

Release Time Policy

Approval Date: March 21, 2019

The purpose of this policy is to provide time free of regular academic duties, for Officers, Directors, members of the Negotiations Team, and other members so that they can devote time to the work of the Association. Payment of release time funds also serves the purpose of attracting able and experienced volunteers as candidates for office and provides a tangible recognition that the Association values volunteer contributions.

This policy is based on the principle that payment of release time funds should be made available for a variety of purposes, provided that an appropriate amount of time is to be delivered to the Association by the members and that the funds are not made available for the personal benefit of any member so as to be used as a salary supplement, except in limited circumstances (Bylaw 7.7.2).

Value of Release Time

The Association recognizes the time commitment required to fulfill effectively the duties of the Officers, Directors, and members of the Negotiations Team and shall ensure time-release from employment responsibilities for these members per academic year. The release time shall be sufficient to allow release from teaching responsibilities or the equivalent.

With respect to release from teaching responsibilities, the Association shall reimburse the University the costs to appoint a replacement. In all other cases, the Association shall reimburse the University for the total compensation costs of the member, pro-rated based on the percentage of time on release.

Release time provided by the University of Alberta shall be without loss of salary or benefits.

Positions Eligible for Release Time

The President of the Association shall be entitled to full-time release from employment responsibilities, and at a minimum, the Vice-President to half-time release, and the Officers and Directors to quarter-time release per academic year. Members of the Association's Negotiations Team shall be entitled to, at minimum, quarter-time release per academic term for the duration of bargaining. Release time may be less at the option of the Association.

For the President, in addition to replacement for teaching or equivalent, the Association shall provide funds equal to the average Department Chair's stipend as an honorarium.

The Executive may authorize the purchase of release time as it deems necessary for other volunteers to do the work of the Association. Decisions regarding the allocation of release time are normally made in the budget process and must be reasonable and justified in the circumstances.

Vacancies

In the event that a vacancy occurs and is filled during a by-election, the amount of the release time for the elected member shall be prorated based on the unexpired term of office.

Disbursement and Administration of Release Time Funds

In no case will the funds be paid directly to the member or otherwise be made available to the member for personal use unless the Association is unable to secure any form of release time from teaching or other responsibilities. In this case, the member is eligible to receive a stipend equal to the cost of time release so long as members still effectively fulfill their duties.

The release time funds may be used for either or in combination of both of the following two purposes:

- they may be used to secure the teaching release or other equivalent release; or
- in the case where the member conducts research, the equivalent funds may be paid into a research grant account in the name and for the use of the member, which account shall be administered by the University of Alberta in the same manner that it would administer a third party grant from an external funding agency.

Non-continuing staff (ATS, TRAS, and TAPS) whose appointments are less than 100% FTE are eligible to receive a stipend rather than release time, if they choose.

Procedure

The Executive Director shall ensure time-release from employment responsibilities for members of the Executive per academic year by informing their Department Chair / Dean or Supervisor of scheduled Executive and Council meetings. Council and Executive meetings are normally held on Thursday afternoons throughout the academic year. Executive meetings are also held during the summer months and may be held at other times as necessary.

As well, the Executive Director shall ensure time-release from employment responsibilities for members of the Negotiations Team per academic term by informing their Department Chair / Dean or Supervisor of their time commitments for negotiations.

No funds will be paid by the Association to the University if the release time is provided. In the event that the University requires replacement for teaching or other responsibilities, then the Executive Director shall request an invoice for these costs in accordance with the terms in the collective agreement. The Executive Director shall first consult with the member as to the replacement arrangements proposed. The funds will be disbursed to the University of Alberta upon receipt of an invoice from the University of Alberta stating to which accounts the funds are to be credited and for what purpose.

In the event that the Executive Director is unable to secure any form of release time from teaching or other responsibilities due to other circumstances, then the member is eligible to receive a stipend equal to the cost of time release.

The Executive Director shall inform those members who receive the stipend in cash that they are required to report the funds as taxable income to the Canada Revenue Agency. Funds paid into the research grant are not taxable income.

The disbursement shall typically be requested and completed within AASUA's fiscal year coinciding with the member's elected or appointed term.

The Executive Director will inform the University of the names of the Officers, Directors and members of the Negotiations Team, as soon as those members are elected or appointed, normally not later than June 30 of any year for a term of office that begins July 1, or as soon as possible with as much notice as possible.