

**College of Education Policy on
Extramurally Funded Course Buy-Outs & Course Releases
Resulting in COE Salary Savings
Approved by Executive Council: 09/18/2024**

Eligible Faculty

All full time equivalent (FTE) faculty (tenure and professional track) whose salary is paid for with A-funds are eligible for course buy-outs and are thus eligible for salary savings. For faculty with a portion of their salaries paid for with A-funds, only the A-funded portion of the salary is eligible for consideration.

Determining Time & Effort on Extramural Funds

To comply with the expectations of funders and auditing standards, salaries allocated to any extramural awards must be based on the assessment of time needed to accomplish the scope of work and the distribution of that time across the year. While the summer months may provide an opportunity for focused attention to grant and contract work, making summer salary appropriate in these cases, faculty should plan to allocate a minimum of 5% of time and effort (T&E) to grant work during the academic year unless the work occurs entirely during the summer. For example, supervising students or staff on grant-related activities during the academic year should be allocated at least 5% of T&E during the academic year.

It is important to distinguish “course buy-outs” from “course releases.”

- A course buy-out occurs when a substantial portion of a faculty member’s salary (15% or more) is paid by a grant.
- A course release occurs when faculty are released from teaching responsibilities due to administrative work, appointment agreements (e.g., endowed chair), or grant awards that are specifically designed to free faculty time (e.g., Spencer postdoc awards), as approved by the Office of the Dean.

Grant or Contract-related Course Buy-Outs

Because research is an expected responsibility of most faculty, whether grant-funded or not, a minimum of 15% of annual T&E must be provided via salary from external awards in order to request a course buy-out. Requests for course buy-outs (including the specific courses) must be approved by the faculty member’s Chair and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and submitted to the Assistant Dean for Business Operations. Decisions about specific courses and alternative instructors (when necessary) should be made in conjunction with program faculty, the Chair, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Rationale: How was 15% annual T&E determined as the minimum to consider a course buy out?

The total cost of hiring of adjuncts and the associated labor far exceeds that of the salary of the adjunct. As agreed by the COE Budget Committee and Assistant Dean for Business Operations the 15% rate generates enough to cover the costs of alternative instructors for extramural funded buy-outs, as well as supplement unit allocation costs associated with research expenditures.

Course “releases” (as opposed to “buy-outs”) funded via Spencer postdoctoral awards & similar awards supporting faculty professional development.

Such awards are designed specifically to fund release time from teaching, and although the COE encourages faculty submissions to such competitions, the budgets must allocate sufficient funds to approximate the COE outlay for the specified course releases. The following guidelines will help minimize the College outlay for course releases:

- Be released from courses that can go untaught for a year.
- Be released from courses that can be covered by faculty colleagues without additional cost.

- In any case, proposed course releases should be discussed with the program faculty and area chair **before** developing the proposal, so the applicant can budget accordingly if funded.

These guidelines also assist thoughtful resource allocations for course buy-outs. The same strategies that reduce the Colleges' outlay to cover course releases should also be considered in the case of buy-outs. That is, even when extramural dollars generate salary savings, does every course that is "bought out" need to be taught in a given year? Chairs, in collaboration with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, have the discretion and authority to determine *which* classes need to be offered via alternative instructors and which may go on hiatus, so that state-funded instructional resources (including salary savings) are used most appropriately.

When a faculty member generates sufficient funds to request a course buy-out, how will the actual instructional costs be funded?

In cases where a faculty member generates salary savings (no minimum required) and **do not request** a course buy-out (due to faculty choice), faculty will retain 50%. Those funds will be transferred to a fund set up specially for the faculty member **the next fiscal year** and can be used as a salary supplement or used as university approved professional development expenses (conference travel, equipment needs, memberships, etc.). The remaining 50% will go to the COE to cover support unit allocation costs associated with the college's research activities.

When grants or contracts fund at least 15% of the faculty member's salary in a given year and the faculty member **does request** a course buy-out, the department will receive 50% of generated salary savings to cover instructional costs, with specific courses and instructors approved by the Chair and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Department chairs cannot provide the department allocation to individual faculty. The remaining 50% will go to the COE to cover support unit allocation costs associated with the college's research activities.

