

Faculty of Arts Guidelines for Course Release Involving Use of External Funds ¹

The Faculty of Arts recognizes that a faculty member may occasionally wish to secure financial support from a third party (e.g., granting agency, foundation, industry) to cover the cost of temporary course release to provide more time for research activities.

Considerations in Making a Request

The granting of course release necessarily depends on two key factors: (1) the department and Faculty's assessment of the value of such release both to the university and to the individual, and (2) whether the individual's teaching responsibilities can be adequately covered. Intended new research activity does not in itself warrant course release. The normal tenure-stream teaching load in the Faculty is seen as already reflecting a reduction from historic teaching levels to accommodate enhanced research intensiveness. This teaching load is understood to be consistent with scholarly ambition appropriate to a major research university.

Initiating a Request

To begin the process, the faculty member must notify the department chair of the intention to secure funds for course release and of the anticipated implications for the faculty member's teaching. **The chair will then notify the Associate Dean of Research** in the Dean's office, where all funds of this type are administered. Should the funds be secured, the faculty member must notify the chair as soon as possible so that the department's teaching plans can be considered in this context. The Faculty Financial Officer will also be notified at this point.

Principles Governing Course Release

1. A request for externally-funded course release will be considered for a maximum of one course in any academic year, for a maximum of three releases in a five-year period.
2. The cost for externally-funded course release is \$18,000 when charged to a research grant with overhead,² and \$21,000 when charged to a third party with no overhead. These rates are reviewed on a regular basis. Consult with the Associate Dean of Research to ensure that the right rates are applied.
3. The granting of externally-funded course release does not concomitantly reduce expectations for service or for department/campus presence. Such temporary reduction of teaching load will not normally require adjustment of the individual's weightings for teaching, scholarship, and service.

¹ For internal buyouts, the consent of the Chair of the department is needed. A sufficient amount to cover the cost of a seasonal instructor plus vacation pay (4%), plus overhead (5-12%) should be secured.

² In the case of Tri-Agency grants, although no overhead amounts appear in individual grant applications, the university does receive support for indirect costs of research through the Government of Canada's Research Support Fund (RSF) (<https://uwaterloo.ca/research/research-excellence/research-support-fund>).

4. Apart from a research sabbatical or other formal leave under Policy 3, a faculty member will not have a full academic year without assigned teaching responsibilities. Course releases, whether for research or administration, may not be combined to result in no assigned teaching for a faculty member in an academic year.
5. It will be unusual for externally-funded course release to be considered for a probationary faculty member, in that it is important to ensure sufficient and diverse teaching activity to inform the deliberations of tenure and promotion committees. This is also a consideration for a faculty member intending to seek promotion to Professor.
6. It will be unusual for externally-funded course release to be considered for a faculty member already on a reduced teaching load by virtue of research-related release (e.g., Research Chair reduction).