

## Course Banking in the College of Arts and Sciences

### Policies and Procedures

University policies governing semester banking can be found in section 6.4.4 of the *Faculty Handbook*. The College of Arts and Sciences agrees with the principle that “the need of many faculty members upon occasion to devote large uninterrupted amounts of time to a single research or creative project without teaching or committee work and to spend time periodically in personal renewal and development is fundamental to every good university” (6.4.4). At the same time, as the subsequent language in the *Handbook* indicates, departments must take into account curricular needs (undergraduate and graduate) and the use of departmental resources before approving any banking arrangements for zero-teaching terms. No additional costs for teaching should be incurred, all department needs must continue to be met, and no barriers to student progress should be raised as a result of such arrangements.

The College recommends that those individuals seeking full release from teaching and service during a specific semester apply for a Faculty Development Leave (FDL), which constitutes a sabbatical. The FDL program is the formal way to relieve responsibilities for teaching and other duties from the university to focus on research/scholarship/creative activity. Course banking is a more limited mechanism to adjust teaching load in order to free up additional time for a clearly-defined project or opportunity. Individuals and departments need to realize that only teaching is being banked, so faculty members on a zero-teaching load earned through banking should take steps to ensure that they do not lose touch with student research supervision and required service commitments, including participation in those departmental activities (such as committees) for which their involvement is essential. In order to ensure that these commitments are met, individuals and departments may make arrangements for essential committee work to be conducted electronically or by other appropriate means. Alternatively, they may propose that service commitments be shifted to non-leave semesters as “overload” service work. The department has the responsibility to ensure that all service responsibilities are satisfied, either by the faculty member requesting leave or by other members of the department.

Applications will come to the College. These applications, which must include a completed [Request for Approval of Faculty Leave Form](#) and its [Cover Sheet](#), will need to have a clear, specific project or opportunity in order to be successful. Applications normally must be made three terms in advance. Examples: Application in Fall 2021 for zero teaching in Spring 2023; application in Spring 2023 for zero teaching in Fall 2024. This process will allow the banking to occur as expeditiously as possible once the zero-teaching semester is approved. Overload courses used for the purpose of course banking must actually be taught (unused releases cannot be banked) and must be completed before the semester to which they are being applied.

In addition to the required approval signatures, applications must be accompanied by a letter of support from the Head or Director. This letter should describe the faculty member’s specific project or opportunity and should specify the normal / expected departmental teaching load. The letter should indicate that the proposed zero-term teaching semester is consistent with departmental expectations and needs in the areas of teaching and service, and it should detail

whatever arrangements are made to ensure that student research supervision and service commitments are met (see above).

Requests to substitute unpaid summer terms of teaching for fall or spring terms must be made in advance of the actual summer teaching and must be approved in advance by the College. All factors taken into consideration with course banking apply in this case as well. Spring and Winter mini-term courses may not be used for the purposes of banking. Unused course releases may not be counted for course banking.

Zero-teaching terms or other special accommodations during the semester immediately preceding retirement normally will not be approved.

Only tenure-track and tenured faculty are eligible to participate in course banking, assuming that they have a supportable project as noted above. As a rule, tenure-track faculty should be discouraged from undertaking banking and encouraged instead to take advantage of the negotiated zero-teaching term to work on projects that will enhance their research / scholarship / creative achievement.

Departments with active and ongoing programs of banking should establish written policies ensuring that applications for zero-teaching semesters do not conflict with department needs in the areas of teaching and service. Some departments will conclude that banking two courses is appropriate for earning a two-course reduction. Other departments will find that banking three courses in exchange for a two-course reduction is better stewardship of the department's curriculum and requirements. All such policies must be approved by the College to ensure that they are consistent with College policies.