



# Faculty Workload Standards and Guidelines

December 2025

Faculty workload is a faculty member's total work effort, in terms of full-time equivalency (FTE), and is comprised of different proportions of core faculty duties (teaching, basic and applied research, scholarship, creative activities, extension programming, clinical patient practice, commercialization and entrepreneurship, librarianship, service, and administration) according to their faculty appointment. Each core faculty duty must be defined in terms of credit hours or credit-hour equivalencies as required by ORC 3345.45.

Faculty workload must be specified for all faculty types (tenure track, clinical/teaching/practice, extension, associated, and research).

A BRIEF REPORT:

**Created by a Faculty Workload Taskforce**



THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# Introduction

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Faculty at The Ohio State University (OSU) are central to the multidimensional mission of the state's flagship and land grant university. They educate students, discover knowledge to improve the well-being of our local, state, regional, national, and global communities, prepare a diverse student body to be leaders and engaged citizens, and foster a culture of engagement and service. Their work drives OSU's vision to become the model 21st-century public, land grant, research, urban, and community-engaged institution.

Taken together, basic and applied research, scholarship, creative activities, teaching, extension programming, clinical patient practice, commercialization and entrepreneurship, librarianship, service, and administrative duties (hereafter collectively referred to as "core faculty duties") are important elements of faculty workload that enable the University to fulfill its mission and realize its vision. Based on the Ohio Department of Higher Education's Standards for Instructional Workload, the undergraduate teaching mission is the foundation upon which flexibility is granted for the achievement of significant contributions in scholarship/research, commercialization and service. However, teaching is the primary means by which a faculty member contributes to the mission.

Faculty workload is a common definition of effort (in terms of full-time equivalency—FTE) that is comprised of different proportions of the elements cited above depending on the different faculty types (tenure track, clinical/teaching/ practice, research, associated). To ensure that academic units are distributing workload fairly and equitably and with greater transparency and consistency, and that OSU complies with [Faculty Rule 3335-5-07](#) and the university's [Faculty Appointments, Faculty Workload, Tenure, and Retrenchment](#) policy, this document revises and clarifies the distribution of faculty duties, responsibilities, and workload.

College, regional campus, and departmental policies, in consultation with the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA), should determine the appropriate division of workload expectation for each faculty type according to the department's level of activity in the degree programs it offers and its specific mission. To determine the relative emphasis that a given college, department/school, or regional campus should place upon undergraduate programs, research, graduate/professional programs, and extension, units should consider the research productivity of the faculty, including externally funded research, the need to provide patient care in clinical settings, administrative responsibilities, and average number of graduate and/or professional degrees granted annually.

The mission of the academic unit (tenure initiating unit (TIU), college, regional campus) will determine the relative balance of effort in faculty duties and, as a result, there will be differences across different TIUs in the relative amounts of effort faculty spend in their areas of responsibilities. Within and across TIUs, different faculty types (tenured/tenure track, clinical/teaching/practice, research, associated) contribute differently to the multidimensional mission of the university, and as such, their workload will be comprised of different time allocations to different duties. The time allocations within each area of responsibility will begin with the proportional teaching/educational load, followed by the contributions expected in any other area of responsibility. These workload standards and guidelines are to be used to align the workload responsibilities and time allocations for each individual faculty as part of the annual faculty review process.



# Equity-Minded Faculty Workload Principles

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As academic units form their faculty workload policies, there are several core characteristics and associated principles that these policies should reflect, including:

