

The Arts and Sciences provides financial support to tenured and tenure-track faculty who obtain grants and awards from external sources by means of “top-ups” that attempt to make up the difference between the full-time salary and the amount provided by the award. The amount of the top-up depends on the availability of earned leaves and the amount of specific award.

The objective of the policy is to provide an incentive for tenured and tenure-track faculty to apply for prestigious fellowships by ensuring that additional salary funds are made available when the fellowship award does not cover full salary.

If an external award does not cover fringe benefits, faculty are strongly encouraged to receive this award as a direct payment. If a faculty member opts to receive payment through Columbia University payroll rather than directly from the funding agency on an award that does not cover fringe, the cost of fringe expenses will be deducted from the award, effectively reducing the award amount by about 1/3 (the fringe rate changes from year to year).

Faculty who are paid directly by a fellowship or grant agency do not receive Columbia University contributions to retirement savings for the portion of salary covered by the award. However, faculty will continue to receive Columbia University fringe benefits, including medical benefits, since they will be on a leave at partial salary (either a paid University leave paired with the award, and/or the top up); premiums will be paid from the Columbia portion of the salary.

The fringe expense on the top-up amount the faculty receives will be covered by A&S and will not be deducted from the top-up amount.

In order to receive a top-up, faculty must inform their chair that they are applying for an external fellowship and the chair must inform the divisional dean of the fellowship application prior to the application being submitted. Faculty should inform their chair as soon as they receive the award and forward a copy of the award letter to the chair, with cc to the relevant divisional dean. Advanced notification is requested for budgeting purposes.

Replacement teaching funds will not automatically be provided for faculty receiving fellowships that are topped-up.

Qualifying Awards: Prestigious awards such as those listed below will be supplemented by the Arts and Sciences according to the top-up guidelines for tenured and tenure-track faculty.

- American Academy in Rome Fellowship
- American Academy in Berlin Fellowship
- American Academy of Arts and Sciences Visiting Scholar Program
- American Council of Learned Societies Individual Fellowships
- Andrew W. Mellon Foundation New Direction Fellowship
- Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (Stanford)
- Folger Institute Long Term Research Fellowship

- Ford Foundation
- Getty Foundation Residential Grants
- Guggenheim Fellowship
- Hoover Institute Fellowship
- Humboldt
- Huntington Library
- I Tatti Fellowship
- Institute for Advanced Study
- Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies (U Penn)
- Library of Congress
- Max Planck Institutes
- National Endowment for Humanities
- National Humanities Center
- New York Public Library Cullman Center
- Perimeter Institute
- Russell Sage Visiting Scholars Program
- Simons Foundation Fellowship
- Social Science Research Council
- Stanford Humanities Center
- Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard
- Woodrow Wilson Foundation-Career Enhancement Fellowships for Junior Faculty

Top-up Guidelines for Tenured Faculty

For the 2026-2027 academic year, tenured faculty, the Arts and Sciences will supplement a qualifying award with a top-up of up to \$65,548 for a full year's fellowship and a top-up of up to \$32,774 for a one-semester fellowship, in order to preserve the faculty member's full nine-month base salary. A tenured faculty member is only eligible to receive top-up fund once in a four-year period.

Most fellowship programs expect applicants who require additional support to seek supplementary funding in the form of earned leave from Columbia University or additional external grants. Tenured faculty members are therefore encouraged to apply for multiple fellowships and may use their sabbatical, Tenured Faculty Research Program (TFRP) credits and/or banked summer ninths should top-up funds not cover their full salary while on leave. Faculty members who have received a qualifying award may request to advance or delay a sabbatical by up to one year (two semesters). Start-up or research funds may also be used in conjunction with qualifying awards unless prohibited by policies governing the use of the specific research funds.

If a tenured faculty member who has received a qualifying award with support from Columbia University requests a second leave funded by another qualifying award before the interval of four years has elapsed and sufficient leave has been accrued, the leave will be granted with the understanding that no support from Columbia University will be given.

University policy allows leaves to be authorized for no more than one year at a time and expects faculty to be in residence for at least two years of full-time service between leaves of any kind.

To receive top-up funds, faculty must inform their chairs as soon as they receive the award(s) and forward a copy/ies of the award letter(s) to the chair. The chair must forward a copy/ies of the award letter(s) to the relevant divisional dean.

Top-up Guidelines for Tenure-Track Faculty

Since junior faculty have fewer sources for supplementary funding in the form of external grants or earned leave from Columbia University, the Arts and Sciences, for the 2026-2027 academic year, will supplement a qualifying award with a top-up of up to \$65,548 for a full year's fellowship and a top-up of up to \$32,774 for a one semester fellowship, in order to preserve the faculty member's full nine month base salary.

For example, a faculty member with nine month base salary of \$100,000 who receives a \$60,000 full-year award will be supplemented by \$40,000, but a full-year award of \$30,000 would be supplemented by \$65,548. Since faculty are only eligible for a top-up once in a four-year period, and no more than four semesters of leave (excluding parental workload relief and/or medical leave) is ordinarily possible during a junior's seven year period, junior faculty who have received one top-up and receive a second qualifying award are expected to use their Junior Faculty Development Leave to top-up the second qualifying award stipend.

As a rule faculty are required to have four semesters of service between any two leaves. However, junior faculty who obtain two qualifying awards may have as few as three semesters of service between two leaves. Because leaves decrease teaching time, department chairs should advise junior faculty about the importance of establishing a strong teaching record in addition to an active research program prior to the tenure review.

To receive top-up funds, faculty must inform their chairs as soon as they receive the award(s) and forward a copy/ies of the award letter(s) to the chair. The chair must forward a copy/ies of the award letter(s) to the relevant divisional dean.

For Further Information

Contact your **divisional dean** for questions regarding eligibility of a particular grant or fellowship if not on the list above. Otherwise, **Michael Susi** (mvs3@columbia.edu) or **Jessie Tong** (jt2622@columbia.edu) in Academic Affairs in the Office of the Executive Vice President for Arts & Sciences can help you with the necessary calculations and considerations.