

Research Incentives Program Texas A&M School of Public Health

Approved by Dean Shawn Gibbs: **May 15, 2023**

This guidance is **effective for Fiscal Year 2024 only (September 1, 2023-August 31, 2024)**. The guidance below will be monitored, reviewed, and updated by the SPH Dean's Office by May 15th each year in conjunction with other considerations including the overall impact of the program on SPH operations, its effectiveness in better supporting tenure-track and tenured faculty, and encouraging externally funded research.

The Texas A&M University (TAMU) School of Public Health (SPH) is committed to the education, research, and service mission of the University. TAMU SPH recognizes that tenure-track and tenured faculty may need, from time to time, flexibility in their workload distribution in these three domains to accommodate a continued high level of success in research.

Unless specified otherwise in letters of employment, full-time tenured/tenure track faculty appointed in the TAMU SPH have 9.0 month appointments that requires being available to teach nine months each calendar year and to provide a workload consistent with the requirements stipulated in the Texas A&M University Rule 12.03.99.M1, System Policy 12.03, and Texas Education Code Section 51.402.

SPH faculty are expected to designate and monitor how their research-covered salary funds are allocated for each project in which they are contributing time and effort. When an eligible TAMU SPH faculty member generates a portion of their academic-year (nine-month) salary and fringe benefits through externally sponsored research projects that would have otherwise been covered through designated state salary funds, there are three options available for allocating the unused portion of state salary (i.e., "generated salary" or "incentive months"), with an overall maximum limit of 7.5 incentive months allowed for allocation:

- 1) **Summer Salary Offset:** A faculty member may designate that up to 2.5 incentive months be allocated to cover summer salary during each fiscal year. This re-allocation recognizes that the same portion of time and effort for other assigned faculty duties that are part of the regular workload during the nine months may instead occur during non-contract months.¹
- 2) **Salary Savings:** Faculty may designate that up to 3.0 incentive months be allocated as "salary savings" that will be distributed as follows:
 - 25% will be allocated to the PI Incentive account for the faculty member
 - 25% will be allocated a discretionary account in the faculty member's primary SPH academic department
 - 50% will be retained by SPH for reinvestment into SPH graduate students and research.
- 3) **Course Buyouts:** Faculty may designate, with approval from the respective department head, up to 4.05 incentive months be allocated to buy out one or more three credit courses. Each three credit course buyout requires 0.15 FTE of externally sponsored research effort over nine months (i.e., 1.35 months of research-generated salary per three credit course), with a maximum buyout of three, three credit courses per year (totaling nine credit hours) and a minimum teaching load of one three credit course per year.

Research-generated salary designated for Summer Salary Offset cannot also be designated for Salary Savings or Course Buyouts. Similarly, funds designated for Salary Savings or Course Buyouts cannot be used for other incentives.

Incentive month accrual exclusions:

- Summer salary effort funded directly by extramural grants or contracts.
- Administrative stipends, one-time merit payments, and any other compensation that is not part of the faculty member's regular state funded salary over the nine month contract period during the fiscal year.
- Salary covered internally by another unit of TAMU such as joint appointments, etc.
- Salary cap differentials and other salary cost share amounts that are paid by SPH to individual faculty.

¹ TAMU SPH faculty will continue to have the option to fund salary directly through external grants and contracts during non-contract months if their research funded time and effort is concentrated during these months.

Salary Savings Accrual and Uses:

- Salary savings funds will be transferred to each relevant account after the fiscal year budget close-out and verification, though not later than March 15, 2025, for funds that accrued during FY 2024.
- Requests to accrue more than 3.0 months of salary savings will require review of faculty workload assignments and must be approved by the Dean or his designee.
- Permitted use of salary savings funds follow the same rules used for PI incentive funds and other discretionary accounts, which can include funding graduate students or others to staff research projects, conference travel, and other activities to support the research or teaching missions of SPH.
- SPH faculty may fund a single merit payment for themselves once per year (limit: \$5K/year) from PI incentive accounts.

Eligibility for Research Incentives:

- Full-time SPH tenure-track or tenured faculty who are administratively located (i.e., ad loc'd) in SPH for 1.0 FTE during the nine contracted months of the fiscal year and are generating salary through extramural research projects over the same nine contracted months.
- Certification by the department head that the faculty member has met annual workload requirements and fulfilled expectations for teaching, advising students, institutional service, and other assigned duties.
- Academic Professional Track (APT) faculty are not eligible for this program. This is because APT-Research Track faculty are required to cover the majority of their salary through extramural funding sources or indirect cost returns, and APT-Instructional Track faculty are expected to focus primarily on the teaching mission of the SPH.
- PI incentive fund accounts with a balance above \$250,000 at the time of disbursement will not be eligible to accrue salary savings funds over the \$250,000 amount. However, faculty with an incentive account balance above \$250,000 can designate what would have been their portion of salary savings to either a department or a center reserve account.
- Course buyouts are not automatic and must be approved by the faculty member's department head.

Other Considerations:

- SPH faculty will be notified of their teaching and other workload expectations for the following academic year as part of their annual review process each spring, which will enable faculty to plan the research time and effort in advance.
- SPH faculty are expected to designate and routinely monitor how their research-covered salary funds are allocated for each project in which they are contributing time and effort and should provide a Percent Effort Grid (PEG) to the SPH Office of Research and their respective department head at least annually.
- SPH faculty cannot commit more than a total of **12.0 months** of personal effort per year as a sum of their annual teaching, research, and service contributions. Faculty effort that is committed as cost share on funded projects must be included in the determination of effort and workload.
- Faculty are responsible for notifying the SPH Office of Research of their planned effort (FTE) on sponsored projects and are encouraged to review their research project accounts each month to ensure accurate charging of their time and effort throughout the year.
- Summer salary offsets that fund faculty salary in non-contract months will be sourced from state salary accounts, but should be included in summer salary requests that route internally through SPH. This will ensure that faculty members do not exceed their maximum allowed effort across all funding sources.
- If a faculty member generates salary through external research funding and leaves SPH employment prior to disbursement of the shared salary savings funds, accrued balances that would have been allocated to the faculty member will instead post to the account of the faculty member's primary SPH department.
- Salary covered through sources other than externally-funded grants and contracts will not accrue incentives.
- Please refer to the [SPH Doctoral Student and Graduate Assistant Research \(GAR\) Incentive Program](#) guidance for additional incentives available to SPH faculty who are mentoring and/or employing SPH doctoral students.

Fiscal Year 2022													Fiscal Year 2023														
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug			
Tracking	FY '22 Accrue/track salary offset \$									No Accrual			FY '23 Accrue/track salary offset \$									No Accrual					
Funding													FY '22 accrual review			Distribute FY '22 savings											
Spending																							Use FY 2022 savings funds*				

Fiscal Year 2024													Fiscal Year 2025											
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Tracking	FY '24 Accrue/track salary offset \$									No Accrual			FY '25 Accrue/track salary offset \$									No Accrual		
Funding	FY '23 accrual review				Distribute FY '23 savings								FY 2024 accrual review			Distribute FY '24 savings								
Spending	Use FY 2022 savings funds*						Use FY 2022-23 savings funds*												Use FY 2022-24 savings funds*					

* Accounts with balances above \$250,000 at the time of disbursement will not accrue salary savings funds