3) an evaluation of the relationship between the anticipated results as stated in the Study-Research Leave application and the actual outcomes achieved, and 4) plans for the continuation of the project, including completion and publication plans.

#### **E. Benefits While on Study-Research Leave:**

1. Faculty members on Study-Research Leave are considered to be full-time permanent employees while on leave. They continue to be enrolled in the Virginia Retirement System or optional retirement program. Retirement contributions and group life insurance payments are based on regular full-time salary. Other deductions (social security, federal and state taxes) are based on the leave salary, including any private funds routed through University payroll.
2. Health care coverage will be continued while on leave in the same manner as prior to leave.

#### **F. Extra Compensation during Study-Research Leave:**

Faculty members on Study-Research Leave cannot render service for compensation at their own university or any other institution or business, ensuring the leave's purpose is focused on research or academic development. Faculty members are allowed to accept a fellowship, personal grant, or government-sponsored exchange lectureship during their leave if it promotes the leave's purpose. However, approval in advance by the Dean is required. This is to ensure that such activities align with the leave's goals and the institution's standards. A distinction is made between funds received in recognition of distinguished achievement without any work or service expectation (such as some fellowships or grants) and stipends or compensation for service performed. The former is encouraged as it aligns with the academic and professional enhancement objectives of the Study-Research Leave, while the latter must be scrutinized to ensure it does not conflict with the leave's purpose. The combined income from the Study-Research Leave salary and any fellowships or research assistance during the Study-Research Leave cannot exceed the faculty member's regular salary, maintaining the focus on professional development over financial gain.

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Modified on 3/5/2001

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