Faculty Research Assignment (FRA)

General information

The COE Faculty Research Assignment provides faculty with a semester of salary support while they are engaged in a project that could not be accomplished without the FRA. These awards are funded jointly by the Faculty Development Program and the faculty salaries budget in the applicant's department, and are intended to support initiation, furtherance or completion of a specific research project. FRAs are usually not awarded merely to allow faculty members more time for research; most successful proposals encompass objectives that would be difficult to accomplish without a FRA. In any case, the proposed work must have its own coherence, limits, and purpose.

The Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies distributes an announcement to the education faculty listserv in late August/early September asking for applicants for FRAs. The application is due to the graduate school in October. FRAs are awarded to Associate or Full Professors for the following year to fund semester-length research leaves. The number of FRAs awarded is contingent upon the total funds available as well as the number of applicants and their salaries.

FRA applications must be first approved by the applicant’s department chair who will also rank the applicants within his/her department. Applications are then reviewed by the COE Research Committee, which is composed of faculty from all COE departments. The Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies will organize and attend all application review meetings, but is not a voting member of the committee. The COE Research Committee makes final decisions about awards and decisions are forwarded to the Dean for approval.

Decision letters are prepared by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies according to the draft templates attached and distributed in early December. The Dean and the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies will sign acceptances and denials. Acceptance letters are to be signed by the awardee faculty, returned to the Associate Dean by January 31, and the Dean would sign as well. Original signed forms are kept in faculty personnel files (managed by the Office of the Dean EA), and copies are sent to the awardee faculty member, their department chair, Assistant Dean for Financial Affairs, Dean's Office HR director, and the Graduate School Faculty Development Program coordinator.

Eligibility

- Tenured faculty (Associate and full Professors) only
- If no previous FRA has been awarded at UT, must have completed at least four academic years of service in residence at UT Austin (i.e., first eligible in year 5)
- If a previous FRA has been awarded, must have completed at least four academic years of service in residence at UT Austin since the previous FRA
- Those who recently were awarded a Dean’s Fellowship will have a lower likelihood of being funded with an FRA
- Applicants must receive the approval of their department chair prior to submitting an application

Terms of the FRA

One full semester of salary with no teaching, service or administrative duties. The maximum amount of an FRA is the equivalent of one semester's salary.

An award may be taken full time for one semester or, with the prior approval of the department chair, at half time for the academic year. If the award is taken full time for one semester (either fall or spring), it is expected that the recipient will devote full time to his or her research during the entire award period and, to prevent encroachment of teaching and/or administrative duties on research time, the recipient may not hold concurrent teaching and/or administrative appointments. If the award is taken half time for the academic year (fall and spring), the recipient is expected to devote that half time to his or her research; the other half may be used for any combination of research, teaching and/or administration.

The recipient is expected to return to normal duties at the University for at least one academic year—September 1 through May 31—following the FRA. A recipient who elects to leave the university without returning for an academic year, whether because of resignation or retirement, is obligated to reimburse the university for funds (gross salary plus fringe benefits) expended in support of the FRA.

How to apply

To apply for an FRA Award, submit the following (using Times New Roman font size 12 with no less than one-inch borders):

1) Project proposal (that is no longer than three single-spaced pages (references are not included in the page count).

2) 4-page CV highlighting relevant research publications and funding. Clearly indicate if/when an FRA previously has been awarded.
The proposal should include a title and outline the project rationale and significance, research questions, and a research plan that clearly specifies the methods and methodology, as well as the short-term (e.g., peer-reviewed articles, chapters) and long-term goals and products of the proposed project (e.g., grant proposal – which must include the intended granting agency). The proposal should also outline how the project is linked with your long-term research goals and why a full semester is needed to conduct the project. Preference for awards will be given to proposals that outline a clearly defined, well-justified and feasible project that will contribute to the submission of a proposal for external funding or provide support for research complementary to existing external funding. Except in special circumstances (e.g., history in a particular area where a book is clearly the research product), an FRA will not be awarded solely to start or complete writing a book or to perform editorial duties on a book.

This application will be submitted to the graduate school through the Graduate School Awards System and is due no later than October 16 for the following academic year. Information about submission and additional information about the FRA can be found on the Graduate School site. Successful applicants will be notified in early December if funding was approved for the following academic year. Following the FRA, successful applicants will be required to submit a summary report detailing research results.

If approved, please also work with the department’s Executive Assistant to submit a Faculty Request for Leave form.

Deadlines for submitting leave requests to the Dean’s Office are: early April for all Faculty Research Assignment (FRA) accepted for the next academic year; early May for long session or fall only leave; and late October for spring only leaves.

Please contact the COE Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies with any questions.

Resources

- Graduate School: Faculty Research Assignments