

Faculty Modified Duties (FMD)

Policy: FACULTY MODIFIED DUTIES (FMD)

Effective date: July 1, 2017

Review date: July 1, 2020

Revised:

Responsible Party: Office of the Provost

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1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

In recognition of the importance of a healthy integration between work and life, and consistent with the goals of providing classroom continuity and promoting faculty diversity and professional career development and advancement, Montana State University is committed to creating a supportive environment for all faculty, particularly during major life transitions. This policy is intended to provide faculty with some relief from duties in response to significant life events.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR FMD

All full-time tenure-track/tenured faculty are eligible for FMD when they are the primary care giver related to the following life events:

- a. The birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child.
- b. The sickness or disability of a family member such as a spouse, parent, live-in partner, or child who requires constant care by the primary care giver.

For purposes of this policy, a primary care giver can be a parent, a legal guardian, a live-in partner, or a spouse by marriage. The primary care giver is the person who has primary responsibility for the care of a child, sick or disabled family member.

Human Resources will determine what medical documentation may be required to verify a family member's health condition and subsequent eligibility for modified duties.

3. MODIFICATION OF FACULTY DUTIES

- a.** FMD is intended to assist faculty experiencing major life transitions by providing a release from teaching or other appropriate duties for up to one semester once per triggering event without a reduction in pay and without an expectation of enhancement of other duties. Modifications may include a release from a portion of or all teaching duties for all or part of a semester, and/or an adjustment to the faculty member's service and/or research expectations.
- b.** If the modification of duties takes the form of a complete or partial release from teaching, the modification shall, when possible, be arranged to coincide with the semester calendar (or appropriate teaching module in effect in the faculty member's unit) to ensure classroom continuity and to minimize disruptions for students as much as possible.
- c.** If a foreseeable event such as the birth or adoption of a child or major surgery will occur during the last six weeks of a semester, the faculty member may request modified duties for either the semester during which the event occurs or the following semester.
- d.** The period of modified duties must begin within twelve (12) months of the date of the triggering event.

4. PROCESS FOR FMD

- a.** A faculty member seeking modified duties shall inform their department head at least three (3) months or as practical prior to the semester in which the modified duties will be applied or as early as is practical depending on the nature of the triggering event.
- b.** The faculty member, department head, and dean shall work together to set the terms of the modified duties.
- c.** The FMD shall not release the faculty member from more than 50% of the faculty member's normal work load for the academic year.
- d.** If the faculty member seeks a full release from teaching for a semester, and the faculty member normally teaches an uneven load from semester to semester (e.g. 1-2, or 2-3), it is permissible for the dean and department head to shift the faculty member's course load so that the release from teaching applies to the lower course load.
- e.** The department head shall issue a memorandum of understanding establishing the expectations for the semester in which the modified duties occur. The annual review shall be based upon the modified duties only and the duties excused will not be included in the review.

f. The department head shall complete the [request for FMD](#) and submit it to the dean and provost for approval.

g. The period of modified duties is not a leave of absence. Faculty members with modified duties status will be relieved of some responsibilities but will be expected to perform the responsibilities that have been identified as remaining.

h. No faculty member shall experience reprisal for exercising the right to faculty modified duties.

i. Faculty Modified Duties (FMD) is NOT an employee benefit or leave as defined under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Furthermore, modification of duties under this policy does not preclude or require use of other defined benefits, such as sick leave, nor modification of duties mutually arranged by faculty and the department head without opting for FMD.

5. FMD POOL

The university will provide a pool for funding faculty modified duties. Where and when possible, the funding will be applied so that FMD in any unit:

- a.** results in hiring of faculty to replace necessary teaching responsibilities;
- b.** does not result in cancellation of required classes;
- c.** does not result in an increased teaching load for any unit faculty, unless by volition.

6. OTHER RESOURCES

A period of modified duties does not affect a faculty member's tenure review date; however, the faculty member is entitled to certain automatic and requested extensions of the tenure review period as outlined in the [Extending Tenure Review Period](#) policy.

These guidelines do not take the place of policies and other resources that may be appropriate including reasonable accommodation, parental and maternity leave, sick leave, family medical leave, disability benefits, or other leave processes available to faculty. Questions regarding benefits and leave policies should be directed to Human Resources.