

Research-Incentives Program

Texas A&M School of Public Health

Approved by Dean Shawn Gibbs: **May 15, 2025**

This guidance is to be **effective for Fiscal Year 2026 only (September 1, 2025-August 31, 2026)**. The guidance below will be monitored, reviewed, and updated by May 15 annually in conjunction with other considerations by the SPH Dean's Office, 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 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, which includes being available to teach 9.0 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 (9.0-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: The faculty member may designate that up to 2.5 incentive months be allocated to cover Summer salary during the same 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 9 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 of 1 or more 3-credit courses. Each 3-credit course buyout requires 0.15 FTE of externally-sponsored research effort over 9 months (i.e., 1.35 months of research-generated salary per 3-credit course), with a maximum buyout of 3, 3-credit courses per year (i.e., 9 credit hours) and a minimum teaching load of 1, 3-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.

Exclusions from incentive month accruals:

- Summer salary effort funded directly by extramural grants/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 9-month contract 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 for 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 budget close-out and verification for the fiscal year, not later than March 15, 2026 for funds that accrue during FY 2026.
- 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 research or teaching missions of SPH.
- SPH faculty may fund a single one-time merit payment for themselves up to once/year (limit: \$10K/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 9 contracted months of the fiscal year and are generating salary through extramural research projects over the same 9 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 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 enables advance planning for research time and effort.
- 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 are not exceeding 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 be otherwise be allocated to the faculty member will instead post to account for the faculty member's primary SPH Department.
- Salary covered through sources other than externally-funded grants and contracts does not accrue incentives.
- Please refer to the [SPH Doctoral Student and Graduate Assistant Research \(GAR\) Incentive Program](#) guidance for additional incentives that confer on 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 Funding Spending	FY '22 Accrue/track salary offset \$												No Accrual																		
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Fiscal Year 2024												Fiscal Year 2025																			
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* Accounts with balances above \$250,000 at the time of disbursement will not accrue salary savings funds