FAQs about Research Assignments, Fellowships, and Related Matters

This sheet answers questions that are frequently asked about Research Assignments and Fellowships. The information provided supplements but does not replace the applicable College and University policies which should also be consulted. If you have additional questions, contact the Associate Dean for Research.

1. What assignments for research are available to me before tenure?
If you are an Assistant Professor, you will be awarded a one-semester assignment for research (Pre-Tenure Research Assignment) after reappointment to a second term. Normally, this will be taken during your fourth year on the faculty. Untenured Associate Professors do not receive this assignment. You may also request an Off-Campus Assignment if you are awarded an external fellowship (subject to restrictions explained in the College’s policy on external fellowships). If you receive a fellowship for one semester or longer during your first four years, you will not also be awarded a Pre-Tenure Research Assignment in your fourth year.

2. Why should I apply for fellowships in my first three years if I can expect a Pre-Tenure Research Assignment anyway?
Such awards are prestigious and contribute importantly to your professional reputation and the strength of your tenure dossier, and because all faculty members have an obligation to seek external support for their research, regardless of the internal support that may also be available. Such external awards will also increase your competitiveness for future awards far more than an internal award can.

3. What is the difference between an Off-Campus Assignment, a Pre-Tenure Research Assignment, and a University Research Assignment?
An Off-Campus Assignment for research provides release from teaching and service in order for you to accept an external fellowship award. The funding agency must require that this release be provided as a condition of the award – an Off-Campus Assignment cannot be requested simply because you receive external funding. The College will match the value of the award, up to a maximum of 50% of your 9-month salary. Thus, in order to remain on full salary for the year, the award must pay at least 50% of your salary. If it pays less than 50%, the College will match the value of the award and you may request a leave at partial pay. Prior approval by your department head and the Dean, and submission of your application in Ramses are required, whether you are requesting full or partial salary.

A Pre-Tenure Research Assignment provides a one-semester release from teaching and service at full salary, contingent on an acceptable work plan and approval of department head, after reappointment to a second probationary term. It is not competitive.

University Research Assignments are awarded competitively to tenured faculty and provide release from teaching and service for one semester at full salary or one academic year at half salary, contingent on the recommendation of the Research Assignment Committee and the approval of the Dean and Provost. A tenured faculty member is eligible for a research assignment every five years. The competition is announced annually by the Provost. See the policy for research assignments on the Provost’s webpage at http://provost.uncg.edu/deans/ResearchAssign/Guidelines%20on%20Research%20Assignments.pdf.
4. What is the difference between an Off-Campus Assignment for research in the case of a fellowship, and a course buy-out in the case of a grant?
Fellowships generally require that the recipient have no institutional responsibilities while on the fellowship. Thus, a fellowship holder is given an Off-Campus Assignment for research. A grant does not normally require complete reassignment of duties but may provide funds that allow for buyout of courses, freeing up some additional time for research. The grant holder is expected to continue with all other institutional responsibilities. Each course release should be budgeted at 12.5% of your annual 9-month salary in the grant request. If agency restrictions do not permit this, consult with the Associate Dean for Research.

5. What are the expectations regarding time back on campus after a research assignment?
You are expected to return to your position at UNCG for at least twice the length of time for which you were on any research assignment partially or wholly supported by University funds: i.e., for one year after a one-semester assignment and for two years after a one-year assignment. (This expectation does not apply if you have taken a Leave without Pay.)

6. What is the maximum time I can be on an Off-Campus Assignment?
Normally, Off-Campus Assignments are limited to one year; under exceptional circumstances, this may be extended. If you want to request an Off-Campus Assignment for longer than one year, you must discuss it with your department head before making any plans.

7. Why must I get departmental head approval for course buyout in a grant proposal?
Department heads need to be sure that the buyout you are requesting can be accommodated and will need to incorporate the possibility that the grant will be awarded into schedule planning for the affected semesters.

8. What is the maximum salary I can expect from UNCG if a fellowship pays less than full salary? Is this guaranteed?
The College’s policy is to match the salary provided by an external fellowship up to a maximum of 50% of your base salary for the period of the award. That is, you cannot use a fellowship to increase your base salary, although you may use funds in excess of 50% of your base salary to pay summer salary. If the total amount of the fellowship is less than 50% of your base salary, the College will match only the amount of the fellowship, meaning that your total salary for the year will be reduced. Your department head must also certify that the department can cover your teaching with the funds recovered from your State salary as a result of the fellowship award. The matching funds are guaranteed as part of the submission through Ramses.

Some fellowships provide relatively low levels of financial support. In general, it is expected that such fellowships will be combined with other awards, such as a University Research Assignment rather than being used alone to fully support a leave. Thus, you are advised to begin planning well in advance of the application due date and have a well-developed budget. In cases where adequate salary support cannot be provided under the College’s fellowship policy (http://www.uncg.edu/aas/casresearch/Fellowship_Policy_4.2014.pdf), you are encouraged to work closely with the CAS Office of Research to identify other sources of internal and external support.
9. Why must I submit the Notification of Intent to Seek External Fellowship and my fellowship proposal through Ramses, if the funding agency allows me to apply directly to them?
The Notification of Intent certifies that the department will be able to cover your absence with the funds available if the fellowship is awarded. It should be submitted as soon as you decide to apply for a fellowship. Approval of the proposal itself ensures that all requirements of the funding agency can be satisfied and also ensures that you, your department, the College, and UNCG are credited for the fellowship submission.
http://www.uncg.edu/aas/casresearch/Fellowship%20Notification%20Form_4.2014.pdf

10. What happens if I fail to submit the Notification of Intent to Seek External Fellowship or my fellowship proposal through Ramses?
The College will not provide any support if the fellowship is awarded. You may request a leave without pay if you wish to accept the award.

11. Why must I have all aspects of a proposal finalized in Ramses at least 5 days before the agency deadline?
The Office of Sponsored Programs needs at least five working days to process all proposals that UNCG must submit online on your behalf (most notably through grants.gov and Fastlane) to ensure that there are no errors. Even the smallest error will cause the agency to reject the application, and it is not unusual for a proposal to be rejected several times before all errors are corrected. This also allows time to get all appropriate proposal approvals and to deal with possible technical issues on UNCG’s end or on the agency’s end.

12. What should I do if my grant or fellowship is not fully funded?
It is not uncommon for grants and fellowships to be funded at a level below that requested. In such instances, for grants, it is your responsibility to restructure the scope of the work to match the budget available. The university cannot supplement the unfunded portion of your project. It is advised that you work in concert with the program officer at the funding agency, as well as with UNCG Office of Grants & Contracts, as you revise your workplan and budget. For fellowships, it is your responsibility to ensure that your salary will be adequate. Policy permits the university salary match to be equivalent only to salary award received from the fellowship up to 50% of your salary. A fellowship award of less than the requested/needed amount needs to be discussed with the department head and dean before accepting the fellowship.

13. When should an application for funding NOT be submitted to Ramses?
In general, all requests for funding to support research and scholarly activity should be submitted through Ramses. Anything purchased through the university belongs to the university, and all funds received by the university must be spent in accordance with State guidelines. The only times you should not submit a proposal through Ramses is if you want to take personal possession of equipment purchased with grant funds, if you will use the funds for expenses not permitted by State guidelines (such as travel for family members or improvements to personal property), or for income from consulting, honoraria, or residencies that will be paid to you directly rather than through UNCG. In such cases you will be entirely responsible for managing the award, including paying any applicable taxes.