

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PERSONNEL MANUAL INSTRUCTION	PMI <u>920-5</u> DATE: <u>FEB 28, 1984</u> APPROVED: <i>Jeanne M. Sclater</i> for Director of Personnel
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SUBJECT: SES Sabbatical Program

I. Purpose

Career executives are one of the most critical resources available in accomplishing the Department's mission. Sabbaticals provide unique opportunities for a limited number of Senior Executives to increase their expertise through well designed projects. The purpose of the Senior Executive Service (SES) Sabbatical Program is to allow career executives to engage in study/research or uncompensated work experience for up to 11 months. The program focuses on improving the efficiency, productivity and accountability of the Department of Education as well as on career growth for the participating executives.

II. Authority

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 authorizes agency heads to grant sabbaticals to certain career appointees in the Senior Executive service who meet certain service requirements for "...study or uncompensated work experience which will contribute to (their) development and effectiveness" (5 U.S.C. 3396c; 5 U.S.C. 3397).

III. Policy

It is the policy of the Department of Education that:

- A. A sabbatical may be granted for up to 11 months to any eligible career SES member to engage in study or uncompensated work experience contributing to the executive's development and effectiveness.
- B. A sabbatical shall not result in loss of, or reduction in, basic pay, leave to which the career appointee is otherwise entitled, or creditable Federal service.

- C. The Executive Resources Board (ERB) shall formally announce a sabbatical competition for any year in which sabbaticals are to be granted.
- D. The upper limit of total time spent by all executives in sabbaticals in a given year will be 12 months times one percent of the number of career SES members or 12 months, whichever is larger.
- E. The ERB is the final approving authority for all Department SES sabbaticals.

IV. Responsibilities

The development and funding of sabbatical proposals is a process carried out through the collaborative efforts of the Department's Executive Resources Board (ERB), the Horace Mann Learning Center (HMLC), the Executive Resources Division (ERD), Senior Executives (SES) and their supervisors.

A. Executive Resource Board (ERB)

The ERB, through its established Executive Development Council:

- 1. Reviews and approves sabbatical policy guidance;
- 2. Encourages sabbatical proposals from senior executives, reviews sabbatical proposals and selects sabbatical recipients;
- 3. Submits to the Office of Personnel Management a copy of all approved sabbaticals 30 days prior to the start of the sabbatical;
- 4. Reviews progress reports for executives on sabbatical; and
- 5. Reviews the plan for the return of each sabbatical recipient.

B. Horace Mann Learning Center (HMLC)

The HMLC:

- 1. Drafts SES sabbatical policy guidance;
- 2. Encourages sabbatical proposals from senior executives;

3. Assists SES members and their supervisors to prepare sabbatical proposals and provide help in linking proposals to performance Agreements and Individual Development Plans (IDPs);
4. Assists the ERB in reviewing sabbatical proposals;
5. Assists in the identification of appropriate public and private organizations for sabbaticals;
6. Identifies SES members and/or SES Candidates to serve as temporary replacements for sabbatical recipients;
7. Monitors the administration of the sabbatical program and each executive on a sabbatical;
8. Evaluates the final reports of sabbatical recipients; and
9. Evaluates the cost effectiveness of the sabbatical program.

C. Executive Resources Division (ERD)

The ERD in the Office of Personnel Management Resource Services:

1. Reviews sabbatical policy guidance for compliance with regulatory requirements;
2. Provides policy interpretations on the sabbatical program;
3. Determines if the proposal is in compliance with agency guidelines and regulatory requirements;
4. Assures that sabbaticals do not violate conflict-of-interest regulations;
5. Maintains official records of sabbatical recipients; and
6. Process all personnel actions for executives to assist them in entering, completing, and returning from sabbaticals;

D. Supervisors of SES Members

Each supervisor of an SES member:

1. Encourages SES members to apply for sabbaticals;

2. Assists in the drafting of the sabbatical proposal and linking it to Performance Agreements and IDPs;
3. Recommends, in writing, initial approval or disapproval of sabbatical proposals;
4. Makes provision for the replacement of SES members during the sabbatical, including acceptance of SES members and/or Candidates as temporary replacements; and
5. Monitors the sabbatical activity on a regular basis.

E. Senior Executives

Each eligible career SES member who wishes to participate in a sabbatical must:

1. Design and submit a sabbatical proposal;
2. Work with his or her supervisor in developing the sabbatical proposal;
3. Assure that the sabbatical does not violate conflict-of-interest regulations;
4. Complete reports during and after the sabbatical to document progress and the value of the sabbatical to the agency and individual; and
5. Agree to serve in the Civil Service upon the completion of the sabbatical for a period of 2 consecutive years unless involuntarily separated from Federal service.

V. Nature of Sabbatical

The sabbatical must be used for projects designed by the SES member in any one or more of the following areas:

- A. Provision of service to a state or local government institution, private institution, or institution of higher education;
- B. Study or research related to the executive's field of expertise;
- C. Study or research outside the executive's field of expertise;

- D. Study and solution of a Department operating unit problem or management issue;
- E. Provision of service to business or industry; or
- F. Study or research on technological changes which may have an impact upon the agency in the future.

VI. Eligibility

- A. Any career SES member will be eligible to apply for a sabbatical if the individual has completed at least seven years of executive service:
 - 1. In one or more positions in the SES; or
 - 2. In one or more positions in the Civil Service, the level and duties and responsibilities of which are equivalent to the SES.

Two years of the seven years of service must be in the SES.

- B. A career SES member meeting the above eligibility requirements will not be eligible to apply if eligible for voluntary retirement with a right to an immediate annuity under Section 8336 of Title V, United States Code.
- C. A career SES member will be eligible to receive only one sabbatical in any ten-year period.

