

UNIVERSITY FACULTY WORKLOAD GUIDELINES¹

A. Introduction: Four Principles

No single, simple formula for an equitable faculty workload can be devised for all the academic units. What is fair and works well in Engineering may be inappropriate for the College of Arts and Sciences, and the arrangement thought necessary in the School of Business Administration may be irrelevant for faculty in Roesch Library.

This is not to say, however, that excessive or inequitably distributed workloads should not be recognized as such. Furthermore, individual faculty members and departments have a right to clarity of expectations. The University must have a system that facilitates accountability in the use of its resources. Therefore, the University sets forth these guidelines to be applied generally, regardless of the special circumstances of the academic unit concerned, and it requires each school, the College, and each department to establish faculty workload policies within these University guidelines. (Departmental policies will need to be developed within the University guidelines and within the policy of the appropriate school or the College.) The University guidelines should be periodically reviewed by the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate. They must be reviewed and evaluated by the Faculty Affairs Committee no more than five years after they have been adopted by the Senate. The results of that evaluation will be submitted to the Senate.

Underlying these guidelines are four critical principles. First, at the University of Dayton excellence in teaching (i.e., “teaching that educates” or “scholarly teaching”) must be an expectation and a goal for every faculty member. The University desires to be a community of learners where there is meaningful faculty-student interaction that produces student learning across disciplines. Consequently, thoughtful and caring teaching and advising are primary activities. The second principle, and one of equal importance, is that every University of Dayton faculty member is expected to engage in scholarly activity and research that is disseminated or published, and to provide service to the University and the scholarly community. The third principle is that as a community we should search for ways of relating our teaching, scholarly activity and research, and service so that each can inform the other. The fourth principle is that each faculty member should regularly review his/her workload and reflect upon it with the department chairperson or Dean² to seek understanding and deeper meaning in his/her work. Within these principles and with this background in mind, the University’s workload policies should include at a minimum:

1. A definition of maximum teaching loads for effective instruction at the appropriate levels and with the appropriate exceptions for types of courses, etc.
2. A definition of the other elements of the faculty member’s workload (e.g., scholarly activity and research, advising, service to the institution and the profession).

¹In the implementation of these guidelines, the College, schools, and departments should review existing University policies in the [Faculty Handbook](#) on such issues as conflict of interest in research, outside employment, third term employment, and academic advising. The College, schools, and departments should incorporate into their policies any policies these units have previously adopted on outside consulting.

²Faculty serving as chairpersons should reflect on their workloads with their Deans; in the School of Law, the Dean performs many of the duties normally the responsibility of a chairperson.

3. A description of the procedures that should be followed in establishing, administering, and revising school, College-wide, and department workload policies.

B. Maximum, Minimum, and Preferable Teaching Loads

Teaching "workloads" are usually described in hours per week of formal class meetings. As a measurement, this leaves much to be desired. The teacher normally should spend far less time in the classroom than in preparation, conferences, grading of papers and examinations, and supervision of remedial or advanced student work. Preparation, in particular, is of critical importance; not only preparation for specific classes or conferences, but that of more general preparation in the discipline or field, by keeping up with recent developments and strengthening one's grasp on older materials, without which the faculty member will soon dwindle into ineffectiveness as scholar/teacher. Moreover, traditional teaching workload formulations do not take into consideration significant University of Dayton initiatives emphasizing experimentation with such techniques as cooperative learning and case materials, using multimedia for instruction, linking residential life with the classroom, off-campus educational experiences, service-learning, interdisciplinary approaches to integrating learning, supervising undergraduate research, and mentoring individual students and groups of students who are participating in faculty research. The University takes these initiatives seriously and therefore the schools, College, and departments need policies on teaching workload that offer a sophisticated discrimination and weighing of these educational activities.³

Maximum and Minimum

The University adopts the following maximum teaching workload limits seriously intending to achieve and sustain an adequately high level of faculty effectiveness in teaching and scholarship.

