

Course Buyout Policy

(approved by faculty October 2018)

Background:

This policy concerns course buyouts: instances in which the Department of Philosophy is compensated for loss of faculty instructional activity. The policy does not cover fellowships (e.g., the Fulbright). Tenure track (TTK) faculty in the Department standardly teach four courses per academic year. Although there is no formal specification of faculty workload as a whole, University administrators have construed it to be 40-50% instructional (including, e.g., graduate student advising), with the rest composed of research and service. Assuming this division of workload, to buy out one course would be to buy out approximately 10% of faculty workload. With respect to sponsored research (e.g., grants), some departments in ARHU require 10% of a faculty member's salary to buy out one of his/her courses; others charge 15%.

Costs:

It currently costs the department a minimum of \$5,500 to arrange for a graduate student or professional track (PTK) faculty member to teach a course. That minimum is likely to increase as the University implements higher pay scales for graduate students and PTK faculty. In addition to the price in dollars of buyouts is their cost in the time and effort needed to reshuffle teaching assignments or find new PTK instructors. Moreover, buyouts often result in faculty or graduate students teaching courses other than ones that would best promote their professional development. Buyouts can also adversely affect our students. Our PTK faculty and graduate students tend to perform admirably in the classroom, but they often lack the expertise and experience of tenure track faculty.

TTK faculty course buyouts:

Buyouts are subject to approval by the Chair on a case-by-case basis, and there is no presumption in favor of their being granted. A faculty member who proposes a buyout needs to provide the Chair with a rationale for it (e.g., his or her aim to complete a particular research project). When reviewing a proposal, the Chair will consider the instructional needs of the department.

Internal funding for a course buyout is funding from the faculty member's own research funds.* External funding is funding from any other source, including other University of Maryland entities (e.g., departments).

With either external or internal funding, buying out one course will normally cost 10% of faculty salary; buying out additional courses within the same year (academic or not) will normally cost 15% of faculty salary per additional course.

- Certain longstanding programs constitute exceptions: For example, the Graduate School's Research and Scholarship Awards (RASA) competition offers successful applicants considerably less than 20% of faculty salary to buy out two courses. The Department will continue to honor these buyouts.
- As the University implements higher pay scales for graduate students and PTK faculty, the cost of buyouts might increase.
- The Chair continues to exercise the discretion to grant course releases for reasons including, but not limited to, faculty recruitment or retention.

* In extraordinary circumstances, a reduction in a faculty member's instructional activity might be supported by a temporary, self-imposed reduction in his/her salary. Such an arrangement would have to be approved by the Provost's Office.