

**University of Washington School of Public Health
Faculty Compensation Plan, launching July 2020
Frequently Asked Questions**

General

- “Tell me the basics.”
 - *The SPH faculty compensation plan provides a guaranteed base cushion of salary support, a simplified guide for bridging, and extra support for early-career faculty.*
 - *The chart – one page, detailed yet flexible – is the core of the plan. It is a guide, not a checklist.*
 - *The goal is to engage and support all faculty more consistently across all departments in the activities we all need to do to make the school, our departments, and our programs successful. The chart serves as a template for engagement and its targets are the starting point for discussions, like in annual reviews.*
 - *This plan doesn’t solve all challenges that faculty face. Still, we really think it will make a real difference in people’s lives.*
 - *The plan is version 1.0 and we will surely revisit after we gain some experience with its implementation.*

- “Why is this plan happening, why now?”
 - *We’ve heard the concerns about how the model of constantly cobbling together funding to fill faculty salaries seems unsustainable and can feel defeating. This plan doesn’t solve all challenges, but it provides a guaranteed base cushion of salary support, a simplified process for bridging, and extra support for early-career faculty.*

- “I heard about this plan – it’s about teaching compensation right?”
 - *Teaching expectations are an important part of the plan, but only one part. The compensation levels – e.g., 50% for TT, 30% for WOTRF, etc. – cover the scope of activities of a faculty member: teaching, mentoring, service, leadership, EDI, and grant writing. Research, practice, and other scholarship remain as important pillars of faculty effort – both in terms of what we do as a school and in terms of covering full faculty salaries. Compensation for research and practice remains unchanged under this plan – i.e., faculty are expected to cover up from the base compensation levels with grant/contract funds; however, the introduction of a guaranteed base compensation and more consistent bridging both will help faculty focus on the most meaningful research over time.*

- “I don’t like requirements.”
 - *No faculty member likes to feel over-managed. The expectations are intentionally flexible – to respond to the needs of a faculty member, the department, different needs at different times in one’s career, etc. Activities in the chart are often provided as examples, to permit discussion between a faculty member and a chair about how to engage in the most mutually productive way.*

- “I don’t see research excellence – isn’t that what we are here for, isn’t that the key to promotion?”

- *The driver of this plan is giving faculty more financial stability, so we have more time, energy, and brain space to do the work we love – including research and academic practice, student mentoring, etc. Thus, this plan facilitates the great research and other work that faculty do. [That great research/practice is then paid by the direct costs dollars that fill up faculty salaries above the base compensation.]*
- “I do all the things in this chart already.”
 - *Bravo! Many faculty members do all these things already – often more than what is in this chart. They will undoubtedly continue to do so. For faculty who haven’t thought about all of the ways to engage in the collective work we do, the plan opens up that opportunity.*
- “How do I add up points in this system.”
 - *This plan is not about points – it is about engaging in the things we all love about being faculty. Nevertheless, we all need to know how much to charge grants to fill up our salaries. The base compensation is guaranteed. Above that, faculty will be paid for teaching, if they choose to teach above the minimum course number in the base compensation; those pay levels were set to be fair, specific, and incentivizing of larger classes. Finally, salary for administrative work and grant-/contract-supported scholarship fills up salary.*
- “Can we afford this?”
 - *Yes! After many discussions, and many, many calculations, the school is in excellent place to afford this, for this next year and as far into the future as we can predict. Calculations have been made taking into account potential other costs that are in the next 1-5 years. The funds to cover this plan are coming from the educational dollars that come to the School from the Provost, and the plan is doable because of an increased and still-increasing revenue stream from that stream. Costs for this plan do not take from other income streams of the school (e.g., ICR).*

WOTRF

- “I am a WOTRF faculty member – why can’t the 30% be higher?”
 - *Everyone would like all the base salary numbers in the plan to be higher. WOTRF faculty are the largest group of faculty in the school. We aimed for 30% to launch the plan, because it is a number we know we can afford and because it is an improvement over current for guaranteed base across the board for WOTRF faculty. Indeed, one of the strongest drivers of this plan was to increase the guaranteed support for WOTRF faculty across the School and that will continue to be one of the strongest drivers as we implement it.*
- “The proposed compensation for tenured faculty is 50% but 30% for WOTRF faculty - why? Can there be more tenure?”
 - *Tenured faculty in the School generally are guaranteed 50% salary – thus, the plan must have a compensation at that level for tenured faculty. Rightfully, the expectations for tenured faculty are greater: two courses to teach, greater mentoring, engagement and scholarship that reflects the award of tenure. For WOTRF faculty, the plan brings a guarantee of salary that has not been present before. Tenure numbers in the School are*

currently under discussion – having a salary guarantee plan like this that can be workable and implementable is part of what would need to be seen to seek additional tenure slots for the School.