Normally, a teaching load of twelve semester hours per semester, with no more than six separate course preparations during the academic year, represents the maximum for any faculty member to satisfactorily perform the faculty member's teaching function. A faculty member who is teaching twelve semester hours per semester can be expected to spend at least an additional twenty-four clock hours in teaching-related activities, including keeping up with her/his discipline. He/she should not be expected to produce meaningful research. It is unlikely that a faculty member teaching twelve semester hours will be able to regularly engage in sufficient research and service activities to fulfill her/his responsibilities as a teacher/scholar, and therefore, this maximum is not recommended and should not be used as a general rule.

Normally, faculty members who engage in meaningful scholarly activity and research (e.g., that which leads to some form of peer review and dissemination) should not teach more than nine semester hours in any semester.

Normally, faculty who produce significant peer reviewed research, engage in major curricular revision, or lead administrative units should be expected to teach no more than six semester hours in any semester.

Except in extraordinary circumstances, or when a faculty member is serving as a major

³The maximum, minimum, and preferable workloads presented in this document represent broad guidelines and the thinking of the University at the time they are written. Sections C and D of this document identify common sources of inequity (e.g., class size) that need to be addressed in unit policies. Furthermore, it is understood that courses with such features as integrative teaching, team-taught interdisciplinary formats, or distance learning using multimedia may require adjustments to these maximum, minimum, and preferable workloads.

administrator or is on sabbatical, no faculty member should teach fewer than three semester hours in any semester.

This statement of *maximum* workload assumes that means must be devised within each school, the College, and department for determining fair equivalents in teaching workload for those faculty members whose activities do not fit the conventional classroom pattern: for example, those who chair departments, supervise laboratories or studios, offer tutorials and conduct problem sessions, supervise student teachers, or teach writing intensive courses.

Preferable

Even with the reservations just made, however, it would be misleading to offer this statement of maximum and minimum loads without providing guidance for a *preferable* pattern. For University of Dayton faculty to be effective in teaching and scholarly activity and research, and service, the following is preferable:

For undergraduate and masters level instruction, a teaching load of nine hours per week with a maximum of five preparations per year.

For instruction at the Ph.D. level (with mentoring, dissertation advising, and research demands) and at the Law School (with mentoring, teaching load, and research demands) a teaching load of six hours per week.

A teaching workload like this should enable the average faculty member to fulfill responsibilities in advising, curriculum development, scholarly activity and research, service and other activities. It must be recognized that achievement of a nine- or six-semester hour teaching load may not be possible at present for every faculty member in every unit. Nevertheless, the University believes that the nine- or six-semester hour loads, achieved by some departments within the past few years and recommended by many accrediting agencies and other organizations, provide as reliable a guide as may be found for teaching loads in any institution intending to achieve and maintain excellence in faculty performance.

C. Unit Procedures

The faculty in each school, the College, and each department should participate fully in the determination of a specific workload policy, both initially and in all subsequent reappraisals. Hopefully, each department should have a faculty committee (e.g., an executive committee or a personnel committee) that can lead the departmental faculty through this process. Reappraisal at regular intervals is essential, in order that older patterns of faculty responsibility may be adjusted to changes in the unit's size, structure, academic programs, and facilities. Current policy and practices should be made known clearly to all faculty members, including those new to the unit each year. Each unit workload policy must be approved by the next higher unit. In other words, deans must approve all departmental policies. The Provost must approve all school and College-wide policies.

Individual faculty members often have quite different duties, some of which may be highly specialized, and the relative weight of these duties may vary dramatically during the year. It is important, therefore, that individual workloads be determined in consultation between the department faculty member and the department chairperson who is most familiar with the demands involved. The department chairperson must be allowed a measure of latitude in making individual assignments, and care should be taken that *all* of the individual's service to the University is considered. On the other hand, care must be exercised to assure that full-time

teaching faculty have posted office hours when they are available regularly to their students.

D. Common Sources of Inequity in the Distribution of Workloads

Listed below are typical sources of inequity in the distribution of workloads. They are presented to help those faculty who develop unit policies to avoid these inequities.

