

FACULTY RESEARCH INCENTIVES
Arnold School of Public Health

Updated August 2024

This document presents policies that are expected to expand the school's extramural research funding by providing individual faculty members with incentives and provides the rationale for expectations of tenured and tenure-track faculty regarding teaching load and release of faculty effort from course teaching through grant-funded salary support. Because each department in the Arnold School has different contexts and needs, each department will set policy on this issue in line with this statement.

Teaching expectations for tenured and tenure-track faculty

Departments should plan for teaching loads appropriate to the level of salary release. If tenure track/tenured faculty do not have salary release for research, they should have a teaching load higher than those who have salary release; the specific teaching load must be determined based on the department's specific curricula, course offerings, and course enrollment.

At the University of South Carolina, "the normal teaching assignment shall be twelve hours or its equivalent" (Faculty Manual, June 19, 2024 revision, p. 60). That is, a fulltime course-teaching load is four three-credit courses per semester or eight per nine-month academic year. Teaching one three-credit course is therefore considered to require on average 12.5% effort from the nine-month base of effort during the academic year. The University policy allows for adjustments to the teaching load to account for high-level courses, research activities, administrative activities, unusually large classes, and other factors (e.g., leading large programmatic grant proposals, mentoring graduate students, chairing or serving on thesis or dissertation committees, and providing significant community service from the local to international levels).

In the Arnold School, tenured and tenure-track faculty members are usually expected to contribute with excellence to all three university missions of teaching, research, and service, including course teaching. In addition to course teaching, faculty members are expected to: impart knowledge by engaging in informal teaching by mentoring students in research and practice, create knowledge through research, and share knowledge by reaching out to the public, agencies, and communities. Consequently, in keeping with university policy, faculty members in the Arnold School do not typically engage in the fulltime course-teaching load in order to allocate effort to these other activities. Typical teaching loads for tenured and tenure-track faculty members in the Arnold School reflect the expectation of extensive involvement with graduate level courses; mentoring, advising, and directing research for graduate students and post-doctoral students; and significant levels of research and community service activity.

Substantial time and effort in the Arnold School is allocated by tenured and tenure-track faculty to research activities. As part of this effort in research, tenured and tenure-track faculty members are expected to seek and obtain extramural grant funding that contributes to developing and maintaining an excellent research program that has quality, impact, and distinctiveness. That is, seeking and obtaining extramural grant funding is a normal and expected part of the job. The Arnold School has intentionally kept the course-teaching effort relatively low to enable faculty members to have sufficient effort to

develop and maintain an excellent research program, including obtaining funds to conduct research. **Because of the lower default teaching load, a faculty member should have salary release of greater than 38% before requesting additional course release (i.e., normal teaching loads already assume research effort of at least 25% within the 9-month base).**

Faculty members in the Arnold School with the typical distribution of effort described above who seek release from teaching a course must document that their research effort and support exceeds the time and effort already allocated for research via the reduced teaching load. This documentation would most often take the form of having a substantial portion of base salary covered from extramural grant funding (after accounting for summer salary). Release from teaching a course is subject to approval by the Department Chair, and any release must be consistent with relevant department policies and fulfillment of the teaching needs and mission of the department and school.

Faculty incentives based on salary release

1. Salary release for tenure-track/tenured faculty must be maximized after covering summer salary needs. Faculty are expected to follow approved budgets in grants in terms of providing reasonable salary coverage relative to the effort expended.
2. Research supplements must be covered by at least 150% salary release, i.e., if a supplement of \$8,000 is requested, the faculty member must document \$12,000 in salary release. A department can require a higher level of salary release than 150%. Salary supplements are a significant incentive to research productivity, but they also require resources. The supplement for any faculty researcher who cannot cover that cost adequately should be reduced or eliminated. Preferably, a research supplement is based on current year salary release, but it can be based on the prior year; however, the same salary release in one year cannot be used to justify salary supplement for two years. Approval for a research supplement is for one fiscal/academic year only. If the faculty member has productivity/salary release to justify a continuation of the supplement, a new request must be submitted to the dean's office.
3. A research supplement negotiated as part of a retention package is subject to the same requirement for return of salary release.
4. While a research supplement can be approved for up to 15% of the faculty member's annualized salary, in practice we typically award 10% of the base salary.
5. In general, faculty researchers are only entitled to partial return of salary release for any approved expenditures (e.g., GA, travel, books and equipment). Each department can identify what level of return, if any, is appropriate in that unit. This return is for salary release funds beyond salary release committed to teaching buyout, summer salary (100%) or to a research supplement (150%).

Incentives based on indirect cost (IDC) recovery

1. Fulltime faculty members in the Arnold School of Public Health, regardless of tenure status or faculty track, are eligible for the incentives described in this document.
2. Any individually negotiated IDC distributions will negate the following incentive policy for that PI or project as appropriate. These agreements are listed below the policy statement.

3. Faculty members who serve as principal investigators on extramural grants will share in the distribution of the school's component of the indirect cost recovery generated by those grants, regardless of the IDC rate or dollar amount.
4. The individual faculty member's share of the IDC will be calculated as 10% of the school's component of the IDC; the individual's share will be drawn equally from the shares of the participating units (usually the dean's office and the academic department but including research centers where applicable). Participating research centers are listed below the policy statement.
5. If a grant has co-PIs, the default the default recipient of the PI is the name on the account. If there are co-PIs, it will be the home unit's responsibility to notify the dean's office whether to split the 10% incentive.
6. Faculty members who have research incentive accounts, but who retire or otherwise leave their faculty positions, may not expend funds beyond the date of termination of their full-time faculty appointments in the Arnold School. Any balance remaining in a terminated Research Incentive Account will be distributed to the units that contributed funds to the account in proportion to the contribution of each.
7. To facilitate accurate allocation of IDC, the SmartState chairs will submit grants through the home department designation in USCERA. Similarly, collaborative grants of the SS Chair in which another faculty member is PI should be submitted through that PI's home department. Sub-accounts for budget breakouts of collaborating investigators should be requested and presented as an addendum via USCERA at the time of proposal submission. The indirect cost (IDC) recovery generated by any SS Chair in the principal investigator role and transferred to the school from central administration will, in most cases, be divided equally between the SS chair's home department and the dean's office. The SS chair receives endowment revenues for his/her discretionary use and therefore is not eligible for the current PI incentive of 3.75% IDC return (10% of the school's component). For large grant proposals paying the full IDC rate, the SS chair may request special consideration of IDC return to support project related administrative needs. Those special needs must be justified in writing and the IDC return should be requested of the School AND the USC Office of Research before grant/contract proposal submission. The burden of atypical IDC return to any PI should be shared equally by central administration, the school and the department.