- **Equitable.** Workload assignments should be fair and balanced across faculty members within the same type (tenure track, clinical/teaching/practice, research, associated) and rank.
- **Appropriate.** Workload assignments should reflect faculty member competencies and role expectations consistent with the TIU's tenure, promotion, reappointment, and annual review guidelines. Workload assignments should also consider a faculty member's career stage (e.g., pre- or post-tenure; probationary or non-probationary).
- **Transparent.** Workload guidelines and procedures should be developed through unit faculty governance processes (voted and approved by faculty during the governance document review process) and must be posted publicly in the unit's Pattern of Administration (POA). Assignment of teaching and service workload according to baselines defined in the POA workload guideline, should be made available to unit members in a transparent manner. Individual workload must be discussed annually during the annual review process.
- **Clear.** Workload guidelines should clearly establish, articulate, and communicate unit workload expectations, metrics, "what counts," and how faculty workload is determined. TIUs may opt to have their workload guidelines span specified timeframes (e.g., one year) or average faculty workload over a given period (e.g., 2–3 years).
- **Flexible.** Workload guidelines should be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of faculty members, academic units, and the University. Accordingly, these guidelines should allow for faculty member contributions to evolve over their careers just as the needs of the unit and University evolve over time. Further, workload guidelines should recognize differing levels of effort as appropriate in instructional effort (e.g., class size, course level, studio courses), service effort (e.g., level of effort, committee leadership, level of committees), community engagement and outreach, research, scholarship, and creative activities (e.g., sponsored research, research project/grant management, community engaged research, extension scholarship, etc.), commercialization and entrepreneurship, librarianship, and clinical practice.
- **Accountable.** Workload guidelines should ensure that faculty members engage in their workload assignments appropriately and within acceptable performance parameters. At the same time, to make the mission of the university work, all workload expectations should be accounted for in the different work assignments (without exceeding the percentage FTE of the faculty). Criteria for and evidence of achievement in each work dimension (teaching, research/creative activities, extension, clinical care, and service/engagement) must be identified in TIU POAs according to OAA template guidelines. POA guidelines should identify how assigned workload can be met and the appropriate actions for faculty members who do not meet expectations (as determined by unit annual review processes). The administrative process addressing lack of performance is set forth in the [Faculty Annual Review, Post-Tenure Review, and Reappointment policy](#). Disciplinary actions will be identified through the [Faculty Rules 3335-5-04](#).
- **Expansive.** Workload guidelines should recognize faculty members who also are assigned and perform essential administrative and/or extension roles in addition to the standard roles and expectations for faculty members, if applicable. These multiple roles should be incorporated into the allocation of duties as part of, not in addition to, their FTE workload.

# General Faculty Workload Requirements

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In alignment with the ODHE's Standards for Instructional Workloads and Ohio State's [Faculty Appointments, Faculty Workload, Tenure and Retrenchment policy](#), the academic unit (tenure initiating unit (TIU), college, regional campus) is responsible for defining faculty workload, ensuring that every faculty member has duties and responsibilities commensurate with their respective appointment, and that the overall unit workload is distributed fairly and equitably among its faculty and is consistent with the institution's mission. Faculty workload must be defined in specific terms in the TIU, college, regional campus POA document.

The present OAA standards and guidelines provide specific directions on how to design faculty workload requirements at the unit level. Colleges, TIUs, and regional campuses are required to build their guidelines based on these OAA standards and describe the allocation of effort in the unit for the collective faculty as opposed to that of individual faculty members. Each unit's guidelines must also define the range and general expectations regarding faculty duties, in terms of the academic mission of the TIU, college, and regional campus.

Faculty workload should be defined differently depending on the type of instructional program(s) an academic unit delivers: associate, baccalaureate, master's, doctoral, or professional.

## **A. Baccalaureate TIUs:**

*(Active four-year undergraduate programs with no, or limited, activities in graduate programs, including those in or co-managed by other departments or held centrally).*

For TIUs only contributing to baccalaureate programs, **the allocation of effort for teaching activities for the collective faculty in the unit is at least 70 percent of a total TIU's workload**, with the remaining devoted to other scholarly activities of research/creative activity and service. Full-time faculty are expected to devote most, if not all, of their teaching effort to undergraduate instruction.

## **B. Baccalaureate/Masters TIUs:**

*(Active baccalaureate and master's degree programs with no, or limited, activities in doctoral programs, including those in or co-managed by other departments or held centrally).*

For TIUs with active baccalaureate and master's degree programs, **the allocation of effort for teaching activities for the collective faculty in the unit is at least 60 percent of the total TIU's workload** with the remaining devoted to research/creative activity, service and other professional activities consistent with the department's mission. It is expected that full-time faculty in these academic units devote more of their effort to teaching undergraduates than to graduate level instruction.

