

TYPE:	Employment Related
TITLE:	Professional Development Leave - Academic
NO.:	EMPL-314
RESPONSIBILITY:	Chief Administrative Officer, Executive Vice-President, Academic and Associate Vice-President, Human Resources
APPROVED BY:	Durham College Leadership Team
EFFECTIVE DATE:	January 2024
REVISED DATE(S):	
REVIEW DATE:	January 2027

1. Introduction

Durham College (DC) is committed to enhancing academic quality. As such, the College encourages and supports professional development leaves for academic renewal, research, retraining, and other purposes that will advance the mission of the College.

2. Purpose

This policy and procedure outlines expectations, requirements and approval process for full-time academic employees applying for professional development leave.

3. Definitions

Refer to [Durham College's Standard Definitions](#).

4. Policy statements

- 4.1. Professional development leaves for full-time academic employees provide invaluable benefits for both the employee and DC.
- 4.2. Professional development leaves may include, but are not limited to, pursuing further education, applied research, return to industry and/or special projects.
- 4.3. The approval of professional development leave applications will be based on criteria which include, but are not limited to:
 - the availability of a suitable replacement;
 - the identification of clear outcomes that will benefit the employee, students, and DC; and
 - conformity with all of the terms outlined in Article 20 of the Academic Employees Collective Agreement.

5. Procedure

5.1. Call for Applications

5.1.1. Each November, a call for applications will be issued by the Associate Vice-President, Human Resources or designate. Included in this call will be specific deadlines for submission of a completed Professional Development Leave Application and Approval Form.

5.1.2. The Professional Development Leave Application will include:

- Applicant information;
- Leave compensation;
- Plan for leave;
- Objectives and activities;
- Benefits and relevancy;
- Reporting obligations;
- Current resume;
- Applicable conference fees, tuition fees, travel or accommodation Expenses;
- Additional forms of paid work; and
- Letter of support from employee's immediate supervisor.

5.2. Selection Process

5.2.1. The Professional Development Leave Approval Committee will review all applications and make recommendations to the Chief Administrative Officer and Executive Vice-President, Academic.

5.2.2. The Professional Development Leave Approval Committee will be comprised of the following positions:

- the Executive Vice-President, Academic;
- the Chief Administrative Officer;
- the Associate Vice-President, Human Resources;
- the Associate Vice-President, Academic (Administration); and
- one Executive Dean/Dean.

5.2.3. Should more applications be received than can be approved, recommendations for approval will be based on the calibre of the application package and prioritized in keeping with Article 20.02 (xii).

- 5.2.4. Employees and their immediate supervisors will be notified, in writing, by the end of March by the Associate Vice-President, Human Resources or designate as to the disposition of their applications.

5.3. Benefits and Compensation

- 5.3.1. Applicants approved for academic professional development leave will meet with Human Resources prior to commencing their leaves to review benefits and compensation.
- 5.3.2. Leaves will normally commence in September and be for one academic year; alternate start dates and leaves of shorter duration may be considered, if mutually agreed upon by the applicant and the College.

5.4. Interim Professional Development Leave Report

- 5.4.1. Full-time academic employees on professional development leave will file an Interim Professional Development Leave Report outlining progress toward the accomplishment of the outcomes identified in their applications. This report will be submitted to the immediate supervisor by the halfway point of the leave and will ensure that the objectives are on schedule for completion. Immediate supervisors will review and acknowledge receipt of the Interim Professional Development Leave Report, and follow-up as required.
- 5.4.2. The Interim Professional Development Leave Report serves as an opportunity for the immediate supervisor to review the development of new skills and knowledge, and to plan for a full-time academic employee's return. Failure to complete and submit the report may result in the leave being revoked, and/or negatively impact the employee's eligibility for future professional development leaves.
- 5.4.3. Any changes to the approved Professional Development Plan must be submitted to the immediate supervisor and approved by the Chief Administrative Officer and Executive Vice-President, Academic.

5.5. Final Professional Development Leave Report and Leave Completion

- 5.5.1. The Final Professional Development Leave Report will be submitted to the immediate supervisor by the academic employee upon return from the professional development leave, as noted in the approval letter issued by HR at the time the leave commenced.
- 5.5.2. Upon conclusion of the professional development leave, the employee will return to the College for a period of at least one year, failing which the employee shall repay all salaries and fringe benefits received from the College while on leave.

6. Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1. It is the joint responsibility of the Chief Administrative Officer and the Executive Vice-President, Academic to ensure this policy and procedure are fully implemented.
- 6.2. It is the responsibility of the Associate Vice-President, Human Resources or designate to issue the call for applications, outline the process, timelines and criteria for selection and notify all Executive Deans/Deans/Directors and applicants in writing as to the disposition of applications for professional development leave.
- 6.3. It is the responsibility of the Professional Development Leave Approval Committee to review the applications and recommend those that meet all criteria to the Chief Administrative Officer and Executive Vice-President, Academic.
- 6.4. It is the responsibility of the immediate supervisor to ensure that all reporting is completed on time and that the agreed upon commitments outlined in the approved application have been met.
- 6.5. It is the responsibility of the applicant to meet application deadlines, obtain prior written approval for additional costs to be reimbursed related to the professional development leave (e.g. tuition, conference fees, travel) and submit reports according to deadlines.

7. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act considerations

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards have been considered in the development of this policy and procedure and it adheres to the principles outlined in the College's commitment to accessibility as demonstrated by the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

8. Non-compliance implications

Non-compliance with this policy and procedure may negatively impact DC's performance in the quality assurance audit process and its overall academic quality as outlined in Durham College's Academic Plan.

Non-compliance may also result in a breach of the Academic Employees Collective Agreement.

9. Related forms, legislation or external resources

- Academic Employees Collective Agreement
- Final Professional Development Leave Report
- Interim Professional Development Leave Report
- Professional Development Leave Application and Approval Form