- “Oh, so this is a plan with 10% base salary and 20% for teaching, yes?”
 - *For a WOTRF faculty, the base is 30% - for all activities. We are thinking about it as the total – not pieces, not points.*
- “I don’t want to teach.”
 - *WOTRF faculty can use grant/contract funds to buy down and not teach (no incentive 25% return however), without additional approvals or adverse consequences. [WOTRF faculty will, of course, still need to fulfill promotional requirements for teaching.]*

Research

- “I want to teach.”
 - *Research track faculty are not required to teach but absolutely can do so. Compensation for teaching for research faculty is the same as for other faculty teaching an “additional course” – 2% per credit for classes with <60 SCH, 4% per credit for 60-300 SCH, and 5% per credit for classes with >300 SCH.*

Lecturer

- “I am full-time, but I do not teach 100% because I do research/practice work with some of my time.”
 - *Many lecturers have research/practice as part of their salary coverage. The plan presents 100% as the generic assumption for full-time lecturers, as 100% salary coverage through teaching is the University’s starting place for lecturer faculty. However, it is completely OK for other activities to replace some amount of teaching. Salary support provided by research, practice, administrative, or other activities will be considered as buying out of teaching.*

Buy Out/Buy Down

- “Explain the two kinds of buy down again.”
 - *Buy out = buy out of teaching. WOTRF faculty can buy down to 10% and not teach; tenured faculty can buy out to 30% and teach one course instead of two, with chair approval.*
 - *Buy down = use other funds to buy back some or all of the base support but keep all responsibilities; there is financial incentive to the faculty member and to the department for this to occur, to encourage both engagement in the expectations and grant-getting.*
- “Is it really true that I can buy down and get some money back?”
 - *It is true – buy down with incentive allows a faculty member who can fulfill the expectations but doesn’t need all the base salary to do so to use grant support to buy down some of the base compensation. A portion (25%) of the salary bought down will be returned to the faculty member in an account = “incentive.”*

- “What can I use a buy down with incentive account for?”
 - *Things allowed by the university for spending public funds: support of a graduate student, travel to a conference, professional organization membership fees, sabbatical salary, pilot work on a new project, etc. No business class, no flowers, no alcohol, no ponies....*
- “Does the money in the incentive account expire?”
 - *For now, no, but the School will assess the implications of holding funds beyond a year or a fiscal biennium and may need to cap the length of time funds can be held.*
- “Is there a timeline for buy down?”
 - *For buying down (i.e., to not teach) departments need to know – likely in late Winter/early Spring quarter of each year for the following academic year – so that teaching allocations can be made. Departments will define deadlines for buying down.*
- “What will the 75% of buy down with incentive that goes to the department be used for?”
 - *Departmental flexible funds – new initiatives, bridging salary for other faculty, etc.*
- “How does buy down with incentive interface with my FEC?”
 - *The percentages provided in the chart are fractions of salary, not time. If a faculty member can fulfill the expectations but doesn’t need all base salary to do so, buying down is permissible.*

Bridging

- “Will bridging automatically happen?”
 - *For 10% FTE or less (for up to a year) bridging will initiate automatically, to a maximum of 10% x 12 months over 3 years. Faculty will be notified – either immediately or at annual review – that bridging is happening, so there can be discussions about how long bridging can be sustained, what other resources can be gathered to offset bridging, etc.*
- “How do buy down and bridging interface?”
 - *Buy down funds returned to the department (i.e., the 75% in the 25%/75% split) will help support bridging. It is anticipated that many faculty will at some point in their career will need a bit of bridging and at some point will buy down.*

Teaching

- “Who calculates my SCH? How close do I need to get to 150/300?”
 - *The SCH targets in the table are averages across all faculty in a department. They are the responsibility of the chair – they are not the responsibility of individual faculty. We know that some faculty teach small/medium courses and some large/very large courses – and that courses of all sizes are important to the educational mission of programs, departments, and the school. Thus, it is the chairs who will be assessing the SCH*

numbers across the faculty in the department to know if sufficient SCH are being accumulated.

