



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

Westphal

College of Media Arts & Design

Sponsored Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Course Buyout Policy

Purpose:

This policy provides general guidelines on the use of sponsored research, scholarship, and creative activity funds for course buyout for faculty in the Westphal College of Media Arts & Design. It codifies both the procedures and calculations necessary to secure a course buyout that complies with the financial requirements of the College and the human resource needs of our programs and departments.

Applicability:

This policy applies to full-time faculty of the Westphal College of Media Arts & Design.

Definitions:

Sponsored research, scholarship, and creative activity:

Sponsored research, scholarship, and creative activity (RSCA) relates to a grant, contract, cooperative agreement, or other arrangement formalizing the transfer of money from the sponsor to Drexel University for the purpose of undertaking research, scholarship, or creative activity. Funds for these activities may be provided by federal, state, or local government, a non-profit entity such as a foundation, or a for-profit private entity.

Course buyout:

A course buyout occurs when sponsored RSCA funds are used to pay for a portion of a faculty's salaries and fringe benefits in proportion to a reduction in teaching load. The corresponding portion of the faculty's salaries and fringe benefits is directly charged to the sponsored research budget during the term of the buyout.

Policy:

Westphal faculty are eligible to utilize a sponsored RSCA course buyout to reduce their current teaching load as a means to allocate additional time to a sponsored project. The following conditions and requirements apply:

- The course buyout must apply to an allocation of time beyond a faculty member's current allocation for research, scholarship, and creative activity. Westphal's workload policy outlines current levels of faculty time allocations distributed across teaching, service, and RSCA.

- The course buyout must be included in the proposal budget to the sponsor and calculated using Westphal's course buyout calculation as described herein.
- The faculty member's department head must be notified at the proposal stage when a course buyout is being considered in order to plan for course coverage.
- Any course buyout, including those incorporated into a cost-sharing requirement, must fit with the curricular needs of the department/program and requires approval by the department head as well as the dean's office. The department head and program director should ensure that adequate course coverage can be obtained. Approval should be documented within COEUS/DragonSPOT.
- Faculty cannot buy themselves out of all teaching obligations. Westphal faculty must teach at least one course each academic year even if there are enough funds to buy out their entire teaching load.
- A course buyout may not reduce the faculty member's departmental and campus service activities.

Calculation for Cost Allocation of Course Buyout:

The calculation of the cost of a course buyout is based on a portion of a faculty member's salary and fringe benefits proportional to the number of credits of the course being bought out.

Using the 36 units allocated to 9/12 faculty, the cost of a course buyout is:

$$(\text{Base Salary} \div 36) \times (\text{Number of Credits Bought Out}) + \text{Applicable Fringe Costs}$$

Using the 48 units allocated to 12/12 faculty, the cost of a course buyout is:

$$(\text{Base Salary} \div 48) \times (\text{Number of Credits Bought Out}) + \text{Applicable Fringe Costs}$$

Applicable Fringe Costs: The sponsored project fringe benefit rate is set by the university each year. Current fringe rates can be found at:

<https://drexel.edu/comptroller/research-accounting/financial/fringe-benefit-rates/>

These rates are subject to change at any time.

Administration of Course Buyout:

The faculty member seeking course buyout is responsible for working with their department head, department administrator, and ORI contact to ensure that the appropriate effort is reported and that salary is allocated properly against the sponsored project by appropriate deadlines. If salary is not allocated by fiscal deadlines, the faculty member may be responsible for making up the teaching load being bought out.

Assistance and Support:

For questions about this policy or assistance in calculations, please contact Neville Vakharia, Associate Dean for Research & Planning, nvakharia@drexel.edu.