

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development

FACULTY WORKLOAD POLICIES

Est. December 2016 – Amended March 2023

PREAMBLE

Faculty are among the most important and consequential resources of any university, and so it is essential that the university, and each of Mason’s academic units, ensure workload equity while also maximizing the efficient use of our teaching, research, and service resources.

Recognizing and allowing for differences among units, these guidelines are designed to ensure consistency of workload expectations both across our university and aligned with related policies and practices in our peer institutions. This document applies to all College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) instructional faculty, and is consistent with the university’s Faculty Handbook, University Policy 2226 – Supplemental Pay, University Policy 4012 – Principal Investigators, and state and federal guidelines.

CEHD faculty workload policies are designed to maximize the amount of time instructional faculty in various roles spend in direct contact with students, within boundary conditions defined by research and service obligations, and with reallocations to other activities permitted only under stringent and carefully specified circumstances. The policies are sufficiently flexible, however, to enable the faculty and administration to take advantage of special opportunities likely to facilitate the organization’s teaching, research, and/or service missions.

These policies are also designed to help regulate faculty activity in ways that promote rather than detract from their sense of autonomy and academic freedom. With specific, a priori guidelines, faculty can plan ahead, knowing in advance which scenarios will be supported by the college and university. This ability to use the guidelines in a self-regulating manner, along with the assurance of fairness that these policies provide, transforms a potentially demotivating administrative responsibility into an empowering administrative tool.

These policies only apply to CEHD full-time instructional faculty. They do not apply to research, adjunct, clinical, affiliate, or administrative and professional faculty, or to instructional faculty in other Mason academic units.

BASE TEACHING LOADS FOR FULL-TIME INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY

The College of Education and Human Development’s workload system for full-time instructional faculty includes tenured, tenure-track (together known as “tenure-line”), and term faculty. The following shows the base teaching load for each:

Tenured:	4 courses per academic year (2-2 base load)
Tenure-Track:	4 courses per academic year (2-2 base load)
Term:	8 courses per academic year (4-4 base load)

Tenured, tenure-track, and term assignments are structured by contractual terms of employment. Annual faculty evaluations are based on the general criteria defined by an individual’s faculty role, along with adjustments associated with workload reductions/reallocations (see below).

The *tenure-line* role is aligned with the Faculty Handbook pathway to tenure and promotion that requires either “genuine excellence” in research and scholarship along with at least “high competence” in teaching or “genuine excellence” in teaching with at least “high competence” in research and scholarship. All tenured and tenure-track faculty are in this role, consistent with the college’s expectation that faculty in tenure-line positions should aspire to meet standards for genuine excellence in research and scholarship as well as in teaching. Term faculty are not eligible for this role.

The *term* role is designed for faculty who focus primarily on teaching, with opportunities for research involvement but no contractual obligation to engage in research beyond activities related to the scholarship of teaching. Tenure-track faculty are not eligible for this role, nor is the role appropriate for tenured faculty except under highly unusual circumstances that must be approved by the CEHD Dean.

BASE TEACHING LOADS THAT DEVIATE FROM CEHD’S STANDARD STRUCTURE

There are 4 contractual workload scenarios that are variations on the faculty roles described above:

- (1) Term instructional faculty at the associate or full professor rank whose research and scholarship productivity is comparable to tenure-line faculty over an extended period of time may be considered for a base 3-4 or 3-3 teaching load. However, any such adjustment only applies to the term faculty member’s current contract, not to any future contracts (i.e., 4-4 is always the default when a term faculty contract is up for renewal).

- (2) Instructional faculty who are on 12-month contracts for programmatic reasons will have 2 summer courses added to their contractual teaching load (e.g., tenured faculty have a base teaching load of 2-2-2; term faculty have a base teaching load of 4-4-2).
- (3) Although tenure-line faculty can only be in full-time positions, term instructional faculty may be hired at FTE levels below 1.0. In such instances, the contractual teaching load is calculated as a pro-rated fraction of the full-time base teaching load for term faculty.
- (4) Tenured faculty who receive an unsatisfactory rating for research in at least one annual evaluation cycle may be contractually required to teach one or more additional courses until they resume a productive research and scholarship trajectory (e.g., escalating to a 3-3 teaching load or converting to term faculty status).

