A. Introduction

All professional development leaves will be used to pursue suitable activities which will enable staff members to enhance their expertise, to build upon initiatives they have undertaken relative to their work at the College, to develop new competencies or to pursue suitable renewal activities in order to address expanded career goals deemed to be consistent with College objectives for professional development leaves.

Professional development leaves provide staff with an alternative to their regular College duties for a maximum period of twelve months. Professional development leaves for faculty, counsellors and librarians shall be governed by College practices and the conditions of the Collective Agreement.

B. Suitable Activities for Professional Development Leaves

Suitable activities would include:

(a) applied academic activities (e.g., research and applied learned in the individual’s specialized area of endeavour at the College, preparation of instructional material; research or study in the practice of education; study of professional/vocational advanced of other institutions;

(b) vocational activities (e.g., involvement with business, industrial or service sectors to remain current or to learn new methods;

(c) other appropriate activities (e.g., task force leadership; survey activities; business, professional or industrial service activities).
C. Suitable Objectives for Professional Development Leaves
Activities pursued during the professional development leave should be directed towards the fulfillment of one or more of the following objectives:

(a) enhance the staff member’s knowledge and effectiveness within his/her discipline, vocation or related fields;

(b) be consistent with the aims of a particular area of the College, Department or Division;

(c) provide direct benefit to students and/or department/divisional operations;

(d) promote relevant opportunities for the employee to pursue or build upon activities/initiatives which have been undertaken external to the College but of direct benefit to Niagara College;

(e) augment the College’s ability to respond to community needs.

D. Evaluation of Applications for Professional Development Leaves
All applications for professional development leaves will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

(a) the relevancy of the proposed activity to College objectives;

(b) relevance to personal development of the employee in his/her role at the College and his/her professional affiliations/goals;

(c) the content and quality of the leave application (e.g., evaluation of proposed activity);

(d) the applicant’s employment profile (e.g., ability of the applicant to achieve the objectives of the leave based on the applicant’s past experience and academic background; applicant’s length of College service, demonstration of prior self-development activities; previous leaves granted to the applicant.
E. Procedures on Professional Development Leaves - Academic

1. Staff members requesting professional development leaves should fully complete the Application for Professional Development Leave form and submit same to their respective Director/Manager at least six (6) months prior to commencement of the leave. For budget planning and staffing purposes, it would be beneficial if staff would submit their request by November 30 for leaves starting in September and by May 30 for leaves starting in January. The Director/Manager will assist with the preparation and presentation of the application and the preparation of the leave request. A detailed statement of the nature of the leave should be appended to the application.

2. Applications for professional development leaves, endorsed by the appropriate Director/Manager, will be submitted to the Professional Leaves Committee (a sub-committee of the Council of Deans and Directors (CoDD)).

The Professional Leaves Committee will review the leave application and, if endorsed, will recommend the application for approval to the President through the office of the appropriate Vice-President. All candidates will be notified by the President regarding the disposition of the leave application by January 15 for Fall leaves and by June 15 for Winter leaves.

3. During the leave, the staff member will provide brief written progress reports to the appropriate Director/Manager who will copy the Chair, Professional Development Leave Committee. These progress reports are due, minimally, once every four months.

4. Within one month following the completion of the professional development leave, the staff member shall provide the Director/Manager with the following:

   (a) a brief summary of the leave noting adherence or deviation from the original proposal;
   (b) an evaluation of the success of the leave as it relates to stated objectives;
   (c) a description of personal benefits resulting from the leave;
   (d) a letter from employer, if on industry or secondment leave, responding to the objectives met during the experience;
   (e) a letter from faculty advisor, if on graduate educational leave, regarding completed program of studies;
   (f) a commitment to share the knowledge obtained during the leave including any of the following mechanisms:
       - faculty newsletter
       - professional development workshop
       - departmental seminars or project
       - dissertations or project reports filed permanently with the Niagara College Libraries.
The Director/Manager is to forward a copy of the completed report to the Chair, Professional Leaves Committee through the office of the appropriate Vice-President.

F. Addendum

1. Professional development leaves for administrative staff shall be governed by College practices and the Terms and Conditions of Employment for Administrative Staff.

2. Professional development leaves for support staff shall be governed by College practices and at the discretion of the President.