OBJECTIVE

To describe the procedures relating to release time (reassigned effort), particularly but not exclusively for Academic Affairs. This document describes how to calculate the effort associated with teaching, the amount of effort a faculty member has for scholarship or service, and the associated costs. We note that this procedure synchronizes processes for full-year and academic-year faculty.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

With appropriate approvals, PIs may generally reassign effort to sponsored programs; in this process, the PI is released from selected institutional responsibilities in order for their time to be released to the program. This is governed by JMU Policy 1306 and, for employees in Academic Affairs, the Provost's Additional Compensation Guidelines.

This documents outlines OSP-AS's processes for:
- Determining the amount of effort a faculty member has associated with instruction and associated with scholarship and service.
- Determining the amount of effort a course release (reassigned instructional effort) corresponds to.
- Determining that appropriate costs to a sponsored program for all types of reassigned effort, including course releases.

This SOP applies to PIs in all divisions as well as to full-year and academic-year contracts (as well as other contract periods), although special procedures for faculty (in academic affairs) is described.

DEFINITION

Release time (reassigned effort): Time granted to a faculty member to work on an externally funded project by reducing their usual institutional responsibilities and charging the associated salary to the sponsored project budget.

Course release: A form of reassigned time in which the institutional responsibility a PI is released from is teaching a single course.

RESPONSIBILITY

Execution of SOP: Office of Sponsored Programs-Administrative Services staff.

PROCEDURES

All requests for reassigned time must comply with JMU Policy 1306 and, for faculty in Academic Affairs, the Provost's Additional Compensation Guidelines. Additionally, all proposals must be approved by a PI's supervisory chain prior to submission. PIs are encouraged to discuss reassigned time with their supervisory chain prior to including it within a sponsored program budget.

For PIs within academic affairs, OSP-AS distinguishes two types of faculty effort:
- Instructional effort
- Scholarship and service effort.

OSP-AS will not distinguish between scholarship and service in effort calculations, although PIs requesting release time from scholarship & service should discuss with their supervisor what institutional responsibilies they will be released from. If faculty members have MOUs or similar contracts which outline duties outside of these categories, OSP-AS will adjust as appropriate.

PIs outside of academic affairs are generally not assumed to have instructional effort. These PIs requesting reassigned time must provide to OSP-AS the quantity of time (in person-months, person-hours, or other convenient amounts). When appropriate, OSP-AS may ask PIs to describe the institutional responsibilities they will be released from.

Faculty Effort Determination (applies to academic affairs)

Absent specific guidance from a college's dean's office, OSP-AS will use guidance from the 2023 Instructional Faculty Workload Report, which recommends that a standard 3 credit class should be weighted at 10% of an academic year workload, while acknowledging that a different weight may be more appropriate. Thus, the default effort-per-credit is 0.3 person-months and a 3-credit course corresponds 0.9 person-months.

As the Faculty Workload Report recognizes that this may not be appropriate for all units across the university, OSP-AS will consult with each dean to develop an alternative standard effort-per-course or effort-per-credit where appropriate. OSP-AS recognizes the complete authority of academic affairs regarding faculty workload. OSP-AS recommends using the college's heaviest typical teaching load (e.g., RTA) for this calculation to avoid the possibility of faculty having greater than 100% effort associated with teaching (absent additional compensation). In recognition of the sensitivity of workload discussions, OSP-AS will keep the calculation of any college's effort-per-course or effort-per-credit confidential, although PIs outside the college on any collaborative proposals may infer information about this from the budget.

Once a standard effort-per-course or effort-per-credit is determined (either by the dean's office or through the default), this will be used for all faculty within a college or unit. OSP-AS will use a faculty member's individual teaching load along with the standard effort-per-course or effort-per-credit to determine the amount of effort that faculty member devotes to teaching. Any remaining effort will be assumed to be scholarship and service.

Appendix A includes a table indicating several examples of how these calculations could be done, including how this applies to both academic year and full year faculty.

If a faculty member has a signed contract, MOU, or other similar document that specifies a distribution of effort which is different than what the calculation using the college's standard effort-per-course or effort-per-credit indicates, the distribution in that document supersedes the standardized calculation.

Effort Costs (Including Course Releases)

When PIs include release time, in any form, on a sponsored project budget, the associated cost is standardly the corresponding salary (including appropriate benefits, such as FICA). This applies to course releases as well as all other forms of reassigned time.

With the approval of their supervisory chain, a PI may use a lower cost (e.g., adjunct cost) when the following conditions are satisfied:
- The PI is requesting the maximum amount allowed by the sponsor/funding opportunity.
- The PI needs to increase other budget categories (e.g., equipment) in order to accomplish the proposed project.
- It is not possible to decrease the effort and accomplish the proposed project.

When appropriate, the cost difference will be included as a form of cost-sharing.

REVISION HISTORY

Version No.	Brief Description of Changes	Created on Date
00	Creation of SOP	

SIGNATURE HISTORY

Name and Title	Signature	Date
Lauren Pearce Interim Director of Research Development and Pre-Award Services	*Lauren Pearce*	11/4/2025

REFERENCES

Policy 1306
Provost's Additional Compensation Guidelines

APPENDIX A

	Example A **2023 Instructional Faculty Workload Report**	Example B	Example C	Example D
Load used to determine standard effort:	5-5 load OR 4-4 load plus 20% scholarship/service	4-4 load	30 credits plus 10% service	24 credits plus 10% service
Standard effort per course/credit:	9 months / 10 = 0.8 * 9 months / 8 = 0.9 person-months per course (10%)	9 months / 8 = 1.125 person-months per course (12.5%)	0.9 * 9 months / 30 = 0.27 person-months per credit	0.9 * 9 months / 24 = 0.24 person-months per credit
Academic year faculty with 4-4 (24 credit) load has:	7.2 months instructional effort 1.8 months scholarship/service effort 3 months possible supplemental	9 months instructional effort 0 months scholarship/service effort 3 months possible supplemental	6.5 months instructional effort 2.5 months scholarship/service 3 months possible supplemental	8.1 months instructional effort 0.9 months scholarship/service 3 months possible supplemental
Full year faculty with 4-4 (24 credit) load has:	7.2 months instructional effort 4.8 months scholarship/service	9 months instructional effort 12 months research/service	6.5 months instructional effort 5.5 months scholarship/service	8.1 months instructional effort 3.9 months scholarship/service
Academic year faculty with 3-3 (18 credit) load has:	5.4 months instructional effort 3.6 months scholarship/service 3 months possible supplemental	6.75 months instructional effort 2.25 months scholarship/service 3 months possible supplemental	4.9 months instructional effort 4.1 months scholarship/service 3 months possible supplemental	6.1 months instructional effort 2.9 months scholarship/service 3 months possible supplemental
Full year faculty with 3-3 (18 credit) load has:	5.4 months instructional effort 6.6 months scholarship/service	6.75 months instructional effort 5.25 months scholarship/service	4.9 months instructional effort 7.1 months scholarship/service	6.1 months instructional effort 5.9 months scholarship/service