

1/31/11

Wake Forest University Guidelines for Internal and External Support of Academic Year Research Salary

This document provides guidance to tenured and tenure-track faculty who are interested in acquiring external funds to be released from some classroom teaching responsibilities in order to focus on research/creative activity, or cover academic year salary related to research effort expended on a sponsored project. The underlying principles that guide the development of these practices are that all members of the tenure track faculty are hired for teaching, research, and service. Course buy-out and recovery of academic year salary do not relieve individual faculty members of their concomitant service or other departmental/programmatic responsibilities.

Internal and External Funds to Support Release from a Portion of the Teaching Component of an Appointment.

While both teaching and scholarship are core components of a tenure track appointment, release from some teaching is an important means by which some members of the faculty may liberate time for the pursuit of additional research/scholarship during the academic year. Reduction in a standard departmental or program course load may be obtained through a course “buy out” mechanism with appropriate approvals. The faculty member making this request will be responsible for funding this release through support mechanisms external to the College or School budget.

- Given the core teaching mission of the university, it is expected that the buy out mechanism for simple course release will not reduce a faculty member’s course load by more than 1 course/semester, unless specifically approved by the department chair/program director and the Dean. It also expected that this course release would not be used to reduce a faculty member’s course load to less than two courses per year.
- All course release requests must be approved in writing, first by the department chair/program director and then by the Dean.
- These practices attempt to facilitate course release in order to encourage academic year scholarship without jeopardizing programmatic quality. The Dean and Department chairs will assess the impact of each request on the department’s instructional mission.
- When budgeting for a course release to be paid for by an external sponsor we have to be conscious of our federally required time and effort reporting requirements. External sponsors are required to pay for a percentage of the WFU faculty members time **not** their replacement cost. WFU’s position is that a 3-4 hour contact time course typically requires 8 hours of effort by a faculty member each week. Therefore, faculty who want an external sponsor to pay for a course release should request 20% of their salary ($8/40 = 20\%$) plus fringe benefits for the semester in which they are seeking the course release. WFU will then expect that faculty member to certify 20% effort level for the time period of the release.
- When budgeting for a **course release to be paid for by internal funds**, such as but not limited to, a D, RC, CG, or SU account, a transfer can be made from one of these accounts to a Dean’s account to pay the complete costs of the replacement faculty, including salary, fringe benefits and any other miscellaneous costs.

External Funds Supporting the Research Component of an Appointment.

Some members of the tenured and tenure-track faculty have access to externally sponsored research grants that provide salary support for individuals serving as an investigator on the project. This is common practice during the summer months where a grant often pays for up to three months of summer salary. In addition to this summer support, some granting agencies (such as N.I.H) will provide funds to cover the research component of their PI’s academic year appointments. These grant dollars are directly used to pay the investigator’s academic year salary, thereby relieving the University of this expense. The goal of this policy is to specify how these university dollars are spent and to ensure that they are used to further support the research process.

Where appropriate to the stated intent and policies of the funding agency, faculty members in the College can also seek external funding for up to 40% of their academic year salary in addition to up to three months of summer salary. In the event that a member of the faculty receives a portion of his/her academic year salary and associated fringe benefits from a research sponsor, encumbered funds become liberated from the University personnel budget on a nonrecurring basis. If no reduction in the standard departmental or programmatic teaching load is requested by, or granted to the faculty member, then the University agrees to return 60% of the funds to the investigator and 10% to his/her department on a nonrecurring basis. The remaining 30% will be used by the Dean of the College or School where the investigator has his or her primary appointment for non-formulaic research support. These nonrecurring funds will be placed in an account which can be used for appropriate research-related endeavors by the faculty member/Chair for the 60% and 10%, respectively. Although these funds cannot be used to supplement salary beyond a 12-month limit in any one year, they may be accrued and used for summer salary support in future years when external funding is not obtained.