TEACHING, RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP, AND SERVICE EXPECTATIONS WITH RESPECT TO TIME ALLOCATIONS

Calibration of time allocations for each faculty role

Annual faculty evaluations will be based on the general criteria defined by whether an individual is term or tenure-line faculty. This is operationalized by assigning differential weights to the areas of Teaching, Research and Scholarship, and Service in annual evaluations. Weights are based on time allocations (percentage of FTE devoted to a particular area), with each course taught assumed to comprise approximately 10% of a faculty member’s overall workload (time allocation) during an academic year:

	Term*	Tenured	Tenure-Track
Teaching	80%	40%	40%
Research and Scholarship	0%	40%	40%
Service	20%	20%	20%

* Term faculty with a base 3-3 or 4-3 load will have a 60-70% time allocation for teaching and a 10-20% allocation to research and scholarship.

Evaluation percentages for a given year may vary from these generic weights if, in the case of an individual faculty member, one or more workload reallocations have occurred (e.g., a tenure-line faculty member who had a two-course reduction associated with time allocated to a research grant would have weights of 20%, 60%, and 20% for Teaching, Research/Scholarship, and

Service, respectively). Weighting changes associated with workload reallocations are determined by the CEHD Dean's Office.

TEACHING, RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP, AND SERVICE EXPECTATIONS WITH RESPECT TO PERFORMANCE, IMPACT, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Faculty are expected to strive for excellence in all facets of their contractually assigned work (teaching, service, and, where applicable, research and scholarship).

Expectations are holistic, contextual, and outcome-oriented rather than being formulaic and activity-oriented. The College of Education and Human Development encompasses dozens of disciplines and sub-disciplines, thus making it counterproductive to use generic standards or to apply evaluation criteria in an inflexible way. The college recognizes that there are many different and consequential ways that faculty can contribute to the mission of the college and the university.

With the exception of "citizenship" (defined below under "Service"), authority for conducting annual performance evaluations of full-time instructional faculty is delegated from the supervisor (CEHD Dean) to elected groups of peers, as detailed in the college's Bylaws. Performance evaluations related to tenure, promotion, and the renewal of multi-year contracts are conducted by multiple layers of peers and administrators as detailed in the Faculty Handbook and Provost Office policy documents.

Criteria and evidence for evaluating contributions in Teaching

Teaching in CEHD is seen as multifaceted, to include classroom and online teaching; supervision, mentoring, and advising of enrolled students; ongoing efforts to improve teaching; and active engagement in other teaching-related activities as outlined below.

A standard of "high competence" in teaching is met by receiving average or above average student evaluations of teaching (compared to Mason norms) and positive peer evaluations; participating appropriately in curriculum development, assessment, and accreditation tasks; and showing evidence of engagement and versatility in teaching assignments, mentoring and supervision activities, efforts to improve teaching performance, and positive student outcomes.

A standard of "genuine excellence" in teaching is met when accomplishments in the above areas are consistently at escalated levels (compared to Mason norms), with clear evidence of impact beyond the classroom. Specifically, compared to a "high competence" standard, course ratings must be reliably superior, consistency and versatility must be greater, and there must be

substantial evidence of impact outside the boundaries of assigned classes. Such evidence could take a variety of forms, including, for example, invitations to teach or to contribute to teaching excellence in settings outside CEHD, publications and presentations at professional conferences or in community settings focused on teaching or on the preparation and professional development of teachers, efforts to secure external funding to support teaching-oriented projects and initiatives, evidence of alumni success, leadership in curriculum and program improvements and innovations, leadership in promoting student learning and teaching excellence, and active engagement in and support of teaching-related partnerships within and across organizations.

Criteria and evidence for evaluating contributions in Research and Scholarship

Evaluations of faculty accomplishments in research and scholarship are based on holistic judgments made by integrating evidence related to quantity (productivity), quality (e.g., of publication venues), impact, and developmental trajectory. To meet standards of “high competence” or “genuine excellence,” faculty must provide evidence of an established line of inquiry characterized by increasing breadth and depth over time. The accomplishments may be of a theoretical and/or applied nature, but they must be consequential and merit positive regard by experts in the field.