# General Faculty Workload Requirements (cont.)

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## C. Baccalaureate/Masters/Terminal Masters/Doctoral TIUs:

*(Active baccalaureate, master's and terminal master's, and doctoral programs).*

For TIUs with active baccalaureate, master's and doctoral programs, the **allocation of effort for teaching activities for the collective faculty in the unit is at least 50 percent of the total TIU's workload** with the remaining devoted to sponsored and departmental funded research/creative activity, service and other professional responsibilities which further the goals of the unit and the university. It is expected that full-time faculty teaching in these academic units will be personally involved in undergraduate instruction.

To ensure that these guidelines are truly developed through a model of shared governance, the process of approval should include consultation of all faculty in the academic unit, according to [Faculty Rule 3335-3-35](#), providing enough time for faculty discussion. In this particular case, consultation should include clinical/teaching/practice, associated, and research faculty and their feedback should be included at the same level as tenure track faculty. The academic unit leader (chair, director, dean of college without department, regional campus dean) needs to demonstrate this consultation process upon submission of the POA, and how feedback from faculty has been incorporated into the final guidelines.

Academic unit workload guidelines must, at a minimum, include statements of:

- Overall workload expectations for each faculty type according to their roles and responsibilities, and in line with the general teaching workload expectations set by the level(s) and degree(s) faculty contribute to (associate, baccalaureate, master, doctoral, professional).
  - The academic unit leader (chair, director, dean of college without departments, regional campus dean) is responsible for achieving this balance of time and effort for the academic unit through the assignment of duties to individual faculty.
  - If TIUs have tenure track faculty on regional campuses (Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark), then their workload expectations and APT documents should be differentiated to allow faculty to achieve the specific criteria required for promotion, given the higher proportion of time allocated to teaching duties for regional campus faculty compared to tenure track faculty on the Columbus campus.
- Types and amounts of instruction needed to accomplish the teaching mission of the unit.
  - Normally, this will include an analysis of the likely numbers and types of courses/ sections necessary to satisfy the demand for undergraduate general education, undergraduate major and minor programs, and graduate and/or professional programs.
  - All faculty should be involved in teaching, and no faculty should be at 0% contribution to teaching unless they are in a 100% administrative role, on faculty professional leave (FPL), or under temporary special assignment/research buyout. Even research faculty have instructional responsibility (e.g., through mentoring).

# General Faculty Workload Requirements (cont.)

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- The OSU standard for faculty with a 100% teaching load consisting only of conventional class instruction (e.g., lecturers/senior lecturers) is 24 credit hours (eight three-credit courses, or other combination of credit hours) for nine-month contracts and 30 credits for 12-month contracts (ten three-credit courses, or other combination of credit hours). Credit hours are based on contact hours and not inclusive of the time required for course design and preparation, or extension travel (e.g. county to county).
- Because faculty duties can substantially vary across fields and university academic units, **each unit defines its particular teaching standard and develops equivalencies for credit hours at the unit level in an equitable way and according to guidelines set by applicable accrediting bodies.**
- The university-wide baseline for autumn and spring semesters is that one three-credit course equates to 0.25 FTE for that semester. This translates into approximately 10 hours/week, or 3.33 hours/week/credit hour. This baseline can be used to calculate equivalencies of effort for courses that generate fewer or more than three credits.
- Only associated faculty members and some clinical/teaching/practice faculty can have their duties exclusively consisting of conventional class instruction.
- In areas where faculty are not assigned to conventional undergraduate teaching (e.g., health sciences, extension, graduate and professional programs), academic units must define in their POAs what constitutes “teaching” for the purposes of determining appropriate faculty workload and aligning that workload to effort distribution as identified in these OAA Faculty Workload Standards and Guidelines. The list below can serve as a non-exhaustive set of examples of activities that contribute to the teaching workload in non-conventional and clinical learning environments:
  - \* Dimensions of teaching may include but are not limited to a) on campus, clinical or online instruction, b) course/curriculum development and design, c) clinical or biomedical laboratory instruction/supervision, d) creation, production, and publication of instructional materials, e) supervision of graduate student research and scholarship, f) guiding graduate teaching associates, g) independent study, h) field instruction, i) student advising, j) formal educational activities for medical students during their required specialty clerkship, k) formal teaching activities for residents/fellows serving within the specific division, l) formal and informal teaching activities of medical students during the Med I and Med II years, and m) continuing education activities for practicing physicians such as symposia, visiting professorships, instructional courses, etc.
- Faculty who buyout their time to meet the research mission of the university will need to have their responsibilities in the other dimensions be proportionally decreased.
- Expectations of time allocation to research/creative activity by faculty types.
- Expectations of time allocation to service and/or extension by faculty types.
- Expectations of clinical practice not related to teaching or service, where appropriate.
- Expectations of time allocation to commercialization and entrepreneurship where appropriate.

