Step-Down Arrangements for Tenured Faculty

Updated: December 2025

The Office of the Provost has long supported step-down arrangements for individual retirement-eligible tenured faculty who wish to phase their transition into retirement or voluntary separation over one or two academic years. We are continuing with this practice, **and extending it to all tenured faculty**, regardless of their retirement-eligible status, who would like to voluntarily separate from the university.

How does a step-down work? In general, a step-down arranges for a reduction in a faculty member's time and effort (i.e., workload) accompanied by prorated compensation.

> Example:
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> Prof. X would like to phase into retirement by teaching half their load for the coming academic year. In return, Prof. X would earn half their salary for the coming year (with any merit pool applied and pro-rated), continue to receive full benefits, and would maintain service commitments as agreed upon with the chair. Prof. X works with their chair to schedule two courses for the fall semester and one course for the spring semester.

Faculty members interested in developing a step-down plan must be in good standing with the Office of the Provost at the time of the initiation of the plan and throughout the step-down period. The process for a step-down plan is as follows:

Process

1. Tenured faculty who are interested in a potential step-down arrangement leading to retirement should contact HR to verify their retirement eligibility. For tenured faculty who are not retirement eligible and are electing a step down toward voluntary separation, please skip to step 3.
2. HR informs the individual of eligibility for retirement. Faculty members consult with their department chair regarding their preferred step-down teaching loads and timeframe and the department's instructional needs and budgetary considerations. The faculty member and the department chair work together to develop a proposed step-down arrangement. Questions regarding the plan or process should be directed to the Vice Provost for Faculty, Graduate and Professional Education (hereafter "Vice Provost").
3. The department chair notifies their dean's office and the provost's office in writing of the proposed step-down arrangement. Either or both offices may suggest modifications. All parties work together to finalize the step-down arrangement details.

4. The faculty member signs an MOU agreement form provided by the Vice Provost to formalize the step-down plan. The faculty member, their dean's office, the provost's office, and HR will receive and retain copies of the signed agreement. Once the agreement has been finalized, the faculty member should complete and submit the Voluntary Resignation/Retirement TDX form. The MOU shall be attached to the TDX.

5. The dean's office then reflects the budgetary impact of the step down in the appropriate subsequent fiscal year budgets.

Step-down plans will be approved at the discretion of the University in consideration of the academic and business needs of the department and academic unit.

Step-down plans may be arranged for one or two years, with the percentage of effort typically decreasing. The step-down arrangements involve determining the percentage of the faculty member's teaching load (or time and effort for faculty members whose workload is not based in teaching) over the next one to two years, with their salary pro-rated according to that percentage of load. In most typical step-downs, the faculty member moves from full-time to 50% time, with retirement at the end of the 50% year. A two year step-down would be driven by specific needs in the department.

Faculty members who are in a step-down will retain full benefits during the step-down period. They will not be eligible for sabbatical or other faculty development programs that involve a stipend or course release. The voluntary separation and step down election is irrevocable.

We kindly request that faculty who are interested in making step-down arrangements with their chairs to develop and finalize a plan by **February 1** of the calendar year in which the plan will be implemented.

Contact facultyaffairs@udayton.edu with any additional questions.