

FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE PROGRAM

TERM: FALL 2027 – SPRING 2028 (Updated: August 2026)

2026 APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND CHECKLIST

APPLICATION DUE DATE

FPDL applications must be sent to the Office of Sponsored Programs [Kuali Form](#) no later than **Monday, November 2, 2026 by 11:59 PM**

There will only be one call for FPDL during the 2026/27 Academic Year for either or both Fall 2027 and/or Spring 2028 term.

Faculty members applying to the FPDL program are solely responsible that a complete application is submitted electronically through Kuali by the deadline date listed above

For questions concerning the application process, please contact Tom Cruise in the Office of Sponsored Programs at tcruise@radford.edu or 831-5479.

DESCRIPTION OF SUPPORT

The Radford University Faculty Professional Development Leave Program (FPDL), also referred to as Sabbatical Leave, provides tenured faculty an opportunity to engage in advanced study, research, and/or other scholarly and creative activities that will enhance their competencies as teachers/scholars that will better prepare them to fulfill their teaching and other professional obligations to the university. This program supports traditional forms of professional development as well as alternative opportunities that would enable a faculty member to intern with a company, agency, school, or other such entity in order to enhance, reestablish, or re-energize their research, scholarship, or creative activity in their area of professional practice.

Faculty Professional Development Leave may be requested at full pay for one semester or at one-half pay for two semesters, according to the terms specified in the Faculty Handbook. Faculty are responsible for their own living expenses.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for Professional Development Leave faculty members must be tenured with seven (7) years of prior University service before the time the leave will begin or have completed seven years of service prior to the time this leave will begin since a previous Faculty Professional Development Leave. Time spent on Faculty Professional Development Leave is not considered in compiling minimum service requirements for future leave. **Only proposals submitted by full-time tenured faculty or full-time faculty who may have tenure granted prior to the leave date will be considered.**

A proposal submitted by a faculty member being evaluated for tenure may be recommended by the committee to the Provost. Acceptance of the leave is contingent on the granting of tenure. A faculty member who is granted leave will not be eligible to apply for another leave until he/she has taught full-time for seven years at Radford University following completion of the previous leave.

While on professional development leave, a faculty member will continue as a Radford University employee with full fringe benefits in accordance with established State and University policies. Each semester spent on leave will count toward total years of service for purposes of promotion or seniority at the institution. A faculty member on leave at full pay may not accept remunerative employment elsewhere while on professional development leave. A faculty member on leave at one-half pay may accept part-time employment during his/her leaves as long as the total compensation does not exceed the amount the faculty member would have received at full salary.

AMOUNT OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Sabbatical Leave may be requested at full pay for one semester or at one-half pay for two semesters, according to the terms specified in the Faculty Handbook. To maximize the number of awards that can be made annually, faculty are encouraged to consider leave requests of one year at (half) pay or adjustments of workload within the department, where possible. **Additional salary support for faculty is not allowed.**

HOW THE SUPPORT MAY BE USED

The Radford University Faculty Professional Development Leave Program may be used to provide tenured faculty opportunities to engage in advanced study, research, and/or other scholarly, creative, or applied activities that will enhance their competencies as teachers/scholars and/or enhance, reestablish, or re-energize their research, scholarship, or creative activity to better prepare them to fulfill their teaching and other professional obligations to the university.

EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR PROPOSALS

The Scholarly Activities Committee (SAC) makes recommendations on Faculty Professional Development Leave (FPDL); a merit-based process. The SAC will meet, evaluate and recommend proposals for support to the Provost. **Consideration will be given only to those proposals that are complete and conform to the required format; incomplete proposals will be returned without review.** Proposals must be written in a clear and concise manner. Proposals are judged based on:

- promise of quality of the applicant's work as a scholar (demonstrated evidence of productivity articulated in the application and CV)
- scope and impact of the work to be accomplished (clearly articulated outcomes/deliverables/products and specific statement of positive impact on Radford University, students, community)
- strength and clarity of the faculty professional development leave narrative
- strength of the letters of support from the chair and dean

To help guide applicants in submitting a strong proposal, a review of successful FPDL applications over a 3-year period 2021-2023 (N=20) revealed several themes. Proposals with the following characteristics were more likely to be funded:

1. Clearly articulated projects, timeline, and products/outputs/deliverables with specific targets – such as named conferences, festivals, journals, grants, completion of book or artwork (i.e., musical album or other artistic creation) under contract, revisions to existing textbooks, extensive data collection for book, artistic creation or project that is in-process).

2. Clear, specific articulation of how the products of the FPDL will be brought into teaching and collaborative work with students. For example, detailing what exercises, assignments, course modules, etc. will be created/updated, and for which specific classes; detailing when and how student researchers would be involved.
3. Strong evidence of artistic and/or scholarly production from CV and articulated in the proposal.
4. A listing of products generated from previous FPDL, SEED grants, and other institutional investments.
5. Evidence of a book contract or external funding in-hand.
6. When involving external partners, demonstrated evidence of joint planning, conversation, invitation and/or agreement on the project; a letter of support.

Additionally, please note:

- Proposals with projects that involve research or data collection using human subjects or vertebrate animals, or research with recombinant DNA and biohazardous materials, must acknowledge that appropriate institutional approval will be obtained.
- Final recommendations will be based upon judgments made by the SAC regarding the relative merit and impact of each proposal.
- Administrators returning to teaching should not be included in this process; please visit with your dean or the provost.

