CAS Research Assignments – Information and Instructions for Applicants and Heads/Directors

I. Preface – As described in the guidelines set by the Provost, the University is committed to the advancement of research and creative scholarly activity. The Research Assignment program rewards tenured faculty members who have demonstrated distinguished contributions to the University through the award of either one semester at full salary or two semesters at half salary during which the faculty member focuses on the advancement or completion of scholarly activities. The one semester assignment may also be combined with a second semester of an externally-funded off-campus assignment, to allow for a year at full pay.

The Provost's guidelines (available on the Provost's webpage, under Policies, look for "Research Assignments") describe faculty eligibility, requirements during and upon completion of the research assignment, salary support from extramural funding during the research assignment, impact on employment, and fringe benefits during the assignment.
It is important to understand that UNCG's Research Assignment is not a sabbatical or an automatic senior leave. It is a <u>competitive award,</u> and applications are reviewed on their merits using criteria described below. The Dean and the review panel recognize and value the breadth of research, scholarship, and creative activity in the College of Arts & Sciences. Therefore, the application and review processes are designed to provide equal competitive advantage to proposals from faculty members in all of the domains of scholarship in the College, including arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. All funding to support Research Assignments for College faculty is provided by the College. No financial support is provided by the University.

The remainder of this section describes the College of Arts & Sciences' policy on the submission and review of applications for research assignments.

II. Timeline – This section provides a typical timeline for the submission and review of research assignment applications. Applicants should consult specific deadlines provided in the annual announcements.

> August – The Provost announces the annual research assignment program; this call will be forwarded to faculty by the Dean's office

> Early September – Completed research assignment applications must be submitted to the applicant's department head/program director (please see the Dean's call for applications for submission instructions)

> Mid-September – Completed research assignment applications and department head recommendation letters are due to the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences

> Mid-October – Recommendations of the College Research Assignment review committee are due to the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences

> Early-Mid November – The Dean's recommendations for research assignments are due to the Provost

> Late November / Early December – Applicants are notified

III. Research Assignment Application – A completed application includes a signed cover page, project description, and curriculum vitae.

The project description should not exceed four single-spaced pages. It must include clear descriptions of each of the following, written in jargon-free language that can be understood by non-specialists:

    a) A description of the research, scholarship, and/or creative activity that will be conducted during the proposed research assignment – if appropriate, this should include description of any novel aspects of the research design or method.

    b) The significance of the work and the contribution it will make to the applicant's program and discipline.

    c) The expected research, scholarly, or creative products that will result from the research assignment (e.g., book draft, creative project, manuscripts for submission, extramural fellowship or grant proposal, development of a new collaborative project).

    d) The timeline for the proposed research assignment. If appropriate, include a brief description of work that will be completed on this project before and after the research assignment. For example, if the research assignment proposes the completion of the final four chapters of a book, describe the status and timeline for the preparation of the initial chapters prior to the proposed research assignment and the anticipated time for the final preparation of the book after the research assignment.

    e) The feasibility of completing the proposed work.

    f) Why the research assignment is necessary for this work to be completed in the proposed timeline.

Proposals that do not clearly document expected products, timeline, necessity of the research assignment, and feasibility will be at a competitive disadvantage. Likewise, it is essential to describe the proposed work in a way that is understandable to a broad audience of scholars (not just experts in the applicant's discipline). Note that proposed plans of research, scholarship, and creative activity may involve work that is nearing completion (e.g., completion of a book or major creative project or preparation of a major extramural funding submission) or work that is in more preliminary stages (e.g., development of a new collaborative program of research or initial development of a book project). However, in either case the application must clearly document the activity, significance, outcome, timeline, feasibility, and necessity of the research assignment for completion of the proposed scholarship. The application may not exceed four pages. Supplemental materials including bibliography may be included but are not to exceed an additional four pages.

The applicant's curriculum vitae should be three pages max. It should include relevant professional and work experiences, service to the University, and a bibliography of relevant publications, creative works, and other scholarly activities.

IV. Department Head/Program Director Recommendation Letter – All research assignment applications must be approved by the applicant's department head/program director and include a letter of endorsement. Before approving and endorsing an application, the head/director should consider the applicant's eligibility for a research assignment [that is, the applicant has 1) tenure, 2) at least five years' service at UNCG, and 3) no previous junior off-campus assignment (JOCA) nor post-tenure research assignment in the four years prior to the beginning of the proposed assignment].

Department heads should also carefully consider the number of faculty in the department applying for research assignments in a given year both in terms of staffing in the department and competitiveness of the applications. Although there is no limit on the number of research assignment applications that a department can submit in a single year, the department head may want to work with faculty in advance to stagger applications across years. Furthermore, if there are multiple applications from a single department, the department head's recommendations should include a critical evaluation of each application.

The Department Head/Program Director's endorsement letter should comment on the following elements of the proposal:
   a. The proposed plan of research, scholarship, and creative activity
   b. The significance of the proposed work
   c. The specific outcome or product of the work
   d. The feasibility of the proposed work
   e. The need for a research assignment to complete this work

Department Head/Program Directors must also complete the Dean's form estimating the cost of the proposed research assignments in the department. If any of the recommendations are contingent on a faculty member receiving an external fellowship or other award, the application must provide the name of award being applied for (specific program, not just the agency or foundation) and the expected amount of the award.

V. College Review Process – Applications for research assignments by faculty in the College of Arts & Sciences will be reviewed by an *ad hoc* committee of College faculty members chaired by the Associate Dean of Research. The committee is charged with advising the Dean regarding the quality and appropriateness of applications for research assignment. Specifically, the committee reviews the proposals, provides a numerical rating, and prepares brief (one paragraph) commentaries. The committee consists of nine faculty members (three each from the Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Arts and Humanities). Committee members typically serve three-year terms (ideally with 1/3 of the committee changing each year). Committee members are recused from reviewing proposals submitted from their department/program or from those for which they have a conflict of interest.

Each member of the committee independently reviews each application based upon the following criteria:
   a. Overall merit of the research, scholarship, and/or creative activity that will be conducted during the proposed research assignment
   b. Significance of the work and the contribution it will make to the applicant's discipline – including the products that will result from this work
   c. Feasibility of completing the proposed work in the proposed timeline
   d. Need for the research assignment to complete the proposed work