1. *Complexity of Courses*

No two courses are exactly alike, and some differences among individual loads are to be expected within a common nine-hour to six-semester hour policy. Serious inequity should be avoided, however. The most frequent sources of difficulty are:

- a. The number of different course preparations within a semester and within the academic year should be considered, not only the total class hours per week.
- b. Special adjustments may be appropriate for the faculty member introducing a new course or substantially revising an older course. This is a matter of the University's self-interest as well as of equity; if the new course has been approved as likely to strengthen a University program, appropriate measures should be taken to ensure its success. This provision can be used to assist faculty members who are new to the University and who often need additional time to develop their teaching. Similarly, when major curriculum revisions are developed and implemented, special adjustments may need to be made.
- c. Extreme differences in scope and complexity among courses should not be overlooked merely because contention might be provoked. For example, the rate of knowledge growth in a given discipline may be so rapid that course revision must be a continual process. In other cases, the difficulty level of a course may be significantly greater than other courses in the curriculum. Such imbalances may occur among courses in different disciplines as well as within the same discipline. In some subjects the advanced course is the more demanding; in others, the introductory course. One course may entail constant student consultation; another may be writing intensive and therefore require a heavy burden of paperwork. At least the more obvious discrepancies should be corrected.
- d. The size of the classes taught should be considered. The larger class is not always more demanding than the smaller class; but it does not follow that the question of class size can safely be ignored. In a given unit there will be many generally comparable courses, and for these the difficulty will probably be directly proportionate to the number of students involved.
- e. In some of the University's departments or programs, it may be appropriate to speak of faculty teaching workload in terms of student-instruction load, or "contact hours," as well as in the conventional semester hours. Contact hours may be a good measure in labs and studio courses for example.

Regardless of the unit's particular circumstances, it should be possible to avoid serious inequities.

2. *Scholarly Activity and Research*

Increasingly, scholarly activity and research have become a major responsibility of University faculty in every academic unit. Scholarly activity and research are essential to the University's mission. Indeed, the University expects all faculty to engage in some form of scholarly activity and research. Scholarly activity is also essential to good teaching which relies on the advancement of knowledge and the excitement of the unanswered question to stimulate critical thinking. The University of Dayton especially values scholarly activity and research and teaching that engages students in research itself. However, lack of clarity and candor about what constitutes "research" can lead to confusing or conflicting demands. At the University of Dayton, scholarly activity and research mean something beyond simply staying abreast of the field. For example, it normally means original, exploratory work in some special field of interest within the discipline that leads to some form of peer review and dissemination (e.g., publication, presentation, performance) among one's peers. It is recognized that such scholarly activity and research require time. It is very doubtful that a continuing effort in original inquiry can be maintained by a faculty carrying a teaching load of more than nine semester hours.

3. *Service*

Faculty members should expect to serve as advisors and mentors to majors and to new faculty colleagues, to serve on departmental, school, or College committees, in certain administrative capacities, and in professional societies and associations. However, a too heavy commitment in any of these areas, or service in too many of these areas at once, will impair the effectiveness of the faculty member as teacher and scholar. A reduction in teaching or in research expectations may be in order when the University or a unit wishes to draw heavily on the services of a faculty member (e.g., as a department chairperson), or when with its approval, a faculty member is engaged in community or government service.

No universally applicable rule can easily be advanced in the area of service. However, through faculty surveys and other means, it is clear that faculty want to perform meaningful service but they are concerned about the extent to which service on committees detracts from their teaching, and scholarly activity and research. At the same time, faculty governance is an important tradition at the University and it needs to be strengthened and made more meaningful. In the light of these survey results and the goal of meaningful service, each faculty member and the departmental chairperson regularly should define clearly what the expectations will be for service. These expectations should include an estimate of the amount of time that should be devoted to the activity, the anticipated results of the service for the University, for the department, and for the faculty member, and the means that will be used to assess the results of the service activity. In so far as possible, service activities should be undertaken that relate to the faculty member's teaching and scholarly activity and research. If these criteria are used when a service activity is undertaken and reviewed, then faculty and the University may achieve a more satisfactory ratio of teaching, scholarly activity and research, and service workload. Ideally, these responsibilities will be related so that they can enlighten each other and result in a synergy.