

## Administrative Regulation 3:8

# Faculty Workload Policy Statement (Approved by the Board of Trustees)

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## I. Introduction

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The University of Kentucky is the Commonwealth's primary land grant institution, and its three-fold mission of instruction, research, and service is unique among the public colleges and universities in Kentucky. The faculty is responsible for the discovery, creation, and transmission of knowledge and skills across the generations as well as the advancement of culture in our society. The University serves students and scholars from across the Commonwealth as well as from beyond its borders. Across a wide variety of areas and disciplines, the University provides an environment in which new ideas are fostered. Its faculty employees disseminate that knowledge to students in baccalaureate through graduate and professional degree programs, and in continuing education at all levels.

Because the University is a comprehensive teaching and research institution, the academic units, faculties, programs, and students are heterogeneous. The students served by its programs, the qualifications and responsibilities of faculty employees who provide instruction, and the many benefits to the Commonwealth are not easily categorized.

To provide the breadth of academic programs required of the University, the faculty performs a complex combination of duties. In this document these collective duties are termed WORKLOAD. Workload may be defined as all faculty activities related to essential professional activities and responsibilities: teaching, research and creative activity, interacting with students, clinical care, institutional and professional service, service to the community, and professional development. The essential character of workload is established for all the diverse types of faculty appointments in the guidelines for reappointment, promotion, and tenure within the University and in the distribution of effort agreement that directs each faculty employee's working schedule. Workload management requires the realistic assignment of a faculty employee's time and University resources.

Faculty employees are independent professionals without prescribed working hours. For some, the work period fits a conventional workday, five days a week. For most, the workday is more flexible, and ultimately more time

consuming. Commonly, heavy time commitments to teaching, grading, and research fill days, late nights, and weekends during the fall and spring semesters. During the summer months many faculty employee commit to rigorous research or academic preparation schedules. Because of the flexible, overlapping, and complex nature of academic work, and because many faculty employees are able to set their own schedules within a class-time framework, time spent in any one of the three areas of teaching, research, and service varies from day to day and may change markedly from semester to semester.

Many studies indicate that most University faculty employee work an average of fifty-five hours per week. [See, for example, Harold E. Yuker, Faculty Workload: Research, Theory, and Interpretation ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Research Report No.10. (Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education, 1984)]. The work Week includes activities in a multitude of environments such as libraries, laboratories, and formal and informal settings around the University and elsewhere. Such activities include teaching and advising, constructing and scoring examinations, reading and grading papers, mentoring graduate students, directing graduate thesis and dissertation research, administrative duties, governance work, research and creative work, keeping abreast of developments in one's professional field, and providing professional services. The faculty work year ranges from nine to twelve months. Many faculty employees are not compensated for some months each year, yet they spend these months preparing new courses, in professional development, and preparing research or creative projects for publication, exhibition, or performance.

Faculty workload includes formal classroom instruction, from undergraduate through postdoctoral levels, which may be measured by semester credit hours; laboratory, studio, and clinical contact hours; and informal non-classroom teaching. Workload includes research, or those activities that have as their goal a specific scholarly production, whether it be non-sponsored, individual research, or organized research supported by extramural funding. Workload also includes external service activities performed by faculty employees on behalf of the general public, and internal service, or work on behalf of colleagues, students, and University units, and professional activities. While teaching, research, and service may be regarded as separate activities, in practice, these three workload components are rarely distinct. Administrative flexibility is required to assign and assess research, service, and teaching. Therefore, workload assignments should be determined by educational unit administrators who understand the abilities and interests of their individual faculty employees.

The standard for teaching-only working assignments for regular-title appointment faculty employees is twelve undergraduate credit hours per semester, or the equivalent effort in teaching-related responsibilities. The workload standard for research- or service-only assignments would be equivalent in time and effort to the teaching-only assignment. Most faculty employees will not have such singular focus assignments but will divide their time among teaching, research, and service responsibilities. Specific guidelines for determining credit hour workload equivalents should be developed at the educational unit level and should recognize the variability of teaching assignments, such as class size and level; research involvement; and service responsibilities.