The SAC consists of the following: Chief Research Officer (Chair); Tenured Faculty (one from each College, appointed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee; President of the Faculty Senate or his/her designee); and the Director of Sponsored Programs and Grants Management.

NOTIFICATION

Applicants will be notified of decisions in writing during the Spring Semester.

POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS

Faculty who accept professional development leave agree to:

1. Upon completion of their leave, return to full-time service with the University for a period equal to the period of leave, or repay the University the full amount paid to the faculty member during the leave.
2. Submit a written report describing accomplishments while on leave submitted by the faculty member to the Department Chair, Dean, Chair of the Faculty Professional Development Leave Committee, and the Provost with his or her Faculty Annual Report or within three months of return from leave.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR FUNDING (OPTIONAL)

Since the FPDL only covers cost for course replacement, below is a list of other possible resources to help supplement sabbatical leave.

- 1.) McGlothlin International Education Fund from the McGlothlin Center for Global Education and Engagement. <https://www.radford.edu/content/global-education/home/faculty-development/funding-opportunities.html>. Contact 831-6200 for additional information.

- Global Funding: These funds are available to Radford University full-time faculty systemwide interested in conducting teaching, research, or other scholarly initiatives of a global nature. Award amounts vary but typically range between \$250-1,500 per faculty.
 - Programming Funding: These funds are available to Radford University department, programs, recognized student groups as well as individual students, faculty and staff interested in pursuing initiatives (abroad or at home) that foster a mission of campus internationalization, collaboration, diversity and/or inclusion. Award amounts vary and will not exceed \$2,500 per initiative.
- 2.) Seed Grant Funding from the Office of Sponsored Programs and Grants Management. <https://www.radford.edu/content/sponsored-programs/home/internal-funding.html>
Contact 831-5479 for additional information.
- Seed Grants are one-year grants to fund pilot or preliminary work leading to external funding for large research/creative projects by members of the faculty and staff.
- 3.) Fulbright Scholar Program from the U.S. Department of State. <https://fulbrightscholars.org/us-scholar-awards>. Contact (202) 686-4000 for more information.
- The Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program offers over 400 awards in more than 130 countries for U.S. citizens to teach, conduct research and carry out professional projects around the world. College and university faculty, as well as artists and professionals from a wide range of fields can join over 400,000 Fulbrighters who have come away with enhanced skills, new connections, and greater mutual understanding.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FPDL PROGRAM

If you have additional questions, you may contact the SAC Committee Chair
Dr. Jeanne Mekolichick, Ph.D., Associate Provost of Research, Faculty Success & Strategic Initiatives,
831-5114 or jmekolic@radford.edu

REQUIRED APPLICATION CHECKLIST

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the proposal is completed through the Kuali form so that it can be reviewed by the Committee. **Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant without review.** Application materials must adhere to the following outline as they represent the evaluation criteria:

- ☐ Kuali Cover Page
- ☐ Uploaded Project Abstract
- ☐ Uploaded Project Narrative (5-page limit) including:
 - a. Complete and clear description of the advanced study, research, scholarship, and/or creative activities being proposed; please write narrative in a way that is understandable to a broad audience.
 - b. Detailed description of how the faculty member's advanced study, research, scholarship, and/or creative activity can reasonably be advanced during the requested leave.
 - c. Detailed description of the quality and scope of the professional development the faculty member is likely to achieve including timeline.
 - d. Detailed description of how outcomes of the advanced study, research, scholarship, and/or creative activities will be disseminated beyond the University, or if for an internship, a description of the site and anticipated activities including products/outputs/deliverables with specific targets – such as named conferences, festivals, journals, grants, completion of book or artwork
 - e. Detailed description of how the products of the FPDL will be brought into teaching and collaborative work with students.
 - f. Articulation of how the leave will positively impact Radford University.
 - g. As applicable, a description of the outcome(s) of previous FPDs, SEED grants, or other institutional investments
 - h. Articulate a plan for the publicly accessible presentation/demonstration/exhibition
- ☐ Projects involving external partners must upload letters of support.
- ☐ Projects involving research or data collection using human subjects or vertebrate animals, research with recombinant DNA and biohazardous materials, must acknowledge that appropriate institutional approval has been or will be obtained.
- ☐ Uploaded Curriculum Vitae
- ☐ Uploaded Department Chair Endorsement Letter (signed evaluation that indicates whether the chair supports or does not support the request and includes):
 - a. A detailed evaluation of the quality of the proposal
 - b. An evaluation of the proposal's contribution and benefit to the University and how it complements teaching
 - c. An evaluation of the proposal's contribution to the faculty member's professional development
 - d. A detailed description of how the applicant's classes and other departmental responsibilities will be covered in his/her absence

- e. A detailed description and amount of additional instructional resources requested/required order to support the proposal.
- ☐ Uploaded Dean Endorsement Letter (signed evaluation that indicates whether the dean supports or does not support the request and includes):
 - a. An evaluation of the proposal's contribution and benefit to the College
 - b. An evaluation of additional instructional resources requested/required and the degree to which these resources can be supported by the College.
 - c. Other Supporting Information (include only if absolutely necessary)
- ☐ Received confirmation email from Kualu verifying application has been successfully submitted