

Instructional EFT & Research EFT Buyout Policy and Procedure

Agencies that provide research or instructional grants and contracts, as well as various units of the University, sometime seek to have faculty devote a portion of their time to a particular funded project. Where the research or instructional work is demonstrably significant and beneficial to the University, SPIA may foster and approve such arrangements, provided that certain conditions are met. Note that all buyouts of time must be approved by the department head and SPIA dean.

Instructional EFT Buyout

The practice of buying out instructional time in support of research and other scholarly activities is recognized as a necessary and valued practice by SPIA. However, it does exact a price on the instructional program. SPIA has set forth the following policies governing the buy-out of instructional time.

Instructional EFT Buyout

All Instructional EFT Buyouts must be negotiated with the appropriate department head. It is the responsibility of the appropriate head to make sure that their decision to recommend approval of any buyout ensures that necessary replacement teaching is available and that it is available at a rate that can be accommodated by the buyout policy. The department head must also consider the potential scholarly value of the project, the benefit from past buyouts by the applicant, and departmental instructional needs including classroom, advising, and curricular work. The head must receive approval from the dean for the buyout arrangements. Proposed buyouts must be brought to the attention of the department head prior to the time a grant proposal is submitted or prior to the time any other type of contractual agreement is entered into by a faculty member. If the department and the dean approve, and the proposal is successful, the faculty member informs the department head, who will make arrangements to fill the instructional needs and to find a qualified classroom instructor. It is the responsibility of the head of the department to identify qualified replacement instructors.

To submit the request to buyout a portion of their budgeted instructional time, faculty should initiate the request using this [online request form](#), also found on SPIA's website. Only external grants and contracts may serve as sources of a buyout of instruction. Once the request has been fully approved, the Office of the Dean will notify the department via email of the approval. The Office of the Dean will submit the necessary position funding change(s) to release the state funds. These released funds will then be distributed as outlined in the policy and approved buyout form.

Instructional buyout funds distributed to departments are state dollars and must be used according to state funding rules. Instructional buyout funds are distributed in the fiscal year they are bought, expire at the end of each fiscal year (June 30th) regardless of the date of the buyout transaction, and do not carry forward.

Teaching Load

Faculty members can buy out a maximum of one half of a standard teaching load which is four courses at SPIA using externally-sponsored grant or contract funding. On an exceptional basis, when a faculty member is executing multiple, major grants and/or contracts simultaneously, and depending on the department's instructional needs and the timing of the faculty member's award notification, an

exceptional one-course teaching load may be requested by the faculty member. If approved by the department head and dean, the one-course load is limited to one academic year and may not be approved for consecutive academic years.

A faculty member who has been granted one semester of research leave (i.e., two course releases – see the Research Leave Policy) is only able to buyout an additional one course under the Instructional EFT & Research EFT Buyout Policy, reducing their teaching load to one course for the academic year, and only in exceptional circumstances, outlined above. Seeking to buyout two courses in addition to a semester's leave is equivalent to requesting a full year of research leave, in which case, the Instructional EFT & Research EFT Buyout Policy does not apply.

Instructional EFT Buyout Rates

Beginning January 1, 2024, the rate for an externally funded instructional buyout is set at 11.875% of an academic-year salary or 8.906% of a fiscal-year salary, plus the corresponding fringe benefit cost.

Distribution of Buyout Monies/Replacement Teaching

Funds from an instructional buyout, at the rate of 11.875% (or 8.906%, per above), are distributed as follows: 80% to the department and 20% to SPIA. Replacement teaching cost must be covered by the department's 80%. Any remaining department funds are at the discretion of the head of the unit.

Research EFT Buyout

Faculty may buy out their Research EFT using funds from grants or contracts. Grant or contract funds must pay the corresponding part of their salary and associated fringe. SPIA has set forth the following policies governing the buyout of research effort.

Research EFT Buyout Procedures

All research buyouts must be negotiated with the appropriate head. It is the responsibility of the appropriate department head to make sure that their decision considers the potential scholarly value of the project and the benefit from past buyouts by the applicant. The head must receive the approval from the dean for the buyout arrangements. Proposed buyouts must be brought to the attention of the department head prior to the time a proposal is submitted or prior to the time any other type of contractual agreement is entered into by a faculty member. Proposals must include plans to spend the potential returned funds and the proposal must be approved by the department head.

Additional conditions:

Faculty must determine that their grant funding agency allows purchase of academic-year time.

Faculty must ascertain that the amount of their research EFT they wish to buy out will not cause any difficulties with UGA grant cost sharing formulas.

Research buyout funds distributed to faculty are state dollars and must be used according to state funding rules. Research buyout funds are distributed in the fiscal year they are bought, expire at the end of each fiscal year (June 30th) regardless of the date of the buyout transaction, and do not carry forward.

To submit the request to buyout a portion of their budgeted research time, faculty should initiate a request using the [online request form](#). Once the request has been fully approved, the Office of the Dean will notify the department via email of the approval. The Office of the Dean will submit the necessary position funding change(s) to release the state funds. These released funds will then be distributed as outlined in the policy and approved buyout form.

Research EFT Buyout Rates

There is no standard rate for research buy-outs. Note that the external funding supporting the buyout must also support all associated fringe rates.

Distribution of Buyout Funds

SPIA will return up to 50% of the research buyout funds to the research support account of the investigator in the same fiscal year according to State funding rules. SPIA will retain the remaining 50% to be used at the dean's discretion to support research activities throughout the school.

To receive buyout funds, PIs must propose a spending plan for the returned funds, which must be approved by the department head in consultation with the dean. A buyout may still be granted with a reduced rate of return to the PI should portions of the spending plan not be approved. Acceptable spending plans include support for developing your research engine.

For instance, a faculty member with external grant funds may wish to employ an administrative assistant or research professional to manage grant personnel, procurement, and scheduling. The granting agency often will not permit such individuals to be hired on grant direct costs. Therefore, the 50% return from the buyout may be used to fund that position's salary.

Note, however, that any individuals hired on the returned funds must be notified that the position is contingent upon available funding and liable to be terminated when a grant expires or when the faculty member no longer wishes to continue buying out their Research EFT. If the position is a permanent, rather than temporary, up to 360 hours of annual leave must be paid out upon termination or resignation, depending on accrued leave during employment. This is true regardless of funding sources.

Additional examples may include: funding for pilot studies for additional research opportunities for the PI or collaborators, funding for travel to present research at conferences for the PI or graduate research assistants, or funding for research equipment or software that can be utilized across multiple new research endeavors.

Cost Share Associated with Salary Cap

Some faculty with federal agency grant funding could have monthly salaries above the associated agency's salary cap. Typically, the salary cap is related to funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). SPIA will honor the funding agency salary cap, as relevant. NIH's salary cap is posted [here](#).

FAQ

Why does my grant get charged fringe benefits on my academic-year salary?

When your academic-year salary is paid by the state of Georgia, it covers the institutional share of fringe benefits. Once you move your salary to a restricted account, that account must pay the fringe. Hence a buyout costs your grant more than just your direct salary, and you must account for this.

How do I coordinate with grants whose start and end dates are not on the standard fiscal year?

The amounts returned from a buyout will always be on a standard July through June fiscal year. Coordinating with your grant's year may require two separate buyout transactions. For example, if your grant starts on April 1, you should ask for one research buyout to cover April 1 to May 30, and a second research buyout to cover August 1 to March 31. These two transactions may both be requested and approved at the same time, however they will be processed in their respective fiscal years. Instructional time buyouts need to correspond to and cover entire academic year semesters (Aug – Dec and Jan – May).