

## Pre Tenure Semester and Other Releases from Teaching

To facilitate their research, faculty in the provisional tenure-track years, who have four-course loads, are usually provided with a release from two courses following a successful second-year review. This teaching release is most commonly taken in the form of a semester without teaching in the Fall or Spring of the third tenure-track year. Teaching releases can sometimes occur at other times too.

These teaching releases are a form of research support funded by the College and the department. As their name implies, they allow the faculty member to have additional research time by not teaching two of the courses that he/she would otherwise teach during that academic year. However, faculty on a teaching release semester are not “on leave” and these teaching releases are not the same as the leaves that can occur through other processes such as the Sabbatical Leave policy (<http://guru.psu.edu/policies/OHR/hr17.html>) for which tenured faculty are eligible, or external funding buy outs. These teaching releases are also not the same as teaching reductions that can occur in conjunction with specific administrative duties.

The teaching release semester is not a sabbatical! During a teaching release semester, faculty are expected to continue their responsibilities such as supervising graduate or undergraduate theses, committee work, and other departmental participation and support, and to focus on a research agenda that they and their department head have agreed upon before the teaching release begins. Short absences for research-related purposes such as conference attendance or library visits can be included, but longer absences need the department head’s prior approval. At the end of the teaching release semester a brief report should be submitted to the department head. [Note: in joint appointments, approval is given by the home-budget department head, but there should be consultation with the other unit(s) about the faculty member’s plans.]

Since teaching releases represent a significant institutional investment in the faculty member’s current and upcoming research, we expect the faculty member to return to Penn State in the year following the release.