

Budgeting FAQs

1. Does ARHU have guidance on what percent of my salary equates to one course buyout? 10% has been used in the past, but I know that other departments/Colleges use higher figures (e.g., 11%, 13%, etc.).
When we do a true buyout, the college norm is usually 10%. That is based somewhat on the concept that a faculty member in ARHU spends 40% of their time teaching, 40% research, and 20% service/admin. However, when you are factoring your effort on a grant, it is not based on a commodity like “one course”, but rather on your ‘effort’. If you are going to spend 10% of your effort on the research, then 10% of your salary would be charged to it. If it’s 20% of your effort, then that is the correct %. It is not tied to a course release, although you may be granted a release by your chair. Remember if any of your salary is charged to a research grant, then you will need to complete an effort report where you attest that the % of salary charged to the grant is an accurate representation of your actual effort during that time period.
2. Are course buyouts the only option for budgeting my time into proposals during the academic year?
Again, the amount of effort/time spent on a grant is the determination, not the course buyout. If 40% of your time is supposedly spent on research, then working on a sponsored grant doesn’t automatically mean that you get a course release.
3. What are the parameters for budgeting in my time during the winter and summer? In other words, what is the maximum amount of my time I can be compensated during the winter and summer?
During winter term, you are still employed by the university as a 9 month faculty member. You can be compensated with an overload if you teach a Winter Term course. Doing work on a research grant during the winter would not count as an overload. In the summer, you can be paid up to 33% of your 9-month salary if charged to a research grant; 30% if just summer pay from a state account. The 33% would imply that you spent every day of the summer period working 100% on the grant – probably not realistic so the amount may be a little lower.
4. How many overloads can I have in a semester/academic year? Can I have course overloads (i.e., teach a course) and/or research overloads (i.e., bring in funding that buys me out of 3 courses, but since my teaching load is two courses, receive a research overload for the third “course”)?
The general rule of thumb is that a faculty member can get 2 overloads during a calendar year – there are exceptions but that is the normal practice. If you teach in the summer and do work on a research grant, and the total comes up to more than the 33%, that would be considered an overload.
5. What is the maximum number of courses I can buy a graduate student out of in the semester?
You don’t necessarily ‘buy out’ a graduate student’s courses. If a GA is hired to work on a research grant – as many are on the campus – they function as a Research Assistant, rather than a Teaching Assistant. If the GA’s time is split teaching 1 course and doing research the rest of the time – and they normally teach two courses - then 50% of their salary would be charged to the grant.
6. What is the maximum amount I can compensate graduate students’ for their time on research projects during the winter and summer?

It depends on how the student is hired. If he/she is a 9.5 month GA, he/she is already compensated during the winter. If they do overload work, for example teach during Winter Term, there are defined rates based on their GA status. During the summer, a 9.5 month GA is paid at an hourly rate – to be determined by the department based on their GA scales. If the student is a 12 month GA, then he/she is already being paid for summer work.

7. How do I calculate overhead for myself during the academic year, winter term, and summer? How do I calculate overhead for my graduate students during the academic year, winter term, and summer?

If you are referring to the campus F&A (Facilities and Administrative rate) that is applied to most grants, the standard on-campus rate is 52% for on-campus activities. There are other rates based on off-campus research or the type of research. Some granting agencies/sponsors limit the amount of overhead that can be charged. The F&A rate is consistent across the year – doesn't change based on AY, winter or summer. There is also the issue of Fringe Benefits – and how they are calculated. See the ORA website and chart to guide you through the fringe benefits choices.