

FAQs - Sabbatical Leave Scheme

Eligibility Criteria

Which professions qualify for the Sabbatical Leave Scheme (SLS)?

Currently, only Social Workers, Therapists (Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Speech Therapists), Psychologists, Counsellors and EIPIC Teachers qualify for the SLS.

Can I apply for the SLS and the Local Training Grant/Overseas Training Grant concurrently?

Yes, social service professionals who are keen to develop themselves further during their sabbatical leave may choose to apply for the training grants. However, the Minimum Service Period (MSP) will be added and accumulated.

I have just completed my SLS, when can I apply for the programme again?

SLS awardees can reapply for SLS five years from their last sabbatical period.

Must psychologists and counsellors be registered with their respective professional bodies to qualify for SLS?

No, they do not.

Nominations

Is there a maximum number of nominations that each social service agency can put up?

There is no limit on the number of nominations that each social service agency can put up for the scheme.

SLS Components

Am I allowed to split the sabbatical leave period?

As the purpose of sabbatical leave is for social service professionals to recharge and refresh themselves, it should be taken over a continuous period or a maximum of two blocks, with each block not shorter than four weeks. In addition, the second block must be taken within six months from the start of the first block. E.g. 1st block starts on 1/3/2015, 2nd block has to be consumed by 31/8/2015.

Is there salary support for SLS?

NCSS will reimburse the social service agencies for the salary support, up to a cap of \$15,000 or the actual salary for the leave period, whichever is lower.

Minimum Service Period

What is the duration of the Minimum Service Period (MSP) for the SLS?

1 year Minimum Service Period (MSP)[^]. The MSP is based on a full-time work calculation. The SLS awardee will serve the MSP for the 10 weeks sabbatical leave period, which will commence on the day that the SLS awardee returns to work upon completion of the sabbatical leave period.

[^] MSP is a non-contractual agreement to serve the service period within the current agency.

Where do I serve the Minimum Service Period (MSP)?

SLS awardees will serve out their MSP at the social service agencies where they are employed.

Resignation

If the SLS awardee resigns from his/her current social service agency before the start of the SLS and joins another social service agency, can he/she still proceed with the programme?

Once the SLS awardee resigns from his/her nominating agency, he/she will be considered to have withdrawn from the SLS even if he/she is still within the sector. However, if the SLS awardee's new social service agency endorses his/her continual participation in the programme, the SLS Panel will conduct an assessment to decide if he/she can resume the SLS.

What happens if the SLS awardee resigns while on sabbatical leave?

Once the SLS awardee resigns from his/her nominating agency, he/she will be considered to have withdrawn from the SLS even if he/she is still within the sector. Paid leave from NCSS will also cease from the date of resignation.

If the SLS awardee has completed the SLS and is currently serving his/her Minimum Service Period (MSP) but resigns, what would happen?

If the SLS awardee is able to find employment at another NCSS member agency or MSF-funded agency, arrangements can be made for him/her to serve the remaining MSP at that agency.