- “I teach in a different SPH department / in an interdisciplinary program – will my teaching count?”
 - *The teaching expectations are in the school. There was overwhelming feedback that the plan should encourage cross-disciplinary teaching – thus, anything in the school counts. The SCH from such teaching will be counted by the primary department of the faculty member.*
- “Does practicum teaching count? Does mentoring count?”
 - *SCH of all types count towards the totals for a department. Departments should be sure that students are taking the appropriate # of SCH for the work faculty are doing in practicum and degree oversight.*
- “I mentor a lot – more than anyone else in my department. Could mentoring substitute for teaching?”
 - *There are occasional faculty whose mentoring work is so much greater than their colleagues and brings in so many SCH that a department might consider whether mentoring could be counted effectively as a course. Similarly, as departments track practicum and capstone work under this plan, there may be consideration there for whether mentoring in those areas could become or be equivalent to a course.*
- “I have taught the same course for years because I was afraid to give up the FTE. Can I switch courses?”
 - *One advantage of the plan is that there is guarantee of base salary, so faculty can work with their chair to change course teaching over time, giving new energy to a course, allowing a faculty member to experiment with a different course, etc.*
- “I teach a large course. Am I doing double or triple duty?”
 - *Large courses are really important to the educational mission of the school. Small courses are too. We cannot train large number of leaders for the future without large courses; we cannot have excellent graduate programs without small classes. The plan brings us all together – all the courses and all who teach them are necessary for our success.*
- “I teach two courses. Who decides which one counts in my base and which is extra teaching?”
 - *That is a discussion between a faculty member and the chair. If courses are taught in two different departments/programs, some discussion between the chairs/program leads will occur.*
- “How do TAs work in this model?”
 - *At this time, there is not a cross-cutting standard for assigning TAs but that is a point of ongoing discussion. For example, there could in the future be a minimum enrollment guide, with flexibility for departments & programs to respond to student/course/instruction/etc. needs.*

- “The compensation for extra teaching for small courses (2% per credit for SCH<60) is low.”
 - *That level was decided across the departments – if a specific & essential course is at threat of not being taught (e.g., cannot find an appropriate TT or WOTRF faculty member to cover it as part of the base), chairs will assess options.*

Mentoring

- “What is the incentive to mentor?”
 - *Mentoring is explicitly part of the base compensation. It is also a core reason why we are here at a university. And, it is one of the most fun, important, and long-term impactful things we can do.*
- “Mentoring is very uneven in my department. Will this plan help?”
 - *The plan sets out expectations that all faculty are mentoring, and tenured faculty more than others. It will be the collective responsibility of all of us, led by our chairs, to ensure that mentoring is carried across the faculty and done well.*
- “What if I mentor a whole lot?”
 - *THANK YOU! The mentoring expectations are minimal targets and many faculty mentor more than that and will continue to do so. Faculty may substitute mentoring for classroom teaching, with the recognition that it takes a lot of mentoring to approach the SCH brought in by an average course.*
- “My department has relatively few students compared to the number of faculty. How will we all be able to chair?”
 - *The mentoring expectations are intentionally flexible to permit “equivalent” capstone, practicum, and committee membership mentoring as well as committee chair work. Determining what is equivalent is a discussion between a faculty member and their chair; departments will find the norm that best fits the circumstances of their faculty.*

Service

- “Service is very uneven in my department. Does this help?”
 - *Yes! Service is an important part of our jobs and we all need to contribute to get collective success. This plan helps by explicitly calling out that service is a compensated activity. In addition, the expectation is that everyone will be doing service.*
- “Can I do service on an interdisciplinary program?”
 - *Service, like teaching, is in the school. The overarching goal is everyone is engaging in the work we all need to do for this great place.*

Scholarly Leadership

- “Might writing or leading a training grant count?”

- *Yes! And, it might be able to substitute for other expectations too, in discussion with the chair.*

EDI

- “I’m newly starting to think about EDI. What should I do?”
 - *Start by looking at the school’s EDI Action Plan – see where you think you can contribute. EDI is central to everything we do – at its core, public health is about equity and justice.*

Grant/Contract Writing

- “My funding is solid this year and next. Do I have to write 2 grants?”
 - *The plan is flexible, designed to serve faculty. If this year is one in which time is better spent on doing the work of current grants (rather than writing new ones) and on other aspects of the expectations, put efforts on those things.*