

**Research Course Release Award Program**  
**University of North Florida**  
**Updated April 20, 2016**

Academic Affairs is committed to increasing the amount of external funding obtained for faculty research, scholarship, and creativity while also supporting the university's mission to engage undergraduate and graduate students in these activities. Accordingly, Research Course Release Awards (RCRAs) are available to support faculty engaged in externally funded projects by granting course releases, both to provide additional time to focus on funded work and to demonstrate to sponsors the university's commitment to the proposed activities.

**Program Description**

At the time of proposal submission, RCRAs for course releases will be committed to regular faculty members who serve as either the Principal Investigator (PI) or co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) on an external grant or contract that meets the following conditions:

- The funding for the grant or contract is a minimum of \$100,000 per year **or** the sum of the total funding plus the amount of that total committed to student support is at least \$100,000 per year (e.g., if the total budget is \$75,000 per year, of which \$25,000 is for student participation, an RCRA will be made).
- The grant or contract returns full facilities and administrative (F&A) costs or, when the F&A rate is lower, generates at least \$25,000 per year in recovered F&A.
- The course release commitment is approved by the department Chair, Dean, and Associate VP for Research prior to proposal submission.

Multiple-year grants or contracts may qualify for one RCRA for each year of the award, provided the criteria above are met for each project year (e.g., a multi-year award of \$300,000 may qualify for three RCRAs provided the funding is at least \$100,000 each year). RCRAs may also be held concurrently with college-supported course releases provided these awards do not exceed the per project or per year limits (see below).

Large grants or contracts may qualify for a maximum of two RCRAs per year if the grant or contract is at least \$200,000 per year at the full F&A rate or a minimum of \$40,000 F&A cost recovery. For example, a three-year grant for \$1.5 million (\$500,000 per year) could provide 2 RCRAs per year for each of the three years.

**Additional Considerations**

The number of RCRAs awarded depends on the amount of funding, not the number of faculty participants in the project. However, where a grant or contract qualifies for multiple RCRAs, these may be distributed between the PI and Co-PIs.

Release time must be taken during the period of the grant or contract for which it is awarded and must be used for research or programmatic activities supported by the external grant or contract. An RCRA cannot be used to provide a release from teaching if the course is subsequently taught as an overload, as this would be inconsistent with the objective of providing additional time for research or creative work.

If appropriate for the sponsor, the AVP for Research will provide a letter of support to accompany the proposal affirming that the university is committed to the proposed project through a reduction to the PIs' teaching load.

Once an award is made by the sponsor, each RCRA previously approved during the proposal stage will be supported with up to \$3,000 from Academic Affairs to the PI's college. RCRAs are only paid out when an award is made on a proposal for which the course releases were pre-approved.

### **Program Exceptions**

All externally funded grants or contracts for programmatic and curricular activities are eligible under this program, with the following exceptions:

- Fee-for-service contracts are not eligible for RCRAs.
- Awards that include commitments of UNF match or any other supplements (except for college-supported course releases) are not eligible for RCRAs.
- No faculty member may receive more than 2 RCRAs per year regardless of the amount of external funding.
- RCRAs may be held concurrently with college-supported course releases, including scholarship releases for junior faculty in their first and fourth year. However, no faculty member can be granted more than 4 UNF-supported course releases in any one year regardless of the amount of external funding (this does not include course buyouts built into the direct costs of a grant).