# Faculty Workload Expectations

It is anticipated that over the course of a faculty member's career, and based on a faculty member's type and rank, that the percentage/level of effort in the different workload categories (basic and applied research, scholarship, creative activities, teaching, extension programming, clinical patient practice, commercialization and entrepreneurship, librarianship, service, and administrative duties) will shift. To address such potential changes, time allocations in each category are better represented by ranges (with respect to 100% FTE) rather than strict course requirements. This flexibility allows an academic unit leader (or designee) to develop procedures that create transparent yet adaptable expectations around which they can assign workload to their entire faculty groups. Units may also have some variations in workload based on commitments to external funding (federal, state, industry, etc.).

## 1. Teaching and Mentoring/Extension Teaching

Assigned faculty course load expectations, and activities that comprise instruction, can vary by unit, discipline, and other factors. Equivalencies considered need to be established at the TIU level.

**2. Research, Scholarship, Creative Activities, Clinical Patient Practice, Commercialization, Entrepreneurship, and Scholarship of Extension.** Faculty duties can vary by unit, discipline, and other factors. Equivalencies considered need to be established at the TIU level.

## 3. Service

Public and professional service, as well as service to the University (e.g., the faculty member's academic TIU, college, and/or University level) is expected of most faculty members. The level of effort required for any given service activity may vary and needs to be identified within the workload allocation. Equivalencies considered need to be established at the TIU level. Examples of equivalencies for effort determination can be found here.

Faculty Type	Teaching/ Mentoring	Research	Service
Tenure track faculty – Columbus campus	40-50%	40-50%	10-20%
Tenure track faculty – regional campuses, ATI, Extension, University Libraries	60-80%	10-30%	10-20%
Tenure track faculty – CFAES Wooster, not including ATI	20-40%	60-80%	10-20%
Clinical/teaching/practice faculty	65-100%	0-30%	0-30%
Practice faculty of University Libraries	70-90%	0-30%	10%
Associated faculty	80-100%	0-20%	0-20%
Research faculty	0-10%	90-100%	0-10%

**Note:** Faculty are accountable to the minimum % teaching identified above unless they are in a 100% administrative role, on faculty professional leave (FPL), or under temporary special assignment/research buyout.



# Elements of Unit Faculty Workload Guidelines

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Academic units are required to develop and implement faculty workload guidance which is to be integrated in their POA documents. See the university [Faculty Appointments, Faculty Workload, Tenure, and Retrenchment policy](#). It is anticipated that unit-level policies will differ given the wide range of fields and field norms represented across the University. Nonetheless, unit level policies should address minimally the following elements:

