**Office of Research Administration**

**Policies and Procedures for Grant Release Time**

1. **Definition**

**Release Time** for externally funded projects is a term broadly used at USM to mean the time a faculty member spends on an externally funded project, and for which the sponsor compensates USM (or is used for cost share/match). Other terms include “buy out” and “effort.” Release time does not necessarily mean that a faculty member is released from teaching a class.

The dollars received from the sponsor to support the faculty member’s time is referred to as **salary recovery**. Recovered dollars are used to support the Faculty Research Incentive Program, the expense of hiring adjuncts to teach, and other expenses related to the university’s research function.

For example, Professor Smith expects to spend 25% time on a sponsored project and budgets 25% academic year effort as a direct project cost. That 25% effort might be Dr. Smith’s expected research time, or Dr. Smith might teach one less class. When the project is funded, ORA assigns 25% of Dr. Smith’s salary to be paid from the sponsored project account. When USM receives payment for Dr. Smith’s salary from the sponsor, then that salary is “recovered” back to USM.

1. **Policies & Procedures**

At the beginning of the development of a grant proposal and budget, the prospective PI or Co-PI should complete the Grant Release Time Form along with the Proposal Information Form(PIF). List all effort proposed by the university employee in order for release time to be considered. Route all completed forms through Cayuse 424 and work with ORA PAM staff as needed.

1. [ORA Policy:](https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-rsch-spa-007) Charging the sponsor for time spent working on a sponsored project is expected unless effort is minimal or the sponsor does not allow or otherwise limits that category of expense.
2. Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200.430 H.2: (2) *Salary basis.* Charges for work performed on Federal awards by faculty members during the academic year are allowable at the Institutional Base Salary (IBS rate). Except as noted in paragraph (h)(1)(ii) of this section, in no event will charges to Federal awards, irrespective of the basis of computation, exceed the proportionate share of the IBS for that period. This principle applies to all members of faculty at an institution. IBS is defined as the annual compensation paid by an institution of higher education (IHE) for an individual’s appointment, whether that individual’s time is spent on research, instruction, administration, or other activities. IBS excludes any income that an individual earns outside of duties performed for the IHE. Unless there is prior approval by the Federal awarding agency, charges of a faculty member’s salary to a Federal award must not exceed the proportionate share of the IBS for the period during which the faculty member worked on the award.
3. **FRIP Requirements**
4. Charge at least 10% of a PI/Co-PI’s E&G funded base salary to the sponsored project. Salary charged to the sponsored project may not exceed actual time spent on the project. PIs and Co-PIs with 100% release are not eligible for inclusion in the incentive program
5. Include full Facilities and Administration cost in the award or the maximum F&A rate a sponsor will pay with a minimum rate of 8%. Projects with an F&A waiver (full or partial) are not eligible for inclusion.
6. Pay graduate or undergraduate students for involvement in the sponsored project’s scope of work if the sponsor allows that category of expense.
7. PI and/or Co-PI only are eligible
8. **Salary Recovery**

Once the Salary release time has been approved and the project is awarded ORA will recover the sponsor dollars and the general fund credit will be returned to the Provost for support of adjuncts and instruction, and to the VPR for expenses related to university’s research.