A standard of “high competence” in research and scholarship is met when faculty manifest a solid record of publications and presentations (relative to norms for R1 universities), developmentally and contextually appropriate achievements with respect to securing external funding, and a trajectory demonstrating both continuity and scholarly coherence and growth.

A standard of “genuine excellence” in research and scholarship is met when faculty manifest escalated levels of productivity and impact, as evidenced, for example by:

- Signature scholarly products recognized for their high quality and high impact
- Sustained success in acquiring significant resources from extramural sources (especially in fields for which external funding opportunities are broad and varied)
- Exceptional support and impact in research mentoring roles with doctoral students and junior faculty
- Effective efforts to advance the field through the development of new constructs, theoretical frameworks, assessment tools, or translational models
- Effective efforts to enhance the impact of research and scholarship through collaborations with professional partners
- Recognized expertise and impact in the field of study among scholars, practitioners, and/or policy makers

Criteria and evidence for evaluating contributions in Service

All faculty must meet minimum service obligations to maintain employment. In CEHD these obligations are collectively defined as *citizenship* and encompass the following expectations: (1) regular attendance at appropriate program, division, and college-wide meetings; (2) appropriate participation in course and curriculum development; (3) appropriate participation in accreditation and program review functions; (4) appropriate participation in student advisement; (5) appropriate participation in program recruitment and admissions processes; (6) essential work with adjunct faculty (e.g., course lead functions); and (7) other essential program duties as assigned by academic program coordinators, division directors, or college administrators.

In the context of merit evaluations, the concept of “service” refers primarily to non-obligatory contributions that go beyond citizenship responsibilities. Expectations with regard to such contributions vary somewhat based on rank and tenure status, especially as they relate to expertise/experience and leadership responsibilities. Examples of common service roles include:

University service within and outside the College of Education and Human Development:

Leadership in program and curriculum development initiatives; leadership in accreditation and program review activities; leadership in academic advising and student services (e.g., chairing/serving on pre-dissertation doctoral committees); support for undergraduate research initiatives; coordination of clinical or field-based aspects of a program; engagement and facilitation of professional development activities (e.g., related to teaching, research, technology, etc.); service as Division Director, Academic Program Coordinator, or Professor-In-Charge of a specific subunit; service as chair/member of a college or school governance committee; service as chair/member of a search committee, first-tier promotion/tenure review committee, Faculty Senate committee, or other ad hoc committee or task force; special efforts to enhance college resources through facilitation of gifts, external grants and contracts, or new enrollment initiatives; active participation in marketing, recruiting, alumni relations, and school partnership activities; special assignments from the Dean or central administration (e.g., HSRB); participation in cross-unit collaborations and partnerships.

Professional service beyond the boundaries of George Mason University:

Reviewing for conferences, journals, and grant submissions; providing expert feedback on prospective books and other scholarly and professional resources; serving as a member or leader in professional organizations; serving on state, national, and international committees or advisory boards; sharing expertise (e.g., through presentations) with local and regional audiences; serving as an editor or associate editor of a journal or edited volume; service as session chair or discussant at a professional meeting; serving as an external dissertation or P&T reviewer; advising/supporting education and human development research and professional organizations.

TEACHING LOAD REDUCTIONS/REALLOCATIONS TO RESEARCH OR SERVICE (INCLUDING GRANT BUYOUT POLICIES)

Philosophy

Teaching load reductions/reallocations will not be made for routine activities that are a normal part of the faculty member's duties (e.g., program advising, required student assessment and accreditation responsibilities, local and professional service). Other than an occasional one-time reduction for new hires, the primary justifications for a reduced teaching load are as follows:

1. A significant portion of the faculty member's salary is being paid by external funding (not including any cost share component).
2. The faculty member is serving in a consequential, time-consuming administrative role.
3. The faculty member is involved in a major, time-consuming special project or activity that is highly congruent with CEHD and/or Mason priorities (e.g., serving in a leadership role for a major accreditation report and/or site visit; serving as president of a prestigious national or international research or professional organization).

Boundary conditions

The ***minimum teaching load*** under any combination of circumstances is one course per year for tenured and tenure-track faculty, and one course per semester for term faculty, except when a faculty member is on official university leave.

Faculty on 9-month contracts are not permitted to use summer teaching assignments to reduce their academic year teaching responsibilities. For such faculty, ***summer teaching*** is an elective and a contractually separate part of the job.

