

Many faculty members may want to consider a phased, effort reduction plan leading to full retirement, often involving a graded reduction of clinical/research/administrative activity in the last few years of regular rank faculty status.

The most common mechanism for creating a Phased Retirement Plan is by using the Flexible Work Arrangement process as outlined in Chapter 4 of the Duke Faculty Handbook (the FHB) (pages 4-5 and 4-6; and below). The form requesting a Flexible Work Arrangement requires an MOU between the Department and the faculty member, specifically outlining the duties and adjusted salary based on reductions in effort. Although most Flexible Work Arrangements are approved for a maximum of 3 years, the pre-retirement timeline can be adjusted based on plans approved by the faculty member's Division as well as the Chair of the Department of Medicine. The MOU can be modified on an annual basis as needed.

Approximately six months prior to full retirement, regular-rank faculty members should also consider applying for transition to emeritus status.

Flexible Work Arrangement Policy for Regular Rank Faculty Members (from Duke Faculty Handbook, 2019)

All regular rank appointments to the faculty of Duke University are made as full time appointments. Recognizing the need for some faculty members to modify their work schedules for extended periods of time, the University may approve flexible work arrangements. These flexible work arrangements are directed toward faculty members for whom Duke University represents their full professional obligation, but who wish to have the flexibility to continue a career in academics while balancing family, pre-retirement planning, or other personal priorities.

This policy does not apply to non-regular rank appointments, or to individuals with another professional endeavor beyond the current consulting policy (for example, this policy does not apply to faculty with clinical practices outside of the Duke Private Diagnostic Clinic or Duke Health).

Each department and/or school shall define a full time work load based on standards established for such activities as teaching, research, clinical activities, university service and administrative responsibilities as applicable. Because the type and acceptability of work load arrangements vary among departments, and because a large number of flexible arrangements in one department could weaken its ability to carry out all missions, the department chair, if applicable, or the dean of the school must approve all such requests.

A flexible work arrangement can be made for up to 3 years. Under certain circumstances the flexible work arrangement can be renewed for additional terms but in any event such renewal shall not infringe on the department's ability to carry out its mission. Each such determination will be made by the department chair if applicable or the dean of the school. In the case of pre-retirement agreements, longer arrangements are permitted on a case-by-case basis with approval of the Dean, provost and the University Counsel's office.

After appropriate discussion, the faculty member submits a request for a flexible work arrangement in writing (see the Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form for Regular Rank Faculty, <https://provost.duke.edu/sites/all/files/Flexible%20Work%20Arrangement%20form%20-%20Editable.pdf>) to the department chair, if applicable, or the dean of the school. The approved request, including the agreed upon 1) modification in duties, 2) compensation, and 3) the proposed total time for which the flexible arrangement will be in effect, then goes from the department chair to the dean. Approved flexible work arrangements will then be sent to the provost for signature. The Provost's Office will monitor usage of this policy.

Faculty members on the tenure track are automatically eligible for 3 months of tenure clock relief for each year of approved Flexible Work Arrangement. However, as outlined in the tenure clock relief policy, there is a 3-year (36 month) overall limit in tenure clock extension. Faculty members may opt out of tenure clock extension.

The University will continue to pay the employer's share of the cost of fringe benefit programs such as health care insurance, group life insurance, and the Faculty/Staff Retirement Plan for a faculty member on an approved flexible work arrangement. Where applicable, the benefit will be based on the revised salary. Nothing contained in this proposal shall imply or suggest a status of less than full time employment for faculty who are working a modified schedule pursuant to this policy. Those individuals with approved flexible workarrangements shall continue as full colleagues, and are eligible for the rights and privileges of the full time faculty. They are beholden to policies affecting the faculty, as delineated in the Faculty Handbook, including criteria for promotion and tenure.