Course Reassignment Guidelines – Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity

Background:

While both teaching and scholarship are core components of a tenured or tenure-track appointment in the College, reassignment from 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. Therefore, reduction in a faculty member’s normal assigned teaching load may be obtained through a course “buy-out” mechanism and with appropriate approvals. Course buy-out does not, in and of itself, relieve individuals of their concomitant service or other departmental/programmatic responsibilities. Consideration of a course buy-out should broadly consider the impact on academic programs and students.

A college may award a limited number of course reassignments each year to facilitate scholarly activity or other creative work of regular, tenure-track and tenured faculty who are in need of the reassignment to complete a major project or external grant. If a reassignment is granted, faculty will be required to submit a report to the Dean outlining the work completed at the end of the semester for which the reassignment was granted. Recipients who fail to submit the required report will be ineligible for requesting a course reassignment for research.

The college will use “buy out” funds to support temporary teaching requests through established procedures. When funds are available, they will also support other research related activities such as travel, memberships, and subscriptions. Grant and contract awards that include faculty reassigned time, and for which temporary replacement faculty are paid less than the amount awarded for the equivalent time commitment, will be available for cost recovery by the college that initiated the grant or contract. A portion of the excess amounts of cost recovery will be returned to the department that initiated the externally funded grant or contract related to the purchase of the reassigned time.

Process:

The department chair will review requests on a case-by-case basis and decide whether to recommend approval. Whether an approval is granted depends if the request can be accommodated within the curriculum schedule, and in consideration of other departmental needs as well as unique departmental circumstances at the time (including number of course enrollment numbers, other instructional releases, suitable teaching replacements, number of sabbaticals/availability of other faculty in the department). The department chair is also responsible for the appointment of part time faculty and negotiating salaries with them as applicable.

All course reassignment requests must be approved in writing, first by the department Chair/Program Director and then by the Dean. The Chair/Program Director must specifically describe in writing how those courses to be “bought-out” will be covered by the department. The dean’s office will provide oversight, as applicable, about the hiring and/or cost of part time faculty.
Procedures

Generally, the chair will determine if requests for instructional reassignments will or should be granted based primarily on:

- Department needs (*curriculum schedule, number of faculty on leave, course enrollments etc.*),
- Individual faculty needs (*teaching evaluations, research demands, administrative or service assignments, performance, etc.*); and,
- Availability of suitable teaching replacements

Preference will be given to faculty who are nearing a review for promotion or promotion and tenure, and who require a course reassignment to complete a major project essential for strengthening an upcoming promotion or promotion and tenure case, and to faculty who require the course release to complete a major project (e.g., book, major grant for external funding, fieldwork/archival work, research collaboration, etc). Preference will also be given to faculty who have applied for external funding to support their reassignment.

Academic units that wish to propose course reassignments to support the scholarly research or other creative work of tenure-track and tenured faculty must submit requests to the Office of the Dean by October 30 for spring semester and by March 30 for the fall semester. Departments will be notified within 30 days if request(s) have been approved or denied.

For each course reassignment requested, department chairs must provide a written request of no more than one page. If a department requests multiple course reassignments, the requests should be submitted in rank order. Requests for course reassignments must include the following information:

- name of faculty member and rank;
- term of proposed course reassignment (fall or spring semester);
- project(s) to be supported by the course reassignment;
- rationale for the course reassignment at this time in the faculty member's career;
- an account of the courses taught by the faculty over the last three years, including any course reassignments taken and any paid or unpaid leaves held;
- a justification for replacing the course for which the course reassignment is granted if there are exceptional and compelling reasons to do so;
- how the reassignment will be funded/covered

**Externally funded reassignments**

Faculty seeking a course reassignment for grant funded research are required to buy out their time by requesting salary in the grant budget, unless such a request is prohibited by the funder or there are other mitigating circumstances. Assuming a 3-course teaching load, the faculty member seeking course reassignment must provide from a source other than the college budget the equivalent of 1/8th of his/her salary plus fringe benefits per course reassignment requested.
When the funder does not allow salary, consideration of course reassignment will be made based on the amount of overall grant funding, the defined workload associated with the grant, and the extent of supervision (i.e. graduate assistantship, research associates, etc.) required. Faculty will need to indicate the extent of the work for which the reassignment is being requested. The dean has the final authority to approve or deny buyouts based on overall departmental needs including continuity of course offerings. Instructional reassignments and course buyouts should not adversely impact the operations and functions of the department. Faculty with reassigned time or course buyouts are not eligible for overload assignments.

Funds recovered from grant-funded reassignments shall first be used to cover the cost of a replacement faculty member, if necessary. Any excess funds shall then be allocated to the College. Funds are expected to be used productively to support needs similar to those for which reassignments are granted.

Additional Considerations

- Faculty should not have had any paid research reassignments for at least three full academic years prior to the year in which the course reassignment will be used. This condition may be relaxed for probationary faculty.
- During the academic year of a research course reassignment, faculty are expected to be in residence, and the reassignment is expected to be the only reduction from regular teaching responsibilities.
- Faculty may not hold a sabbatical leave, a single semester leave, or any other paid research leave, whether funded by the University or by external fellowships, grants, or other sources during the academic year in which the research course reassignment is held.
- Reassignments must be used in the term for which they are requested, and may not be transferred to other faculty or banked for future use.
- Under normal circumstances, the course for which the course reassignment is granted will not be replaced. If there are exceptional and compelling reasons for replacing the course, a justification must be included in the written request described above.