Unbalanced teaching loads (e.g., 3-1 for tenure-line faculty; 5-3 for term faculty) and "***banking***" of courses for future credit may be considered but require approval from the Dean's Office.

Teaching overloads are permitted within defined boundary conditions. Specifically: (1) only tenured and term faculty are eligible for overload teaching, (2) overload teaching is never permitted in the summer (for 9-month faculty), (3) maximum of one overload course in any given AY semester, (4) compensation for overload teaching can only be earned at the adjunct (matrix) rate, and (5) all overload teaching involving compensation must be approved by a Division Director as well as by the Office of the Dean and the Provost Office. Eligible faculty

may also choose to teach an overload course as part of their service activities, but there is no extra compensation or “payback” in such cases.

Workload accounting for very small classes

Faculty cannot use **very small classes** (defined as a class with enrollment below 6 students) to fulfill their assigned teaching load. This constraint applies to all courses, regardless of level (undergraduate/master’s/doctoral). Very small classes may be offered and count as on-load classes with Dean’s Office approval under special, pre-defined circumstances (e.g., starting a new program or sunsetting an existing program); however, normally, faculty can only earn fractional workload credit (between 10-50%) under CEHD’s mentoring policy for such courses (see the section below titled “Fractional Teaching Load Credit for Mentoring Activity”). Mentoring credits may not be used as if they represented students in a class in an effort to reach the minimum of six students (e.g., the class had two students and a request is made to use .4 credit to reach six). However, up to .9 mentoring credit may be added to the mentoring credit derived from a very small class to count a class as on load (e.g., the class has three students and an additional .7 mentoring credit is used for the class to count on load).

Formula for teaching load reallocations to externally funded activities (grant “buyouts”)

In general, teaching load reductions can only be earned for activities that generate academic-year (AY) salary savings for the faculty member. Incremental teaching load reductions occur when the following thresholds are reached:

AY salary savings of at least	Term	Tenured	Tenure-Track
10%	1 course	no reduction	no reduction
20%	2 courses	1 course	1 course
35%	3 courses	2 courses	2 courses
50%	4 courses	3 courses	3 courses
65%	5 courses	3 courses*	3 courses*
75% or higher**	6 courses	3 courses*	3 courses*

* Funding above 50% cannot reduce teaching loads below the minimum teaching load of one course per year (for tenure-line faculty) or one course per semester (for term faculty).

** If external funding nears 100%, a temporary change in status may be appropriate.

Specific timing circumstances under which a grant-related teaching load reduction may be taken for an immediately upcoming semester

The following guidelines were developed to prevent conflicts regarding the timing of course buyouts:

<u>Circumstance</u>	<u>Teaching Load Reduction Now?</u>
Sponsor writes to PI saying “Congratulations! We are going to fund your project!”	NO , because it’s not an award until an award document is fully executed and signed by the Sponsor’s authorized representative
Sponsor sends an award letter to OSP	NO , because OSP cannot accept funding if the award does not meet legal/regulatory requirements (as evidenced by the OSP Director signing the award document)
OSP sends an award letter to PI and CEHD	YES* , assuming the required % of salary coverage is budgeted and the enabling funding forms have been submitted
Donor gives money to GMU Foundation that could be used to cover part of your salary	NO , because GMUF first has to verify donor purpose, then the funding has to pass through OSP to set up a GMUF linked account and establish a budget
OSP sends an award letter to PI and CEHD verifying that a gift is available for salary purposes	YES* , assuming an appropriate EPAF or funding change form has been submitted covering the required % of salary coverage

***30-day rule:** For any award that meets the “YES” circumstances listed above *PRIOR* to 30 days before the start of classes, the program leaders (Academic Program Coordinator and Division Director) are responsible for finding an alternative instructor (perhaps with help from the faculty member being released from a course obligation). However, within that 30-day window, the faculty member is responsible for finding an alternative instructor that is acceptable to the program (perhaps with help from the Academic Program Coordinator and Division Director). Thus, while grant-funded faculty are free to withdraw from a teaching commitment if

they have an appropriate level of guaranteed salary coverage more than one month in advance, after that point in time they cannot withdraw from a teaching commitment unless and until they have personally solved the problem of finding a fully qualified alternative instructor (as verified by the Dean's Office) that is acceptable to both the Academic Program Coordinator and Division Director.

