Faculty Workload Policy

Radford University recognizes and supports the important work that faculty members do in and outside of the classroom to impact academic disciplines, students, the University, and communities. In support of that commitment, the following workplace policy will guide department, college, and University decisions related to the fair and prudent allocation of faculty workload.

All departments are required to create and maintain workload policies that define the appropriate teaching load equivalence of courses and teaching-related activities (including contact hours) and define what constitutes "research active" faculty. In constructing these policies, departments are expected to use selected terms and definitions outlined in this document. These terms include "equated hours," "standard workload," and "overload." The term "equated hours" is used to refer both to credit hours of teaching and to time assigned to activities that are equivalent to credit hours of teaching. The work involved in any activity worth three equated hours will have been determined to be equivalent to the work involved in having sole responsibility for instructing a one semester non-laboratory three-hour undergraduate class with enrollment at typical numbers or with responsibilities that do not significantly increase normal workload. Departmental policies regarding how equated hours are assigned to particular activities are to receive majority approval in departments, and subsequent approval by the Chairperson, College Dean and Provost. The process for creating the workload policy should be transparent. Changes made to the departmental workload policy by any level of academic leadership should be documented, made available, and communicated to the department. In cases where a minority of the faculty is performing duties that substantially increase their workload, it is the Chairperson's responsibility to ensure the policy is fair and equitable. Workload policies should be reviewed every three years by the Personnel Committee and Chair of the Department.

At the program level, "Standard workload" is 24 equated hours across an academic year with the exception of instructors without a service component. The conceptual framework for this standard workload is a total workload of 30 equated hours with six equated hours being allocated for maintaining currency in one's field, advising duties, and normal department, college, and University service activities. The departmentally-approved activities of each faculty member will often vary, and in many cases the standard workloads for individual faculty members will also vary. Research-active faculty members are typically granted a three hour reassignment per semester to promote scholarly endeavors at the University, resulting in an equated 18-hour instructional workload for an academic year. Research and other agreed upon activities are negotiated between the Chairperson and the faculty member, with the approval of the College Dean.

The University supports rigorous curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and clearly and strongly supports faculty involvement in mentoring student research. Thus, the construction of viable workload policies, equitable both within and between departments, requires that departmental workload policies address specific courses and the workload of each, program development, coordination, and supervision, individualized research or readings supervision, thesis supervision, extensive off-campus travel associated with job duties, and other
activities valued by the department that increase a faculty members workload (i.e., as measured in equated hours). Issues such as course level, numbers of students, number of class preparations, effort required for grading and student feedback, independent and directed studies, number of advisees, and time required for advisement are expected to be considered.

"Overload" is determined by evaluating the workload assigned to a faculty member in relation to the standard workload as configured for that faculty member. Thus, if a faculty member with a typical nine-hour semester teaching load is asked to teach additional coursework during a semester, then that faculty member's workload would be considered overloaded. Any faculty member with a workload assignment that exceeds, according to department workload policy, 25 equated hours shall be compensated for being on overload status. It may reasonable that, as a function of departmental workload policies, a faculty member's standard instructional load may deviate one to two hours above or below nine hours for research active faculty and 12 hours for non-research active faculty.

Faculty members who are requested to teach overload course assignments have the right to refuse such assignments. If a faculty member chooses to accept an overload assignment, then that faculty member is entitled to overload compensation, to future workload reductions, or to another compensation arrangement mutually acceptable to the faculty member and the Chairperson. Faculty who receive overload compensation will receive a minimum instructional salary based on a scale of 3% of base salary per credit hour unless otherwise negotiated with the unit's direct academic administrator or College Dean. Faculty who choose to accept an overload assignment will be permitted to renegotiate prior established merit weights for teaching, research, and service.

If a substantial proportion of faculty disagrees with the content of the department policy or with changes made to the policy by the Chairperson or College Dean they should attempt to resolve differences of opinion with the focal/relevant academic administrator. If a resolution is not possible then the faculty member may submit a written appeal to the Provost for consideration. Faculty who feel the department policy is not being applied equitably may use the normal appeals process outlined in the Faculty Handbook.

Annually, no later than February 1, Heads of Departments and Schools will submit to their College Deans two reports concerning faculty workloads. These reports will reflect assignments to teaching, research, and service. One report will be a report of actual faculty assigned workloads for the current academic year. The second report will be a faculty workload plan for the next academic year. College Deans will submit College reports and plans to the Provost no later than March 15.

Guidelines

The following guidelines are recommended for a Typical\(^1\) Faculty Semester Load.

\(^1\)Typical assumes lecture or laboratory teaching assignments each having 3 contact hours per week.

Faculty Workload is based on 1 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) that includes all aspects of service.
A. Tenure Track Faculty
  • 3 course load (or equated) not to exceed 12 contact hours per week
  • Total teaching = .6 FTE (24 hrs/wk)
  • Professional activity = 0 to .4 FTE (8 hrs/wk)
  • Service = 0 to .2 FTE (8 hrs/wk)

B. Tenured Faculty
  • 3 course load (or equated) not to exceed 12 contact hours per week
  • Total teaching = .6 FTE (24 hrs/wk)
  • Professional activity = 0 to .4 FTE (0 to 16 hrs/wk)
  • Service = 0 to .4 FTE (0 to 16 hrs/wk)

C. Full-time Non Tenure Track Faculty
  • 4 course load (or equated) not to exceed 16 contact hours per week
  • Total teaching = .8 FTE (24 hrs/wk)
  • Professional activity = 0 to .2 FTE (0 to 8 hrs/wk)
  • Service = 0 to .2 FTE (0 to 8 hrs/wk)

Individual teaching assignments may result in student credit hour production above or below the departmental base budget adequacy model target as long as departments and colleges reach their total respective targets as set by the dean and provost, respectively.

Departmental faculty loads may vary according to the mission of the department, college, and/or university. Department heads, with approval of the dean, may reassign faculty from teaching to invest more of their time in scholarship, administrative duties, or engaged service, but the departmental student credit hour target must be met.