Appropriate workload management by educational unit administrators would best meet the educational unit and college responsibilities by maximizing the application of faculty expertise through a Distribution of Effort or DOE. The rationale for a DOE stems from the recognition that the University's three-part mission is an aggregate institutional mission, not necessarily the mission of each individual faculty employee. The DOE will permit the educational unit administrator, with approval by the dean, to assure fairness in the distribution of responsibility among faculty employees. The merit evaluation system should reflect the reality of workload distributions and the amount of effort that constitutes a full load equivalent.

## II. Faculty Workload

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### A. Teaching

One role of the University is to offer course work and degree programs to students which are on a par with those at the leading public universities in the country. Teaching is broadly defined to include formal classroom instruction, which may be measured by semester credit hours, but also includes laboratory, studio, and clinical contact hours. Courses may consist of lectures, discussion and quiz sections, laboratory exercises, field studies, industrial and clinical practice, and seminars. Formal classroom teaching includes conception, design, and preparation; research; performance; individual tutoring and mentoring; and evaluation of student

accomplishment.

Teaching extends beyond the formal classroom setting. Since some of the most valuable teaching frequently occurs in one-on-one sessions outside the classroom, every contact between students and faculty employees is a teaching opportunity. In these settings, formal credit hours do not measure the actual contact hours faculty employees spend with students, yet such instruction often accounts for a major portion of the work week for the faculty employees involved. Much undergraduate laboratory, studio, and field work is informal. At the graduate level most education combines informal and formal classroom teaching. Beyond-the-classroom education has many aspects of an apprenticeship. For example, students in the health care professions learn from faculty as they treat patients. For these students, such experience may be the single most important component of the educational process.

Teaching also includes advising, whether it be advising undergraduate students, graduate students working on thesis or dissertation research, supervision of internships, or guidance given students enrolled in professional programs. Teaching and advising may merge in many programs to become one process. Therefore, the teaching portion of the overall workload will vary among individuals, from program to program, and from semester to semester, depending upon the teaching duties of each person. Faculty employees may teach fewer courses when actual contact hours substantially exceed formal credit hours, as they usually do in laboratory, studio, clinical, and field work assignments.

Professional development is also of primary importance since to be effective teachers it is mandatory that faculty employees know and understand the intellectual and practical status of each subject they teach, and follow disciplinary advances through the professional literature and other appropriate creative forums. This workload component cannot be measured by the number of courses or credit hours taught. Nevertheless, it is at the heart of all University academic programs.

#### B. Research and Other Creative Activity

Because the University is the Commonwealth's primary research institution, faculty employees are expected to maintain research programs on a par with those at the best benchmark institutions. Therefore, most faculty employees are selected on the basis of their ability to make original research contributions. Research includes those activities that have as their goal a specific scholarly production and may be non-sponsored, individual research, or organized research supported by extramural funding. Research results in a collective advancement of knowledge which may have applied, theoretical, or aesthetic attributes, and it has a central role in enhancing teaching. An effective research program also underwrites professional development.

Research styles and methods vary widely from one discipline to another. For example, the historian may spend long hours in the University library and in bibliographic collections across the globe in order to interpret our heritage. The engineer may form an academic-industry team to enhance robot design and thereby improve workplace productivity. The musician, artist, poet, and architect create sounds, visions, words, and structures which will uplift community spirit.

Research output can be measured by quality and number of productions or publications, and, in some fields, by awards, contracts, and grants received.

#### C. Service

Based upon the faculty employee's professional expertise, service includes activities established and maintained by the University on behalf of the general public, or external service. Also included is internal service or work on behalf of University units, and professional activities.

The University is committed to providing public service to the Commonwealth and its residents. Specific examples of such external service include agricultural extension work; diagnostic and regulatory activities whereby faculty employees bring agricultural information and research findings to farming communities, agribusiness, and the general public. Also included are health care services; service on committees that support the implementation of the Kentucky Educational Reform Act; and advising county governments,

student or civic organizations.

