



Faculty Transition Incentive Program (FTIP)

Policy Type: Board of Visitors
Responsible Office: Office of Provost
Initial Policy Approved: 08/2004
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Policy Statement and Purpose

The purpose of the Faculty Transition Incentive Program (FTIP), as used in this document, is to provide a mechanism for the release of tenured faculty resources for budget reallocation or reduction in accordance with the university’s Strategic Plan goals, changes in enrollment, and other university needs. This program is not designed to be a faculty fringe benefit program; it is a management tool.

Flexibility in faculty transition plans and agreements is both desirable and necessary. A university faculty transition program, therefore, is a framework for management guidance rather than a prescription for action.

Noncompliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. VCU supports an environment free from retaliation. Retaliation against any individual who brings forth a good faith concern, asks a clarifying question, or participates in an investigation is prohibited.

Table of Contents

Who Should Know This Policy.....	2
Definitions.....	2
Contacts.....	2
Policy Specifics and Procedures.....	2
Forms.....	6
Related Documents.....	6
Revision History.....	6
FAQ.....	6

Who Should Know This Policy

All tenured faculty and all university administrators responsible for faculty personnel should know this policy and familiarize themselves with its contents and provisions.

Definitions

Tenured Faculty

A tenured appointment is an appointment that continues until the faculty member either voluntarily leaves the university or is dismissed for cause under the *Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures* policy. Tenure is conferred in accordance with the criteria and procedures established by the *Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures* policy and supplemented by appropriate school and department guidelines.

Contacts

The Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs officially interprets this policy. The Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs is responsible for obtaining approval for any revisions as required by the policy *Creating and Maintaining Policies and Procedures* through the appropriate governance structures. Please direct policy questions to the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.

Policy Specifics and Procedures

A. General Assumptions and Framework

1. Transition plans, policies and practices must comply with state law and regulations as specified in the Code of Virginia and as modified by the Virginia Acts of Assembly, in addition to the Board of Visitors' approval.
2. Transition agreements, as used in the context of this document, are related to tenured faculty (tenured instructional and research faculty who have tenure due to academic appointments).
3. Transition agreements must be mutually agreeable. A faculty member is not automatically entitled to benefits that might follow from a transition program, and the university cannot require a tenured faculty member to accept any transition plan.
4. The Board of Visitors has the authority to modify, amend or repeal the program, but faculty who agree to FTIP will continue to be governed by the terms of the program at the time of their agreement.

B. The Program Structure

The university transition incentive program, entitled VCU Faculty Transition Incentive Program (FTIP), provides a phased-in (transition) plan for up to three years, leading to separation. It provides flexibility for tailoring appropriate transition incentives and other agreement components

to individual situations prior to an agreed-upon date for separation of a faculty member from full-time employment with the university.

C. General Process of Preparation and Approval

1. Annually the university president will determine whether the program will be offered for the next academic year.
2. All FTIP agreements will be reviewed and evaluated within a coordinated university process of faculty resource utilization planning and management to meet the Strategic Plan and other university priorities.
3. No central university resources will be set aside for FTIP agreement costs; funds to support the agreement requirements will come from school/college resources.
4. The dean of the school or college must approve and recommend the FTIP agreement prior to consideration by the vice presidents.
5. Each vice president will make recommendations to the president for final approval.
6. Guidelines for preparation, review and approval of FTIP agreements are provided in Section II of this document, "Faculty Transition Incentive Plan Implementation Guidelines."

I. COMPONENTS OF THE PHASED-IN SEPARATION PLAN

A. Incentive

In exchange for a firm separation date, the agreement under this plan will provide faculty eligible to participate in this program (see Section B. below) with an appointment which allows for a workload reduction*, a salary adjustment based on the reduced workload, and continued participation in all regular faculty benefits programs during the separation phase-in period. The faculty contract will be either a single year or multi-year agreement (not to exceed three years) which specifies the particulars of the agreement, including the compensation and the date on which the faculty member agrees to separate.

*Reduced workload must meet requirements for continued contributions toward health coverage premiums.

B. Participation Criteria

To be eligible to apply, a faculty member must be tenured and meet one of the following criteria: (1) the faculty member must be at least 60 years of age and have completed at least 10 years of full-time service with the university, or (2) if the faculty member is 55 through 59 years of age, the sum of the individual's age and years of service must be at least 80.

