

University of Nevada, Reno Instructional Faculty Workload Policy – 2011

Submitted by Faculty Workload Policy Committee

Approved by the Faculty Senate, 24 March 2005

Updated September 2011 per revisions to Board of Regents' Guidelines adopted September 8, 2011

Context

The NSHE Board of Regents revised the “Faculty Workload Guidelines” in September 2011. These guidelines appear as a “Faculty Workload Policy” in the Board of Regents Handbook (Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 3). This policy states that it “shall be the responsibility of the president of each NSHE institution to establish justifiable, equitable instructional workload standards through a process of shared governance with the faculty.”

At the University of Nevada, Reno, the Faculty Senate approved an institutional workload policy in 2005. This document represents a revision to that policy to include revisions adopted by the Regents on September 8, 2011.

The Regents’ policy specifies that teaching, scholarly research, creative activity, and/or professional development, and service are expected of all university faculty: “With the exception of faculty members at the Desert Research Institute, all NSHE instructional faculty members are expected to teach; develop curriculum; conduct other instructional activities including advising, grading, and preparing for classes; maintain currency in their academic discipline; and perform public and professional service, service to the institution, and similar academic activities. In addition, at the universities, state college and Desert Research Institute, academic faculty members are expected to conduct scholarly research or creative activity.” The Regents define the term “instructional faculty” in the Handbook (Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 2).

The Regents’ policy allows institutions “substantial autonomy to select and determine the relative importance of faculty activities in the areas of teaching, scholarly research or creative activity, and service.” It recognizes that “Faculty workload cannot and should not be measured solely by the time spent by the faculty member in the classroom.”

The Regents’ policy specifies an expected load in the area of teaching: “At the universities, an expectation of 18 instructional units per academic year, or 9 units each semester. For faculty heavily involved in doctoral-level education or research, the expected instructional workload may be reduced as required by an equivalent increase in doctoral-level instruction and/or research. Additionally, newly hired faculty may be given a reduced instructional workload for a limited period of time in order to establish a research program.” It also specifies that “reassignments from the expected instructional load as well as course overloads must be approved in advance by the appropriate vice president or president.”

The Regents’ policy states that each institution must develop “institutional policies” that “will provide detailed guidelines for equivalent teaching load credit as well as adjustments of workloads that reflect different kinds of instruction – including, but not limited to, distance education, rural education, internet instruction, vocational education, and clinical education. The policies should also take into account non-instructional activities that may be essential to the work of faculty in particular disciplines and provide equitable recognition for extra contact hours that faculty spend with students in courses that involve studios, laboratories, clinics, independent study, thesis and dissertation, internships, and similar activities related to instruction.”

University of Nevada, Reno Policy

The purpose of the University of Nevada, Reno policy is to provide clear guidelines for instructional faculty and for department chairs, deans, and others responsible for faculty workload. The Board of Regents' basic policy regarding the teaching portion of workload is that university faculty are expected to teach six courses per academic year (three + three), with the teaching workload for faculty who are heavily involved in doctoral programs or research being reduced equivalent to the increase in doctoral-level instruction and/or research.

"Workload" consists of teaching; scholarly research, creative activity, and/or professional development; and service. The scholarly research or creative activity assignment is a critical feature of the culture of a research university, and it is expected that all tenure-track and tenured faculty will maintain a program of research, scholarship or creative activity. All non-tenure-track faculty on continuing appointments, such as lecturers, are expected to maintain a program of professional development appropriate to the area in which they teach.

The distribution of responsibilities in these areas for each faculty member is to be specified in an individual statement of professional responsibilities, or "role statement," to be determined by the faculty member in consultation with the department chair (or equivalent). Role statements are to be prepared annually, at the beginning of the calendar year or term of employment. The distribution of responsibilities in an individual faculty member's role statement may vary from one year to the next. If it becomes necessary to change the distribution of responsibilities significantly during the calendar year, the faculty member and chair should revise the role statement. The distribution specified in the annual role statement must be considered during the faculty member's annual evaluation.

The policy is designed to be flexible enough to enable faculty to do the varied tasks that are required throughout the university and to credit them appropriately for that work. In particular, it is designed to recognize and account for the many activities necessary to the work of the university that do not appear in tabulations of student credit hours, including service on graduate students' committees at the master's and doctoral levels, mentoring of graduate students, formal advising of undergraduate and graduate students, and formal assessment of instructional programs. It is also designed to recognize certain non-instructional aspects of workload, including varied expectations in scholarly research, creative activity, and/or professional development for different kinds of faculty positions.

The department chair (or equivalent) is responsible for determining individual faculty teaching loads and the "equivalent teaching load credit" of other activities associated with instruction to which a faculty member may be assigned. The dean is responsible for review and the maintenance of equity in teaching load and other assignments within the college. The provost is responsible for equity in assignments within the university.

The teaching load specified by the Regents may be adjusted when faculty have responsibilities that have been approved by their department chair (or equivalent) as having "equivalent teaching load credit." Reassignments from the expected teaching load will be specified in faculty role statements. Role statements will also specify the appropriate assignment for faculty holding "A" rather than "B" contracts.

A. The following guidelines explain when such teaching reassignments might occur. They are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive. All such reassignments will be specified in faculty role statements.

1. Faculty in departments with master's degree programs who are actively involved in those programs may be reassigned to mentor graduate students and serve on their committees. Faculty who are actively involved in an interdisciplinary graduate program may be reassigned to mentor and serve on the committees of graduate students in that program. Pre-tenure faculty may be reassigned to begin mentoring graduate students.

Determinations of the involvement of individual faculty members in master's and doctoral programs must take into account the following: chairing of graduate committees, service on graduate committees in

one's own department or program, service as outside members of graduate committees in other programs, formal advising responsibilities, oversight for independent studies and internships, extensive graduate-level teaching, and the nature of graduate mentoring in the discipline.

2. Faculty with major administrative assignments, such as department chair or director of a large instructional program at the graduate or undergraduate level, may be reassigned. [The provost's office has set up another committee to draft guidelines for administrative reassignments and stipends.]
3. Faculty with substantial formal responsibility for undergraduate advising; independent studies, internships, or undergraduate research; or assessment or performance assessment may be reassigned to those responsibilities.
4. Faculty whose teaching assignments include one of the following may be reassigned:
 - courses requiring extra contact hours, such as studio-based and lab-intensive courses.
 - very large classes with limited teaching assistant support.
 - multiple new preparations or formal responsibility for new curriculum development.
 - off-campus or non-traditional teaching responsibilities.

B. The following guidelines explain when other kinds of workload reassignments might occur. They are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive, and to take into account the different kinds of instructional faculty positions at the university. Such reassignments may include an increase in the load of activities associated with instruction. All such reassignments will be specified in faculty role statements.

1. Faculty in continuing non-tenure-track positions that do not have a substantial expectation of scholarly research or creative activity may be reassigned.
2. Tenured faculty may request to be reassigned in lieu of a portion of the standard expectation of scholarly research or creative activity.
3. Faculty in full-time positions that are renewable contingent upon funding and have no expectation of scholarly research or creative activity may be reassigned.