Teaching load reallocations associated with service in faculty leadership roles

Division Directors and **Academic Program Coordinators** can elect to take a teaching load reduction (maximum of one course per academic year) for this assignment, although where appropriate they may also choose other incentives or combinations of incentives (see CEHD policy on incentives for serving in these faculty leadership roles, available from the Senior Associate Dean). Division Directors on a 12-month contract may also have a required summer teaching load; that load varies by the size of the Division (as defined by the Dean's Office).

Instructional faculty appointed to an **Associate Dean** role "on assignment" will have at least one course reduction annually, and may have a two-course reduction depending on the time requirements of the Associate Dean assignment.

There is no teaching load reduction for service as **Professor-in-Charge** of an academic concentration, track, or specialization; or for service as a **Center Director**; or for serving in a leadership role on a **faculty governance committee**. Teaching load reductions for service in other faculty leadership roles are rare and require special approval from the CEHD Dean.

FRACTIONAL TEACHING LOAD CREDIT FOR MENTORING ACTIVITY

Faculty may earn teaching load credit not only by teaching regular classroom-based or online courses, but also by teaching students in individualized instructional arrangements. This includes **supervising student interns** at a ratio approved by the Dean's Office, with guidance from Academic Program Coordinators, Division Directors, and relevant accrediting bodies. In addition, faculty can earn fractional course credit by mentoring individual students in CEHD **independent study courses**, by electing to teach **very small classes**, by serving on CEHD **doctoral dissertation and/or master's thesis committees**, and by serving as **chair of a master's project**:

Supervision of student interns: (accreditation defined, 10-20% per student depending on program)

Very small classes (5 or less): (10% fractional course credit for each student in the class)

Independent study courses (excluding EDUC 998 and 999): 3.33% of a course per credit (this calibrates to 10% of a course for a typical 3-credit, one semester independent study experience)

Dissertation committee chair or co-chair: 20% of a course (per student) for each academic year in this role

Dissertation committee service as member, service on a master's thesis committee (as chair or member), or service as chair on a master's project committee: 10% of a course for each academic year in this role

No teaching load credit is given for academic advising assignments (including service on *pre-dissertation* doctoral advising committees).

Additional guidelines for earning fractional teaching load credit for mentoring activity

Teaching load credit can only be assigned when a student is actually registered for a class and tuition is being paid (by the student or by a third party).

Teaching load credit can only be assigned when students are registered for CEHD courses. Dissertation and thesis committee work outside Mason or in other Mason academic units can only be counted as "Service."

Guidelines for "cashing in" earned mentoring credits

Fractional course credits earned through mentoring activity are reported each semester within the context of the Faculty Workload Tracking System on the CEHD intranet. Only those mentoring credits that have been reported by the faculty member and verified by the Dean's Office (i.e., only those credits showing under "Faculty Workload Overview") can be "cashed in." Mentoring credits have no expiration date.

Earned mentoring credits may be used to cover no more than two courses per academic year. Exceptions to this guideline require approval from the CEHD Dean's Office.

WORKLOAD FULFILLMENT ALSO REQUIRES A MINIMUM THRESHOLD OF STUDENT CREDIT HOUR PRODUCTION

To fulfill their assigned teaching load, instructional faculty must not only teach the appropriate number of classes, they must also meet CEHD's minimum enrollment thresholds (defined in terms of student credit hour [sch] production over a Fall/Spring/Summer cycle):

MINIMUM threshold for ***undergraduate*** classes (*on average* across AY): 15 (i.e., 45 sch)
MINIMUM threshold for ***graduate*** classes (*on average* across AY): 12 (i.e., 36 sch)
MINIMUM threshold for ***doctoral*** classes (*on average* across AY): 8 (i.e., 24 sch)

Either additional teaching or a mentoring credit deduction will be required for workload fulfillment for those who do not meet these thresholds. Note that use of an *average* enrollment metric makes it possible for programs to offer classes below these thresholds when academically necessary (i.e., teaching assignments can be planned over the course of a year to accommodate lower enrollments in some classes). Very small classes counted for mentoring credit are not included in the enrollment threshold computation, nor are overload courses or courses that are "payback" courses from a previous year.