- **Course load expectations.** Teaching loads assigned to faculty members may be adjusted due to such factors as course “buyouts” (which should be aligned with percent effort defined for role) that are supported from internal and external funds, service assignments with particularly heavy workloads, course enrollment and level of effort, course modality, required vs. elective course, partial credit for team-taught courses, and decreased research productivity (as determined through TIU and University review processes). However, increases in teaching load effort should not be a long-term response to lack of performance in other areas of responsibilities. The administrative process addressing lack of performance is set forth in the [Faculty Annual Review, Post-Tenure Review, and Reappointment policy](#).
- **Research expectations.** Recognizing that specific indicators of research productivity may vary by discipline and subdiscipline, even within the same academic units, TIUs should articulate within their POA the time allocation for overall research activities. Research time allocation for faculty can be adjusted based on indicators of an active research agenda (e.g., grants, fellowships, supervision of undergraduate and graduate students and/or postdoctoral associates, publications), and increased teaching and/or service workload effort.
- **Service expectations.** Service workload assigned to a faculty member may be adjusted due to such factors as substantial research load (e.g., the receipt of numerous grants, the receipt of a prestigious fellowship), engagement in professional activities (e.g., professional society leadership, journal/book series editorship), decreased research productivity (as determined through TIU and University review processes), and other activities. TIU policies should articulate generally expected service requirements for faculty (e.g., participation on unit, college, and/or University committees, and service to the profession and/or discipline), while also recognizing that service, beyond the expected contributions, is not a replacement for workload expectations of teaching and/or research.
- **Faculty with Clinical Appointments in Health Science Colleges.** Faculty with such clinical appointments may require clarification of the equivalencies in their instructional activities that contribute to their teaching workload. Examples include conducting formal educational activities for medical and health professions students during required and elective clerkships; participating in formal teaching activities for residents/fellows serving within the specific division and the Department; and participating in evaluations of medical and health professions students, residents, and fellows.
- **Faculty with Extension Appointments.** Faculty with extension appointments may require different determinations of teaching, research and creative activities, and service due to their extension roles and assignments. Faculty with extension appointments should have a set of articulated (curricular) goals, a clear scope and sequence of instructional activities relating to the program (curricular) goals, appropriate target audience(s) given the position description and funding, and partners both within and external to the university.



# Elements of Unit Faculty Workload Guidelines (cont.)

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While extension teaching does fall under the broad category of teaching, extension effort should be called out separately from for-credit teaching to provide clarity for the faculty member and those evaluating them.

- **Joint appointment.** Faculty workload assignments for faculty with joint appointments (e.g., in other academic TIUs or centers and institutes) should be proportional to the assigned FTE in the respective units.
- **Unit Administration.** Assumption of administrative responsibilities within the unit (e.g., chair/director, vice/associate chair/director, program director, director of special departmental projects) requires reduction of expectations for teaching, research and creative activities, and/or service. The reduction may be dependent on the size of the unit, the scope of the administrative responsibilities, and other relevant factors.
- **Clinical Work.** Contributions to patient care in a clinical setting, without the engagement of learners, requires reduction of expectations for teaching, research and creative activities, and/or service. The reduction may be dependent on the scope and frequency of clinical patient care responsibilities, and other relevant factors.
- **Other Administration.** There may be instances in which faculty members will be asked to assume significant administrative roles, for example when a faculty member is assigned to lead a research center or strategic initiative. Assignment of additional time in the areas of administration and the consequent reduction of expectations for teaching and/or research and creative activity and/or service should be directly related to the duration and the extensiveness of the administrative commitment.
- **New and Early-Career Faculty.** Assignments for new and/or early-career faculty members should take into consideration their need to develop or teach new courses, to begin or establish a research program, to establish extension programs, or other factors to become established in their roles.
- **Time interval.** Unit policies should determine the interval considered for faculty workload expectations. For example, some units may assess faculty workload on an annual basis, while others may choose to assess faculty workload over a multi-year period (e.g., 2–3 years). Individual workload should be discussed annually during the annual review process.
- **Workload adjustments.** Unit policies should address how faculty workload is rebalanced when a faculty member voluntarily expresses a desire to adjust their workload (e.g., a desire to engage in additional teaching in lieu of some research activity, a desire to decrease one's FTE proportion). Similarly, unit policies should address how faculty workload is rebalanced based on review processes (e.g., annual, 4th year) that determine a faculty member has not met unit performance expectations in one or more areas (e.g., research productivity, teaching, service). Workload adjustments must be equitable and meet the needs of the unit.
- **Complaint mechanism.** The TIU chair/director has the role of assigning courses. Unit policies should include a process for faculty members to file complaints regarding their assigned workload, if they exceed the designated number of courses (or equivalent teaching assignments)
  - Faculty members in departmentalized colleges should first seek to resolve the matter with their TIU head/director. If the matter cannot be resolved, the complaint should be reviewed by the Dean.

# Elements of Unit Faculty Workload Guidelines (cont.)

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- Faculty members on regional campuses should first seek to resolve the matter with their regional campus dean/director, and faculty members in colleges that are the TIU should first seek to resolve the matter with their college dean. If the matter cannot be resolved, the complaint should be reviewed. If the matter cannot be resolved, the complaint should be reviewed by OAA.