The University depends upon its faculty employees to provide many academic governance functions, and this work comprises a part of their internal service. For example, faculty employees serve on admission committees, faculty search committees, review panels, reappointment, promotion and tenure committees, budget and program task forces, minority recruitment committees, and many others. Faculty employees may serve in formal administrative positions for a period, but they are expected to maintain active research programs and teach.

Faculty employees are also responsible for service to their professional disciplines. They edit and manage journal publications and serve on editorial boards that evaluate the quality of research manuscripts submitted for publication. They serve as officers of professional organizations, constitute groups that advise state and federal governments, sit on national panels that select research grant applications for funding, organize and chair scholarly and public meetings and symposia, and serve in advisory capacities to government, industry, and social service organizations.

#### D. Interactions Among Teaching, Research, and Service

Individual faculty employees' workloads consist of three separate components: teaching, research, and service. For most academic disciplines, these components are rarely clearly distinct. Teaching and research become one for most physical science, life science, social science, humanities, and engineering faculty projects, where research by the faculty employee is inseparable from teaching research methods to graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Research and service are inseparable when the research involves issues relevant to the community or the Commonwealth, such as programs to assess drug abuse or improve the health of Kentucky farmers. Teaching and service are one when the teaching is in a community health care center or a demonstration school. Research and teaching missions are often combined in programs other than those leading to baccalaureate and graduate degrees. For example, a faculty employee may be doing research on reading which affects teaching in the secondary education classroom or is applied to adult literacy programs in the community.

### III. Principles for Implementing Faculty Workload Policies

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- A. Each educational unit is responsible to its dean or appropriate administrator for contributing to three mission areas: teaching, research, and service. The educational unit administrator best knows and understands unit needs and the abilities and interests of their faculty employees. Therefore, individual faculty workloads (be they regular-, extension-, special-, clinical-, or research-title series; librarian series; or adjunct series), are determined by, or in consultation with, the educational units most familiar with those responsibilities. Unit administrators should be allowed latitude in making individual workload assignments, and care should be taken that all of a faculty employee's contributions to the institution be considered.
- B. Policies and practices must assure that full-time, regular-title series faculty employees have comparable total effort; individual distributions of teaching, research, and service may vary but should not result in reduced effort for some individuals within an educational unit. By their nature, other title series faculty appointments carry more definitive workload specifications.
- C. The workload for an individual faculty employee would be equivalent to:
  - 1. A teaching-only assignment in which the person would teach some combination of classes and engage in associated teaching-related activities that, given the qualifications in Section II.A above, would be equal to twelve undergraduate credit hours. At the University, the standard teaching-only workload is twelve undergraduate credit hours per semester, or the equivalent in other teaching, research, and service responsibilities.
  - 2. A research-only assignment equivalent to teaching twelve undergraduate credit hours in which the person would direct research activities, supervise research team employees, administer grants and contracts, prepare grant proposals, and/or engage in other research activities as described in Section II.B above,

sufficient to maintain a vigorous research program comparable to successful full-time researchers in the same or comparable fields at the best of our benchmark institutions.

3. A service-only assignment in which the person would engage in activities, such as those described in Section II.C above, for the equivalent of teaching twelve undergraduate credit hours.

In practice, few faculty employees with regular-title appointments would have such a singular focus but would combine teaching, research, and service responsibilities, such that their aggregate workload would be equivalent to any one of these assignments.

University faculty employees are the products of rigorous graduate and post graduate education, and possess unique talents and abilities. Appropriate workload management by educational unit administrators would seek to best serve student interests and meet departmental responsibilities by maximizing the application of faculty expertise through a Distribution of Effort or DOE. The rationale for a DOE stems from the recognition that the University's three-part mission -- teaching, research, and service -- is an aggregated institutional mission, not necessarily the mission of each individual faculty employee. Therefore, to implement a DOE, workload should be conceived of as variable individual efforts which, when aggregated at the educational unit level, allow that unit to meet its academic responsibilities and contribute to the overall University mission. To enhance the ability of a particular educational unit to meet its academic responsibilities, individuals may be assigned asymmetrical workload distributions that emphasize one or two mission areas, rather than all three. Because of promotion and tenure requirements, a DOE heavily weighted toward one area would normally be inappropriate for untenured faculty employees who are full time and regular-title series, since there is an expectation that excellence be demonstrated in each of the three mission areas.

