

Teaching release and course buyout policy¹

It is occasionally necessary for faculty to have a temporary reduction in teaching duties due to time-intensive and/or high profile research obligations that are at odds with regular teaching obligations (e.g., if the faculty member in question is leading a large, externally-funded, and administratively complex research effort such as an NSF Center with many PIs and senior personnel). In this circumstance, the department may grant a release of, or reduction in, that faculty member's teaching obligations so that they can successfully perform those duties. This type of release is not guaranteed, and may be impossible due to the department's overall teaching obligations, staffing availability, and broader priorities.

Faculty may also wish to "buy out" their teaching using grant funding in order to meet urgent research obligations. Given the department's dual missions of teaching and research and widely varying expectations from funding agencies regarding this particular use of external funds, grant-funded course buyout should happen only in exceptional and rare circumstances. If this does happen, buying out one course (from a minimum 30%/2-course teaching load) will cost the faculty member either 15% of the faculty member's academic year salary OR \$15,000, whichever is greater². Grant buyout of a second course in a given year should be even less common, and when it does happen should cost an additional 25% of the faculty member's AY salary OR \$25,000, whichever is greater (so, 40%/\$40K total, whichever is greater). As with other types of teaching release, the opportunity to use grant funds to buy out some or all of their teaching obligations is not guaranteed, and may be impossible due to the department's overall teaching obligations, staffing availability, and broader priorities.

In all circumstances, temporary reduction in teaching responsibilities should be discussed with the Department Chairperson. It should also be done substantially before the beginning of the academic term(s) in question (by the beginning of the semester prior to the semester where you wish to buy out your teaching - i.e., by the beginning of the spring term for the following fall), in order for the department to attempt to find a way to cover the faculty member's reduction in teaching.

¹ Approved by CMSE's Advisory Committee on 2021-04-30

² Note that the listed dollar amount and percentages may need to change when the cost of instruction changes - for example, if individual departments become responsible for paying employee benefits. In that case, all amounts will be increased to cover the increase in departmental costs. Note further that the dollar values listed above do not include overhead/indirect costs, which will add to the total cost coming from the grant as per MSU's agreement with the funding agency.