C. Selection Criteria

1. The purpose of this transition plan is to provide the university with a management tool to provide incentives for the release of tenured faculty position-based resources for reallocation or reductions, in accordance with the university Strategic Plan implementation, changes in enrollment, and other university needs.
2. Criteria under which applications will be considered are those that are in the best interest of the university and include but not limited to: the relationship to the goals of the university's Strategic Plan, especially those areas identified for diminution; the tenure profile of the department; the proportion of potential applications for participation in the program in a unit/department and the workload of the department; changes in enrollments; the demand for an applicant's expertise; general availability, cost and necessity of new faculty; and savings to be generated by the separation.

D. Program Cost and Limitations

No central university resources will be set aside for FTIP agreement costs: funds to support agreement requirements will come from school/college resources.

E. Application Period

There will be an annual application period established by the university administration.

F. Other

1. Participation in this early retirement incentive program will not preclude the faculty member from some future employment with the university or with another Virginia agency or institution on a part-time basis (in a position not eligible for Virginia Retirement System or Optional Retirement Plan), subject to the needs and approval of the appropriate unit of the university or other Virginia agency or institution. Possible opportunities at VCU may include adjunct teaching and other instructional and research activities. The faculty member will be required, however, to withdraw from active participation in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) and/or an Optional Retirement Plan (ORP), may not be employed in any position or capacity that requires participation in the VRS or ORP.
2. There are federal and state laws which impose restrictions on the re-employment of retirees. These restrictions must be complied with and they include a 26 week break between the retirement date and the re-employment date. For more details on these re-employment restrictions see VCU's [Procedures for Part Time Employment of Retirees](#). Every three years, the VCU Faculty Transition Incentive Program will be reviewed by an *ad hoc* committee appointed by the university president or the president's designee, and to include faculty representation.

II. FACULTY TRANSITION INCENTIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Timetable

1. By May 15th, the vice president for academic affairs, in consultation with the vice president for health sciences, will recommend to the president whether FTIP will be offered the next academic year. Notification of the availability of FTIP will be placed on the VCU website in appropriate locations.
2. Interested faculty may submit a letter of request (which serves as the application) at least six months prior to the date on which their transition plan is to be effective. This will provide adequate time for review and action by the university.
3. An eligible faculty member should submit the letter of request to their department chair for review and recommendation. The letter should include a request to participate in the FTIP program, proposed workload transition plan, including a proposed date of separation from full-time employment. The separation date must be within three years of the date of the FTIP agreement.
4. Within 30 days of receipt of a letter requesting participation in the FTIP program, the department chair will submit the letter of request with a written recommendation of approval or disapproval to the dean's office.
5. Upon receipt of the department chair's recommendation and the letter of request, the dean's office has up to 30 days to review and recommend action on the application to the Office of the Provost or the Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences, as appropriate.
6. In the event that the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number that the dean determines the school/college can support or in any other circumstance, the dean may choose the option of referring the names of all the eligible applicants, along with appropriate documentation requesting that a university panel be appointed by the provost and vice president for academic affairs and the vice president for health sciences in consultation with the president of the Faculty Senate. The panel would determine which applicants from the school/college should be recommended to the vice presidents.
7. The Office of the Provost or the Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences (as appropriate) has up to 30 days to approve or disapprove the recommendation to participate in FTIP. Notification will be provided by the appropriate vice president to the dean, the department chair and faculty member of the final decision to approve or disapprove the request to participate in FTIP.
8. A faculty member who is approved to participate will receive a FTIP agreement and will have 30 days from the date of the FTIP agreement to execute the agreement or the agreement will be null and void.
9. The VCU Board of Visitors will act on FTIP contracts as part of their regular review of compensation, as applicable.

10. The president has the authority to make an exception to this timetable and these guidelines if requested by the provost or the vice president for health sciences and if he/she determines that it is justified.

Outside Consultation

During the period of transition, arrangements for faculty consultation outside the university must concur with the university's [Outside Professional Activity and Employment, Research, and Continuing Education](#) policy.

Funding and FTE

1. If needed, the university will establish a central pool of educational and general (E&G) authorized staffing full-time equivalents (FTE) to supplement school FTE temporarily during periods of new faculty overlap with transitions.
2. Funding is to come from the position budget from which the faculty member is funded.

Forms

There are no forms associated with this policy and procedures.

Related Documents

1. VCU Policy: [Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures](#)
2. [Procedures for Part-Time Employment of Retirees](#)
3. VCU Policy: [Outside Professional Activity and Employment, Research, and Continuing Education](#)

Revision History

This policy supersedes the following archived policies:

Approved by the Board of Visitors, August 2004

Revised, July 2012

Revised, July 24, 2015 *Faculty Transition Incentive Program (FTIP)*

FAQ

There are no FAQ associated with this policy and procedures.