Examples:

Name	Salary	15% salary savings	No Buy-Out		With Buy-Out	
			Fac 50% (provides salary supplement, travel, equipment, etc)	COE 50% (covers support unit allocation costs)	Dept 50% (covers adjuncts)	COE 50% (covers support unit allocation costs)
Prof. A	\$80,000	\$12,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
Prof. B	\$100,000	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500
Prof. C	\$120,000	\$18,000	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$9,000

**At this time, the above policies around salary savings apply to FTE employees paid by state funds. RGP employees do not qualify as there are no college salary savings.*

When a faculty member with a 12-month administrative appointment generates a portion of their salary through extramural funds, how will the salary savings be allocated?

Faculty on a 12-month administrative appointment (e.g. associate deans, department chairs) who are released from their teaching duties due to their administrative appointment will not receive salary savings in the same manner as 9-month faculty. Rather, faculty administrators who generate a portion of their salary through extramural funds will receive **25% of those salary savings via professional fund**. Unlike 9-month faculty, only the **first 33% of the administrator's 12-month salary** (not including administrative stipend) are subject to salary savings.

Examples:

12-month Salary (w/o stipend)	Salary Savings	Eligible Amount (up to 33%)	COE 75% (covers support unit allocation costs)	Faculty 25% (professional fund)
\$100,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$7,500	\$2,500
	\$33,000	\$33,000	\$24,750	\$8,250
	\$50,000	\$33,000	\$24,750	\$8,250

This policy replaces any and all previous COE salary savings policies, and is subject to available funding.

Frequently Asked Questions about Grant Funded FTE, Course Buy-Outs, and Course Releases

How much salary do I need to charge to a grant to buy out of teaching a course?

The amount of effort allocated to any external grant or contract must be based on the assessment of time needed to accomplish the scope of work and the distribution of that time across the year. In cases when 15% of a faculty members' annual salary is provided via external grants and contracts and results in salary savings to the College, faculty may request a course buy-out, subject to approval of the Chair and the Assistant Dean for Business Operations.

When will I receive my salary savings? We calculate salary savings for the past year in October, after the 90-day payroll retro period has ended.

Does the salary that I charge to a grant during the academic year supplement my salary during that period?

No. During the academic year, salary from external grants results in salary savings to the College, a percentage of which is shared with the faculty member that will be put into a fund to be used for professional expenses, such as conference travel, professional memberships, technology needs, etc. or be paid as a salary supplement. These funds will be transferred during the next fiscal year. The exact percentage depends on whether you teach your full slate of courses for the year (you keep 50% of generated salary savings) or buy out of a course (department would receive 50% to cover instructional costs).

What if my percent effort is more than 15% and I take a course buy-out?

In cases where more than 15% effort is paid for through extramural sources and a course buy-out is taken, the remaining funds are split 50-50 between the COE and the faculty member. For example, if 20% effort is provided to a grant and a course buy-out is taken, the remaining 5% is split between the COE and the faculty member's account. Conversely, if 20% effort is provided to a grant and a course buy-out is not taken, the entire 20% is split between the COE and the faculty member's account.

Can I charge all my grant effort as summer salary?

No, unless all the grant work is done in the summer. T&E allocated to any external grant **must** be based on the distribution of effort across the year, and salary must reflect effort. While the summer months may provide an opportunity for focused attention to grant work, making summer salary appropriate, faculty should plan to allocate a minimum of 5% of T&E to grant work during the academic year unless the work occurs entirely during the summer. For example, supervising students or staff on grant-related activities during the academic year should be allocated at least 5% of T&E during the academic year.

When my grant budget is small, can I allocate a larger percentage of my time than the percentage of salary I charge?

No, unless required in the grant. The amount of effort allocated to any external grant, and the related salary charged, should be based on the assessment of time needed to accomplish the scope of work.

I've been awarded a Spencer postdoc award, which requires a reduction in my teaching.

How do I pay to cover my courses and still complete the project?

Some awards are designed specifically to fund release time, but the budgets should allocate sufficient funds to approximate the COE outlay for course releases. Several strategies can help minimize the actual COE outlay:

- Identifying courses that can go untaught for the year of the award,
- Identifying courses that can be covered by faculty colleagues at no additional cost.

Plans for proposed course releases should be discussed with the Department Chair and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs **before** developing the proposal for such awards.