

Guidelines for Professional Leave and External Activity Leave for School of Medicine Faculty Members

School of Medicine (SOM) faculty members may participate in professional activities outside UAB that advance their individual careers and the academic mission of the SOM and University. These professional activities are divided into those that require preapproval from the faculty member's department and the Dean's office ("external activities," to which External Activity Leave may apply) and those that do not require preapproval ("professional public service activities," to which Professional Leave may apply) and are required to be reported in the UAB approved timekeeping system (HR policy 208).

External Activity Leave

There is existing guidance from the [UAB Faculty Handbook](#) that addresses External Activities. Examples of External Activities include consultation with pharmaceutical companies or device makers and serving as an expert in medicolegal cases. Participation in External Activities is permitted with the approval of the department and Dean's office, provided that this participation (a) does not interfere with the performance of other responsibilities as a faculty member, (b) is limited in time, (c) is compatible with the interests of UAB as a public academic institution, and (d) avoids use of UAB resources or facilities. Faculty involvement in these External Activities is governed by [UAB HR Policy 128](#) that allows faculty members to request External Activity Leave in order to rearrange their schedules to accommodate both their UAB work and their participation in these activities for ≤ 20 (twenty) working days per year.

Professional Leave

Professional Leave may be used for Professional Public Service Activities, which are governed by the [UAB Enterprise Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Policy](#). Professional Public Service Activities do not require preapproval unless participating in the activity might cause a faculty member to miss a University commitment. A maximum number of days of Professional Leave that may be taken for Professional Public Service Activities has not previously been specified. Professional Public Service Activities include the following categories and must be reported in the UAB-approved timekeeping system with sufficient detail to understand the nature and location of the activity:

1. Seminars, lectures, service on advisory committees or boards of directors, or review panels for U.S. federal, state, or local government agencies, institutions of higher education, academic teaching hospitals, medical centers, or research institutes that are affiliated with an institution of higher education.
2. Professional studies, services, participation on boards of directors, or participation in manuscript review, grant/contract review, or academic program review for nonprofit/philanthropic entities, professional societies, or professional associations that are not affiliates of or affiliated with industry or other for-profit entities.
3. Seminars, presentations, performances, or board service for civic groups.
4. Participation on boards of directors with UAB Enterprise-affiliated entities.

Proposal:

The following guidelines will be implemented effective October 1, 2019, for the SOM:

- Full-time faculty members will be permitted to take a combined total of 52 (fifty- two) total working days of Professional Public Service Activities Leave or External Activity Leave per fiscal year (Fiscal year - October through September).
- Professional Public Service Activities Leave within the 52-day limit must be entered into the UAB approved timekeeping system and is subject to the normal approval process. However, once the limit is to be exceeded, they must be preapproved by the unit (Department/Division) supervisor and then entered in the UAB approved timekeeping system.
- Departments are encouraged to have Departmental-specific policies that enhance the goals of the Department. These policies may allow for fewer days of Professional Service Leave. However, these policies may not allow for more than the 52 working days for Professional Public Service Activities Leave described in this guideline without pre-approval as outlined above.
- Activities being performed by full-time faculty for directly in support of their UAB jobs, but at a non-UAB site, are exempt from this 52 working day Professional Public Service Activities Leave limitation. An example would be visiting a lab at another university as direct part of the faculty member's own research activities normally conducted at UAB, because UAB lacks a specific piece of lab equipment necessary for the research.
- All provisions of UAB HR Policy 128 remain in full force and effect for the SOM, including that External Activity Leave may not exceed 20 (twenty) working days per year and including the recommendation that there not be more than 5 such days per quarter.

Appendix

Policy 128 – Employment and Other External Activities

Date Effective: 10/80

Date Revised: 08/22

With prior approval of university management, employees may be permitted employment and other activities outside of UAB. For full-time regular employees, (including 3/12-hour shift employees) their UAB job is expected to be their primary employment. External activities are allowed under the following conditions:

1. They do not interfere with the performance of other institutional responsibilities as an employee;
2. They are compatible with the interests of UAB as a public academic institution; and
3. They do not violate state law and policy related to use of UAB resources or facilities.

Outside employment and other activities should not bring discredit to the University, nor should an employee use their association with the University to acquire the position. Before accepting activities outside of UAB, employees must obtain approval of their supervisors, using electronic forms as appropriate to ensure that no conflict of interest or conflict of commitment exists or is acceptably managed.

Approved external activities must be performed on the employee's own time. This includes, for example, nights and weekends (or the equivalent for shift employees), personal holidays, or vacation.

In the case of faculty members, who, as academicians, are given latitude to arrange their own work schedules in a way that achieves the aims specified in their appointment letters, their "own time" may also include time away arranged during their otherwise typical work schedules. This is only possible with the advance approval of the department chair/dean and after the faculty member demonstrates that they can otherwise accomplish their primary education, research, or service responsibilities as expected. Faculty members may reasonably rearrange their work schedules in this way to release no more than 20 (twenty) typical working days per year and recommend no more than 5 (five) days be rearranged per quarter. Beyond 20 days per year, personal holiday or vacation is more appropriate to accommodate external activities and must be charged for the time away from UAB.

Regardless of the type of leave used to perform external activities, time away from UAB employment is at the discretion of and must be approved by university management. University management necessarily reserves the right to reschedule work assignments to meet the demands of University employment and to address issues of excess or abuse as conflicts of commitment arise. The processes for obtaining advance approval to perform external activities and for obtaining advance approval for leave are independent of one another. Both must be successfully completed prior to performing an external activity. Employees who are engaged in external activities at the time of hire are required to seek approval prior to continuing the engagement.

Activities specifically classified as Professional Public Service Activities by the [UAB Enterprise Conflict of Interest Conflict of Commitment](#) are part of an employee's University responsibilities and are not considered external activities for purposes of this policy. Professional Public Service Activities are exempted from the requirement to obtain advance approval under the [UAB Enterprise Conflict of Interest Conflict of Commitment](#). However, schools may require advance approval if the professional public service activity engagement requires an employee to miss a University commitment, such as a lecture or clinic. Additionally, investigators must adhere to notification requirements contained in the [UAB Enterprise Conflict of Interest Conflict of Commitment](#). Time spent in these activities may be considered professional leave, a category of leave that does not reduce banked benefit time. Time spent attending professional development seminars, conferences, and educational sessions related to one's UAB role may also be considered professional leave.

Clinical practice activities performed by faculty who do not have clinical appointments within the UAB Enterprise but who are required in their letters of appointment to maintain professional licensure require advance approval as external activities. However, time spent in such activities may be considered professional leave.

For additional information, see [UAB Enterprise Conflict of Interest Conflict of Commitment](#) and the ["External Activities" section of the UAB Faculty Handbook](#).

HR Policy 208 Time Tracking and Recordkeeping

This procedure states the process and requirements for tracking and recording employees' time.

[UAB HR Policy 208](#)