VII. Length

- A. A sabbatical shall be no more than 11 months long. The actual length will be dependent on the nature of the sabbatical as described in the sabbatical proposal.
- B. A sabbatical will not be curtailed except under a severe emergency or if the sabbatical is not working out as planned and in accordance with the approved proposal.
- C. A sabbatical will not be extended beyond the eleven months maximum by other authorizations such as leave without pay or long-term training.

VIII. Funding

In accordance with applicable laws and regulations, the Department will make provision for an appropriate level of funding to support sabbatical activities (i.e., relocation (including per diem) allowances, and/or other non-salary expenses).

IX. Continuation in Service Requirements

The executive shall agree to remain in the Federal service for two consecutive years following the sabbatical regardless of the length of the sabbatical. This agreement shall be void if the executive is involuntarily separated from Federal service. If the executive voluntarily fails to remain in the Federal Civil Service for the two years, he or she will be liable for all expenses (including salary) of the sabbatical.

The ERB may approve or disapprove waivers to unfulfilled obligations.

X. Monitoring/Evaluation

Each SES sabbatical proposal will contain a plan for evaluation of the experience. Also, the SES member will submit an end-of-sabbatical report and any other reports specified in the approved sabbatical proposal or as directed by the ERB.

The ERB, with assistance by the HMLC, will review the program annually and make necessary changes in the policies and procedures that will improve both the program and its administration.

For purposes of program evaluation, individual sabbatical files shall be maintained by the Executive Resources Division through calendar year 1985 and for two years for sabbaticals approved after 1985.

XI. Termination of a Sabbatical

A sabbatical may be terminated by the Secretary prior to the scheduled completion date. A request for termination may initiate with the career SES sabbatical recipient or with the Department.

A. Self-Initiated: An SES member on a sabbatical may initiate termination by submitting a written request to the Executive Development Council of the Executive Resources Board. The request must justify in specific terms why the sabbatical should be ended. The Executive Development Council shall consider the request and make a recommendation to the ERB. The ERB shall

forward its recommendation to the Secretary who shall have the final authority to approve or disapprove the request.

- B. Department-Initiated: The Executive Development Council may recommend to the ERB, and the ERB may recommend to the Secretary, that a sabbatical be terminated before the scheduled completion date for either of the following reasons:
1. The objectives in the sabbatical proposal are not being met and cannot reasonably be expected to be met during the remainder of the sabbatical; or
 2. There is a compelling reason to return the executive to a non-sabbatical assignment to meet an urgent need of the Department.

The request to terminate a sabbatical for failure to meet sabbatical objective (reason #1 above) will initiate with the Horace Mann Learning Center as a result of its monitoring of the sabbatical. If the HMLC determines that the sabbatical objectives are not being met, the sabbatical recipient shall be notified in writing of the intent to recommend termination of the sabbatical. This notification shall also state the steps that must be taken to avoid termination of the sabbatical. HMLC must provide this notification at least 30 days prior to sending a formal request for termination to the Executive Development Council.

If appropriate action has not been taken by the sabbatical recipient within the 30 day time frame, a formal request to terminate the sabbatical will be sent to the Executive Development Council with a copy to the sabbatical recipient. The SES member shall have 5 working days to respond, in writing. The Council will then make its recommendation to the ERB who shall in turn make its recommendation to the Secretary who shall have the final authority to approve or disapprove the request.

The request to terminate a sabbatical due to a pressing need of the agency (reason #2 above) may initiate at any point in the Department. A detailed written justification must be submitted to the sabbatical recipient and to the Executive Development Council. The sabbatical recipient shall have 5 workdays to respond, in writing, to the request. The justification and the sabbatical recipient's response shall be reviewed by the Executive Development Council and a formal recommendation submitted to the ERB. The ERB shall make its recommendation to the

Secretary, who shall have final authority to approve or disapprove the request.

XII. Relation to Performance Appraisal

Neither bonuses nor awards will be given to SES members for work done during sabbaticals. However, if performance prior to going on sabbatical warranted a bonus or award, such recognition may be granted.

The performance of an SES member on sabbatical will be subject to appraisal in the same manner as for SES members generally but evaluated against standards appropriate to the sabbatical (see PMI 920-3).

SES members must have an approved IDP which reflects the intent to participate in the sabbatical program and the sabbatical must be built into their Performance Agreement under the Department's SES Performance Appraisal System.

XIII. Application/Selection Procedures

A. Announcement:

The Executive Resources Board shall formally announce the opening of the sabbatical program for any year in which sabbaticals are to be granted.

B. Nomination:

SES members may nominate themselves or be recommended by their supervisors. The final selections will be made by the ERB upon recommendation of the Executive Development Council.

C. Selection Criteria:

Sabbatical proposals will be judged based on:

1. The demonstrated competence of the SES member and his or her ability to achieve the objectives specified in the proposed sabbatical;
2. The specificity, clarity, and overall quality of the proposal;
3. The proposed sabbatical's potential for contributing to the development of the SES members;

4. The proposed sabbatical's potential contribution to important goals of the agency or Federal Government; and
5. The proposed plan for evaluating the sabbatical experience.

D. Procedures

The HMLC will develop, issue and implement procedures designed to carry out an effective SES sabbatical program. These procedures will:

1. Establish an annual date when sabbatical proposals are due;
2. Establish a format for the submission and review of sabbatical proposals;
3. Establish a method of notifying successful applicants; and
4. Establish a method for evaluating, monitoring, and certifying completion of sabbatical projects.