

Faculty Grant-Funded Course Buy-Out Policy

Background

Full-time regular Bard College undergraduate faculty teach a full load of courses, typically 3-2, over nine months of the academic year, and concurrently commit to conducting professional work and undertaking service obligations. A course release may be granted when a faculty member undertakes specific duties, resulting in a reduced teaching load within the normal academic year. In other words, the faculty member is “released” from a portion of their teaching obligation while maintaining their regular full-time salary.

Course releases are generally granted in order for the faculty member to take up significant administrative duties, or as a recognition of special teaching commitments, such as teaching FYSEM regularly in addition to within the home program.

Course “buy-outs” occur when a course release is granted so that the faculty member can dedicate effort to an externally-funded project. In effect, the grant award “buys” the faculty member’s released time by reimbursing the College a portion of the faculty member’s salary so that an equivalent amount of effort can be spent on the funded project.

Course releases are different from professional leave, which occurs when a faculty member is released from all teaching and service obligations for a regularly scheduled sabbatical or to accept a fellowship. **In accordance with the AAUP contract, faculty members with course releases are expected to maintain their full-time responsibilities to advise, direct senior projects, serve on boards, undertake service, and engage in campus life four days a week.**

Qualifications:

- A faculty member may request course buy-out(s) for the purpose of working on a grant-funded project:
 - Course releases for term-limited administrative positions should not be combined with a grant-funded course buy-out.
 - Faculty should discuss the feasibility of such a request with their program colleagues, divisional chair, and the Dean of the College before pursuing any grant-funded project that adds a course buy-out in the project budget.
 - More than one course release per academic year will only be considered in extraordinary circumstances at the discretion of the President and the Dean of the College.
 - No more than three grant-funded course buy-outs may be taken over a five-year period.
- No faculty member should seek grant funding to support a non-teaching semester. The process of requesting a leave of absence is covered in the Faculty Handbook.

Requesting a Grant-Funded Course Buy-Out:

Faculty members working with the Office of Institutional Support (OIS) on submitting applications to fund their projects should discuss the feasibility of including a course buy-out as a first step in the proposal budget process. At that stage approval should be attained.

The request should be made through the Dean of the College's submission tool, which is available on the Dean's website. The request will be sent to the program director, the divisional chair, the Dean of the College, and OIS and should include: 1) the scope of work to be conducted; 2) a rationale as to why a course release is necessary to complete the scope of the funded project; 3) the name of the sponsor which will provide funding; and 4) the anticipated semester(s) in which a course release is requested.

After conferring with the program director and divisional chair, approval for course release is made at the discretion of the Dean of the College in consultation, as needed, with the divisional representatives of the Faculty Senate (EC, CC, PAC). The process for approving a course release request is expected to take a minimum of one month. Approval is made on the condition that the release will be granted if the award is made, and the course release time has been budgeted according to the course buy-out policies below. Written confirmation of approval of the course buy-out will be included in the proposal materials kept on record. Approval is not transferable: it is specific to the project and funding identified in the proposal submitted. Course releases may not be requested after submission of a grant or outside the scope of the application as has been approved.

Calculating a Grant-Funded Course Buy-Out:

In general, grant-funded course buy-outs are calculated on a flat rate according to the full-time regular faculty member's rank, plus fringe benefits*:

- Assistant Professor - \$10,000
- Associate Professor - \$12,500
- Full Professor - \$15,000

In cases where the sponsor sets a limit on course buy-out funds that is lower than the rate stipulated by the faculty member's rank, the lower limit will be used. These rates will be reviewed periodically and adjusted when needed.

*In consultation with the Dean, the amount requested to cover fringe benefits can be adjusted under the following circumstances: (a) the sponsor allows cost sharing, and (b) requesting full applicable fringe benefits would exceed the limit of direct costs.

Post Award Procedures:

When course buy-out has been budgeted and approved, and if the grant is awarded, the external grant will be charged for the budgeted portion of the faculty member's effort, associated fringe benefits, and indirect costs. Faculty and/or the grant administrator must work with the Office of Post Award Management to be sure the external grant funding is correctly charged.