Appendix: Summary of Faculty Workload Policies for Full-Time CEHD Instructional Faculty

CEHD faculty workload policies are designed to insure workload equity and to maximize the amount of time instructional faculty spend in direct contact with students, with reallocations to other activities permitted only under stringent and carefully specified circumstances. These policies are also designed to help regulate faculty activity in ways that promote rather than detract from their sense of autonomy and academic freedom. With specific, a priori guidelines, faculty can plan ahead, knowing in advance which scenarios will be supported by the organization.

Base Teaching Loads Vary by Faculty Role

<i>Term</i> (all term faculty with rare exceptions):	8 courses per academic year
<i>Tenure-Line</i> (most tenured/all tenure-track faculty):	4 courses per academic year

(Faculty on 12-month contracts for programmatic reasons have a two-course summer teaching load.)

Workload Fulfillment Across the AY Is Defined BOTH by Courses Taught and Course FTE Generation*

Minimum average threshold for <i>undergraduate</i> classes:	15 (45 sch/3 FTE for a 3-credit course)
Minimum average threshold for <i>graduate</i> classes:	12 (36 sch/3 FTE for a 3-credit course)
Minimum average threshold for <i>doctoral</i> classes:	8 (24 sch/2 FTE for a 3-credit course)

Either additional teaching or a mentoring credit deduction will be required for those who do not meet these AY thresholds.

**AY (academic year) is defined for the purposes of this policy as the Fall/Spring/Summer cycle. ALL courses taught during the AY are included in this computation except for overload (matrix pay) courses, courses in which the students are counted for mentoring credit, and courses that are "payback" courses from a previous year's deficit.*

Faculty Can Earn Fractional Workload Credit for Mentoring Activity (but Only if Tuition Is Being Paid)

Direct supervision of student interns: (accreditation defined, 10-20% per student depending on program)
Very small classes (5 or less): (10% fractional course credit for each student in the class)
Independent study courses: (10% fractional course credit for a 3-credit independent study course)
Chair or co-chair of dissertation committee: (20% fractional course credit assuming tuition is being paid)
Member of dissertation committee: (10% fractional course credit assuming tuition is being paid)
Chair/member of a master's thesis committee, Chair of master's project committee: (10% fractional course credit assuming tuition is being paid)

NOTE: Fractional workload credit awarded for tuition-supported mentoring activity can be seen in the Faculty Workload Tracking System on the CEHD intranet.

Teaching Load Reductions for Externally Funded Research Are Stringent and Formulaic

No course reduction until a sufficient amount of AY salary and benefits are covered by external sources:

One-course reduction if at least 20% of 9-month salary AND benefits are being paid from external sources

Two-course reduction if at least 35% of 9-month salary AND benefits are being paid from external sources

Three-course reduction if at least 50% of 9-month salary AND benefits are being paid from external sources

Minimum teaching load is 1-0 for tenure-line faculty and 1-1 for term faculty (course reductions occur at 10%, 20%, 35%, 50%, 65%, 75%)

Teaching Load Reductions for Service Are Rare; Most Are for Faculty Program Leaders

Division Directors and Academic Program Coordinators: maximum one-course reduction per AY (selected as part of a broader menu of incentives that also includes a stipend and/or professional spending account, with the total value of those incentives varying by size/complexity of program and by role [DD versus APC]). Division Directors on a 12-month contract may also have a required summer teaching load depending on the size of the division.

Instructional faculty appointed to an *Associate Dean role* “on assignment” will have an annual teaching load reduction of 1–2 courses per AY. Associate Deans on a 12-month instructional faculty contract may also have a required summer teaching load depending on the scope of administrative responsibilities.

On rare occasions a faculty member may be given a course reduction to serve as president of a major national or international organization, or as the coordinator of a time-consuming accreditation exercise, or in some other highly consequential service role. Otherwise, any service-related teaching load reduction would need to be funded by some source beyond the college’s base budget using the same formula as applied to cases involving externally funded research. [Exception: in some cases involving service assignments outside the college and a within-Mason source of funding, a service-related course reduction might be authorized when the amount of funding provided to the college is matrix replacement funding.]

To ensure internal equity, only the CEHD Dean can approve non-formulaic teaching load reduction/reallocation requests.