



## Guidelines for Managing Faculty Research Portfolio During Leave of Absence

### 1. Introduction

Research awards are issued to institutions with at least one named individual listed as the Program Director (PD), or the Principal Investigator (PI), for the funded project. The funders expect that the PI would lead the scientific development or execution of the project, including oversight of the staff and mentoring associated with the project. They further expect that the agency would be notified if the individual were on extended leave of absence for any reason (generally three or more consecutive months) which would impact the ability of the individual to provide the scientific or administrative leadership of the project; or if the individual's effort on a NIH award will be reduced by 25% or more while on leave of absence.

This document is intended to provide guidance for Schools on issues that should be considered when a faculty member's request for an extended leave of absence is being considered.

It is assumed that the primary office responsible for managing the faculty leave of absences (paid or unpaid) is the school-based Office of/for Faculty Affairs.

### 2. General Requirements

The general requirements for review of an individual's request for a leave of absence (generally greater than 3 months) or reduction in professional time and its potential impact on the individual's research portfolio is listed below. These requirements apply to all extended leave requests regardless of its purpose (e.g., medical leave; personal leave of absence; \*sabbatical; etc.).

The review should be conducted in partnership with the school research administration office and should include:

- a. Review the individual's research portfolio and identify time commitments (both research and any mentoring commitments) on each award.
- b. Review the individual's absence and/or reduction in time request and determine if pursuant to the request, the individual will be able to continue to meet the commitments made on all currently funded or pending awards, if funded. This includes their research time commitments (effort) on the grants and any mentoring commitments associated with any of those awards.

*Note: Consideration should be given to any relevant State and Federal employment requirements, including any restrictions on conducting university business while of leave.*

- c. If during the time period of reduced commitment, the individual is *able to meet* their commitments, it should be documented in GMAS (e.g. a note to file), and no further action is required. If the individual will be working at a non-academic entity (e.g., a private company; their start-up; a commercial research entity; etc.) during all, or part of, their leave of absence there are additional restrictions that are listed in Section-3 below).



- d. If during the time period of reduced commitment, the individual is *unable to meet* their commitments:
  - i. Determine if there are any reductions of effort on any of the awards that need to be made. Please document if the reduction is 25% or more and place a copy of the documentation (e.g., a memo) in GMAS for record. If the funder has a prior approval requirement for changes exceeding 25% (e.g., NIH), obtain agency approval for the reduction *prior* to finalizing any agreements.
  - ii. If the individual cannot meet any of the obligations on any existing award(s), or if an agency does not accept the proposed effort reduction, then another individual, qualified to assume the responsibility for the award as a PI or PD, must be identified and submitted to the funding agency for approval prior to transfer of responsibilities. The agency notification typically should include the reason for the change and its duration.

*\*Note: Faculty on paid Harvard sabbaticals are expected to continue to conduct their research and mentor students and. This process should still apply to understand the faculty activities during their sabbatical to ensure compliance with the various policies and funder requirements.*

### **3. Requirements for Absence at a Commercial Entity**

If the individual will be spending any part of a proposed leave at a commercial entity related to the individual's work at Harvard, there are specific restrictions. These restrictions are imposed to ensure the distinction (firewall) between the work conducted at the commercial entity during the leave of absence and the activities related to university responsibilities such as research and mentoring.

For individuals who are taking a full year, or longer, leave of absences to be at a commercial entity we strongly recommend the following:

- a. *Research portfolio:* As an individual cannot conduct research at Harvard while taking a full year, or longer, unpaid leave of absence to pursue a full-time position at an outside entity, they cannot be expected to meet commitments related to their grants. Thus, there needs to be a plan to transfer their research portfolio to another PI who will assume the responsibility during the period.
- b. *Mentoring:* Similarly, individuals should not be involved in mentoring of any Harvard trainees (e.g., students, post docs, etc.) while at a commercial entity, especially if it involves research. This is to avoid complications arising from any IP generated by the work of the mentee and its ownership. If there are compelling reasons as to why the mentor-mentee relationship should continue, then OTD and OVPR should be consulted. If these offices agree to allow the mentorship to continue, an agreement should be drafted to address ownership of any potential IP. Teaching activities should be subject to additional reviews to ensure compliance with school specific requirements.
- c. *Other University Activities:* In general, if the individual is retaining any commitment to the University for professional work during a leave or reduction in time commitment that includes simultaneous employment and/or engagement with a commercial entity, it is strongly recommended that the OTD to be consulted for advice on any agreements (e.g.



disclosure of IP, ownership of IP between Harvard and the entity for which the individual is working, etc.) be in place prior to finalizing the arrangements. In addition, relevant School COI Officials should be consulted regarding necessary conflict of interest management plans.

- d. *Partially Funded Sabbatical*: Faculty on a sabbatical partially funded by Harvard, should confer with their relevant faculty affairs and research administration offices to review effort commitments and available time to spend at a company

It is recommended that the final arrangement regarding the faculty roles and responsibilities during the absences, including any limitations, be documented in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and be signed by the individual and the appropriate School official(s).

#### 4. Relevant Policies and Guidance Documents

- a. [Guidance on Charging Approved Family and Medical Leaves to Sponsored Awards](#)
- b. [FAQs on Guidance on Charging Approved Family and Medical Leaves to Sponsored Awards](#).
- c. [Absence Management Guidance](#): Guidelines for Budgeting and Charging Employee Vacation Time to Sponsored Awards
- d. [Effort Reporting Policy](#)
- e. Harvard University [Policy On Individual Financial Conflicts Of Interest](#) For Persons Holding Faculty And Teaching Appointments
- f. [Statement](#) on Outside Activities of Holders of Academic Appointments
- g. [Principles Governing Commercial Activities](#): Statement of Principles
- h. Statement of Policy in Regard to Intellectual Property ([IP Policy](#))
- i. [Research Data Ownership Policy](#)

#### 5. Contacts

School	Faculty Affairs Contact	Research Administration Contact
FAS	Zoe Fonseca-Kelly Kwok Yu	Katerine Gates Sarah Elwell
HMS	Grace Huang	Rachel Cahoon
HKS	Suzanne Cooper	Matt Alper
HGSE	Jessica Pesce	Tiffany Blackman
HSPH	Jennifer Ivers	Frank Urso Patrick O'Neill
SEAS	Diane Schneeberger	Pam Baker-Webber