

Policy Title: Course Release and Research Incentive Policy

Policy ID: N/A

Status: Draft

Original Policy Date: September 23, 2024

Last Revised:

Oversight Executive: Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs and Associate Dean of Research

Applies To: All Full-Time Faculty

Publicize Policy?: Yes

Reason for Policy: The School of Data Science (SDS) supports faculty in their pursuit of developing and engaging in methodological data science research and its translational and collaborative activities. To support these activities, faculty are encouraged to apply for external funding, which can be used to 'buy out' of their teaching obligations, or to receive a salary bonus, in accordance with this policy. This policy explains how faculty can support their own course releases through extramural funding, how faculty can receive a salary bonus from extramural funding, the requirements on extramural funding used for these purposes, and when faculty are eligible for these options.

Course Release Incentive Program

Faculty may reduce their teaching load by one (1) course by either:

- Covering 15% of their 9-month salary (including fringe)
- or
- Covering 100% of 12-month funding for three (3) PhD students at the given year's faculty-funded GRA rate

In total, faculty may reduce their teaching load by **up to 2 courses** per academic year. Course releases are not guaranteed and are approved at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs based on program needs and the availability of other resources. Every effort will be made to provide course releases when sufficient eligible extramural funding is available.

Research Incentive Bonus Program

Faculty may elect to receive 60% of any 9-month salary savings that results from offsetting a portion of their 9-month salary with eligible extramural sources. Sources of faculty salary support that will be recognized for this purpose include:

- Sponsored research from federal, state, foundation, or corporate sources with net F&A rates of 25% or higher.
- Other qualifying income from extramural sources as determined by the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs. Faculty may appeal the decision on other qualifying income to the Dean. The decision of the Dean is final.
- *Extramural funding used to support a course release is not eligible for the research incentive bonus (funding cannot be double-counted).*

Payment Logistics: The incentive bonus will be made as a lump sum wage payment in the October pay period for the prior year (e.g., payment in October 2025 for the 2024-2025 academic year). There is no minimum amount of effort to be eligible for the research incentive salary savings bonus, but the minimum cash payment threshold is \$100. The maximum research incentive salary bonus is 4.5 months, or 50% of the 9-month salary. The SDS Finance Team is responsible for managing the research incentive bonus process and timelines, communicating the timeline with all parties involved, and calculating and sharing the incentive payment calculations with Faculty Affairs by established deadlines. The Faculty Affairs team is responsible for tracking, coordinating, and communicating with the eligible faculty about their participation in these incentive initiatives.

Faculty Eligibility for Course Release and Research Incentive Programs

The Faculty Affairs team verifies that faculty members meet the following eligibility criteria.

Academic General Faculty (AGF): AGF on the *teaching track* are automatically eligible. AGF on the *research or practice track* are not automatically eligible due to the varied and unique funding arrangements of these positions. However, research and practice faculty may request eligibility if they expect to have sufficient supplement funding to offset their previously determined funding expectations. Such requests must be made in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs, generally before October 1st of the academic year in which they wish to be eligible. The Dean must review and approve the Associate Dean's recommendation for eligibility.

Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty (T3): Because SDS already invests 45% of all T3 9-month efforts to promote research activity, T3 faculty are required to recover some of this investment before participating in these incentive plans.

Specifically, T3 faculty must first recover 15% of their 9-month salary with eligible extramural sources *before* qualifying for a course release or research incentive bonus. If a T3 faculty funds a summer month with eligible extramural sources, they get 5% credit towards the 15%. Hence, funding three (3) summer months with eligible extramural sources would satisfy the recovery requirement. Faculty who do not wish to fund their summer must offset 15% of their 9-month salary to meet this requirement, with all subsequent funding (above the initial 15%) then eligible for either incentive plan.

Joint Appointment Faculty: Faculty with joint appointments who have a 50% appointment or greater with SDS are eligible for the incentive plans. The effort and coverage requirements for eligibility for the research incentive bonus are understood to be scaled by SDS effort that the school pays for (e.g., if a T3 faculty is 50-50 with another unit, they only need to offset 7.5% of their SDS 9-month salary to be eligible for the incentive programs). However, when offsetting real costs, there is no rescaling, such as with a course release, where the full amount is required (i.e., 15% of a 9-month salary for a course).

All Faculty: The following eligibility requirements apply to all full-time faculty, regardless of track:

- Faculty must be in "good standing" with the School of Data Science and the University at large.

- Faculty must be performing research at the University (in residence) or paid by the University while performing research elsewhere. Faculty do not need to be in residence when the incentive cash payment is disbursed.
- Faculty with a contractual cycle greater than 9 months must have sufficient funding for each additional month to cover full fringe benefits.
- Faculty who are on sabbatical or otherwise on leave are not eligible while they are on leave.
- Faculty acting as assignees to a federal agency via the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) may not count the effort on the IPA towards and incentive. Eligibility depends on the negotiated overhead and indirect rates.
- The grants on which the faculty member serves as a PI must not end the year in a deficit and faculty must be in good financial standing in SDS.
- Faculty must be in full compliance with the University's Code of Ethics.

Any and all exceptions to these eligibility requirements must be approved by the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs, and the Dean.

Next Scheduled Review: Fall 2025

Approved by, Date: Academic Committee 10/22/24; Faculty 11/6/24; Dean 12/3/24

Supersedes (previous policy date): N/A