
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth Houston)

Guidelines for the Faculty Development Leave (FDL) Program

PURPOSE: The Texas legislature's purpose in establishing the Faculty Development Leave (FDL) Program is to improve further the higher education available to the youth at the state-supported colleges and universities and to establish this program of faculty development leaves as part of the plan of compensation for the faculty of these colleges and universities [§ 51.105(a) TX Educ. Code].

The FDL proposal should be designed to enable the faculty member to engage in study, research, writing, and similar projects for the purpose of adding to the knowledge and skills available to them, to the students, to the institution, and to society generally. "A faculty development leave absence may be granted for study, research, writing, field observations, or other suitable purposes within the school's mission, if the faculty member is eligible by reason of service, the purpose is one for which the faculty development leave may be granted, and the granting of such leave does not place on faculty development leave a greater number of faculty members than that authorized." [§ 51.106 TX Educ. Code].

It is intended that all faculty members have the right to have their proposals considered by a faculty peer review committee and that the proposals be forwarded through the entire review process.

ELIGIBILITY: A faculty member is to be considered eligible by reason of service for an FDL when they have served as a faculty member of UTHealth Houston (or the university) for at least two consecutive years. However, preference will be given to faculty with longer periods of service. This service may be as an instructor or as an assistant, associate, or full professor, or an equivalent rank, and must be full-time academic duty but need not include teaching. [§ 51.103 TX Educ. Code].

PROCEDURAL MECHANISM:

1. The faculty member should communicate their intent to apply for an FDL to the school development leave committee before submitting an application.
2. The faculty member should discuss the proposal with their department head. Items to be discussed should be: a) purpose of the proposal; b) benefits of the development leave to the individual, the department, the school, and/or the university; and c) plans for replacing or covering the applicant's departmental responsibilities.
3. The faculty member should then submit a copy of the proposal to the department chair to review.
4. The faculty member will forward the leave proposal along with their department chair's a) written recommendation and rationale for the approval or disapproval of the proposal and b) recommendations, if any, to strengthen the proposal to the school committee established to review faculty development leave proposals.
5. The school committee will assess the proposals based on criteria appropriate to their school's mission, consistent with the criteria established by the UTHealth Houston FDL Program. The school committee's written recommendations and rationales for approvals or disapprovals, or other recommendations to strengthen the proposal, shall be forwarded along with the applicant's proposal and the department head's recommendations to the school's dean for review.
6. The dean shall review the proposal and recommendations and, as deemed necessary, seek clarification, make recommendations to improve the proposal, and/or otherwise consult with the

applicant or department head. The dean shall then forward the proposals with their written rationales, along with the school committee's rationale for recommending the proposals' approval or disapproval, to the Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer (EVP/CAO) via the Office of Faculty Affairs and Development (OFAD).

7. OFAD will forward all proposals and recommendations to the UTHealth Houston Faculty Development Leave Committee (FDL Committee). The FDL Committee will review, evaluate and prioritize the proposals based on the established criteria. The FDL Committee shall then forward its priority scores, written evaluations, and any additional recommendations to OFAD. If the FDL Committee has recommendations to strengthen the application, that information will be shared with the faculty member.
8. OFAD will provide the FDL Committee's summary and recommendations with the faculty member's application submission to the EVP/CAO for review. The EVP/CAO shall then approve or disapprove the requests for development leave, and OFAD will inform the dean of the appropriate school.

CRITERIA: FDL is a privilege earned by the faculty member's record of positive contributions to the educational and research missions of the department, school, and UTHealth Houston. The UTHealth Houston FDL Committee will use the following criteria in evaluating and prioritizing the proposals:

1. the merit and appropriateness of the proposal;
2. prospective value of the leave to the individual, the department, the school, and the institution;
3. the strength of the recommendations given to the proposals;
4. the equity of the distribution of the prospective recipients across schools at UTHealth Houston; and,
5. consistency with the university's affirmative action policies.

FACTORS: Other factors to be considered are:

1. the existence of some arrangement whereby the faculty member may effectively meet assigned responsibilities without compromising the value of the leave;
2. prior development leaves taken;
3. length of time the faculty member has been in continuous full-time employment with the university;
4. the credentials of the applicant;
5. the presence of extramural funding for the proposal; and,
6. the availability of resources within the school and the university.

FORMAT OF THE APPLICATION: The applicant should provide a double-spaced narrative of approximately 1000 words, maximum of four pages, which describes:

1. the goals for the development leave;
2. the activity and time for which the leave is requested;
3. the significance and expected impact of the project on the applicant's field and scholarly activities;
4. where the work will be done and written evidence of an outside institution's willingness to provide facilities for carrying out their proposal;
5. its relevance to the applicant's professional development and the institution; and
6. any proposed arrangements the applicant has made to cover their responsibilities while on leave. A two-page biographical sketch in USPHS format should also be provided, and applicants are discouraged from submitting reprints.

TIMETABLE: The FDL proposal should be sent to the school's faculty development leave committee following the school's procedures. The dean will forward the FDL proposals to OFAD to start the review process. OFAD will work with the UTHealth Houston FDL Committee to evaluate and prioritize the proposals. The applicants and other pertinent individuals will be notified whether or not the proposal is approved.

OTHER STIPULATIONS:

- If there is any change in an applicant's proposal after the proposal has been approved, the applicant must notify OFAD as to those changes. At the EVP/CAO's discretion, the change may be allowed, or the proposal may require a resubmission through the application process.
- Development leaves may be granted to a faculty member for up to one academic year at one-half salary or up to one-half academic year at full salary. Salary will include fringe benefits.
- Faculty on development leave may accept a grant for study, travel, or research but may not accept employment without the express approval of The UT System Board of Regents.
- The precise terms of the development leave should be in writing and given to the recipient before the commencement of the leave. Recipients assume an implied obligation to return for service of at least the same duration as their development leave.
- For tenure track faculty, no time will be counted toward fulfillment of their probationary period for tenure while on leave.
- Each recipient must, upon leave completion, file copies of a *report of leave activities* with the departmental chair (or equivalent), the dean, and OFAD.

REVIEW TIMELINE:

OFAD and the FDL Committee are prepared to review FDL proposals when received. The expected timeline would be approximately two weeks from receipt of the proposal for review to the decision.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT LEAVE COMMITTEE (FDL Committee)

Charge

The Charge of the UTHealth Houston FDL Committee is to disseminate information to the faculty on the institutional FDL Program, monitor the nomination process for the program within the schools, review nominations, and make recommendations to the EVP/CAO.

Chair

Elected by the members of the FDL Committee membership.

Membership

One faculty representative from each school who is also serving on the Interfaculty Council.

Ex-Officio Membership

Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer

Term of Membership

There are no fixed terms. Membership is reviewed annually by the Interfaculty Council.