

Sabbatical Policy:

(The agency) encourages missionaries to take sabbaticals for rest, refreshment, and renewal in order to enhance personal, spiritual, and professional growth. A sabbatical is not a vacation, nor is it only a respite from ordinary work. It is a spiritual work.

Sabbaticals normally shall be 8-12 weeks in length and may be taken after at least 7 years from the date of initial arrival on the field (or beginning of service if in a US-based ministry) and every 7 years after the initial sabbatical period.

Approval should be sought at least 3 months in advance, and a written sabbatical plan must be presented with the request. Approval for the sabbatical must be given by both the one-up and the International Director, and timing should be coordinated with needs of the field. Ordinarily, US-based sabbatical times would be either before or after an HMA period to minimize travel to/from the field. Up to two weeks of vacation time may be taken immediately before or after the sabbatical.

Written sabbatical plans must include:

1. Goals for the sabbatical period. (A sabbatical plan may address the areas of spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, and relational health and may include both reflection on the past and looking ahead to the future.)
2. Identification of a sabbatical coach with plans for regular follow-up during the sabbatical time.
3. If married, evidence that the entire family has been taken into consideration.
4. Any planned activities, including specific courses, retreats or organized opportunities. (These are a recommended part of the rejuvenation process.)
5. A budget indicating any allowable business expenses related to retreats, conferences, travel, etc. planned during the sabbatical period that would be reimbursable. (Reimbursements are dependent on a minimum discretionary balance in the support account.)

At the end of the sabbatical, a brief written report should be given to the sabbatical coach and to the one-up. The report should include how the sabbatical has equipped or impacted plans for future ministry.

Work responsibilities should be relinquished and either delegated to others or suspended during the sabbatical period. Ordinary salary and benefits will continue during a sabbatical. If professional counseling is part of the sabbatical plan, normal policy for approval and reimbursement apply. The member care department can suggest helpful resources.