The DOE should also permit the educational unit administrator, with approval by the dean, to assure fairness in the distribution of responsibility among faculty employees. For example, since the University is the Commonwealth's primary research institution, and faculty employees are expected to establish research programs, an individual whose research has produced an internationally recognized body of work and has obtained external funding support may be assigned to teach one or two courses per semester. Their remaining academic effort would be allotted to research and service. This effort would constitute a full academic workload, and the definition of full load and contact hour will vary across departments. The educational unit administrator might assign another faculty employee, whose research program and service responsibilities are limited, to teach three or four courses. Such an assignment would be reevaluated on a regular basis, in conjunction with a regular faculty review period.

These are examples, and many other DOE combinations are possible. The merit evaluation system should reflect the reality of workload distributions and the amount of effort that constitutes a full load equivalent.

- D. Considerations for adjusting workload distributions for an individual should relate to:
  1. Difficulty, scope, size, and level of courses taught (e.g., number of preparations, development of new courses or revisions of existing courses, type of instruction, class size, use of teaching assistants, advisement and mentoring activities, etc.);
  2. Research responsibilities and/or service expectations.
- E. Research, service, and non-classroom teaching are more difficult to quantify than formal classroom teaching but are, nevertheless, assessed according to merit evaluation and reappointment, promotion, and tenure guidelines. Policies and practices must assure that full-time faculty employees have comparable total effort, although individual distributions of teaching, research, and service may vary.

## IV. Expectations and Outcomes

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In support of this workload policy, the University will operate in consideration of the following:

## A. Expectations

1. That faculty employees in each educational unit should participate fully with unit administrators in determining appropriate specific guidelines and procedures for assigning workloads;
2. That faculty employees should participate fully at the college and university levels to develop and implement general workload guidelines;
3. That each academic unit should clarify and formalize their criteria and procedures to assure that all faculty employees within the unit have comparable workloads;
4. That reappraisals of workload policy within educational units should occur at regular intervals to respond to university and college missions and to adjust to changes in size, structure, and curricular demands; and,
5. That those policies and practices should be made clear to all faculty employees each year.

## B. Outcomes

1. On behalf of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the University faculty aspires to accomplish a three-part mission: to create knowledge through research; to preserve and disseminate knowledge through teaching; and to serve the public and academic community through the application of learning and expertise. This workload statement seeks to achieve these ideals through the realistic management of faculty time and University resources.
2. The University faculty places high value upon the process and product of scholarship, and seeks to make University students and Commonwealth residents the chief beneficiaries of that scholarship. Teaching must be informed by research that has currency; to do otherwise would be to offer outdated ideas and solutions to tomorrow's problems. Faculty employees will seek to underwrite their own research programs through proposals to external funding sources. Research awards will enhance those resources provided by the Commonwealth and, in addition to supporting research, will greatly benefit teaching and service productivity.
3. University teaching and research programs will provide students studying at the University at all levels -- undergraduate through postdoctoral -- with the best educational experience that faculty and resources can provide. Thus, a university education will foster a cadre of graduates who will be informed and skilled citizens, providing leadership for the Commonwealth's business, industry, professions, and government.
4. University programs will also contribute to the life of the community by helping individuals to define and pursue personal goals which enrich their own lives, and which ultimately contribute to the well-being of the Commonwealth's citizens.
5. Given these commitments on the part of university faculty employees, this workload statement seeks to assure the faculty, in turn, that their assignments will be equitable, and recognition and reward will be based upon the quality of their accomplishments.

## **Revision History**

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No previous versions. (4/5/2013 Updated Terms and Titles), (8/11/2022 Updated Terms)

For questions, contact: [Office of Legal Counsel](#)