

Policy on Faculty Workload

I. Purpose. Faculty are the core means by which the University of North Carolina (UNC) System fulfills its statutory mission to "...discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge."ⁱ Faculty apply advanced training and education towards teaching, research/creative activity, and service in support of the mission of their individual constituent institution and the broader UNC System mission. The Board of Governors has an obligation to ensure that the constituent institutions are deploying and monitoring faculty workloads in a consistent, efficient, and effective manner across the UNC System.

A. Faculty are critical for advancing the quality and impact of the UNC System and its constituent institutions. Faculty hold primary responsibility for designing and implementing curricula and academic programs; facilitating student success; engaging in research/creative activity; providing service to their disciplines and their communities; and enhancing the quality of life for North Carolinians. Faculty workload policies should acknowledge each of these areas and recognize faculty members' contributions to each.

B. North Carolina G.S. 116-1(b) specifies that the mission of the UNC System "...is to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society. This mission is accomplished through instruction, which communicates the knowledge and values and imparts the skills necessary for individuals to lead responsible, productive, and personally satisfying lives; through research, scholarship, and creative activities, which advance knowledge and enhance the educational process; and through public service, which contributes to the solution of societal problems and enriches the quality of life in the State." Faculty workload policies should take into account faculty members' contributions towards the University's mission.

Additionally, the Board has previously established the expectation that teaching "...should be the first consideration of all UNC institutions" in evaluating faculty.ⁱⁱ As such, teaching responsibilities shall serve as the core requirement and foundation of each constituent institution's faculty workload policy.

C. The Board of Governors has delegated to the boards of trustees of the constituent institutions the authority to adopt personnel policies for personnel in all categories of university employment, including policies governing academic tenure and promotion.ⁱⁱⁱ

II. Required Institutional Faculty Workload Policies.

A. Each UNC System institution shall develop policies and procedures implementing the provisions of this policy. Institutional policies shall be developed by the chancellor and provost, approved by the institutional board of trustees, and then approved by the president. Each constituent institution shall establish, publish, and monitor specific academic unit workload requirements that are consistent within the institution and across system institutions. All

workload decisions should be made with educational mission, student success, and financial implications in mind.

B. Responsibility for the successful implementation of the institutional faculty workload policies shall be shared among the following stakeholders:

1. Boards of Trustees shall be responsible for ensuring the constituent institution is implementing a faculty workload policy that advances the institution's mission, fosters student success, and ensures financial sustainability.
2. Chancellors and Provosts shall be responsible for developing institutional policies and ensuring that all colleges, schools, departments, and other units develop and implement faculty workload and evaluation procedures that comply with the institutional policy in a fair and consistent manner, with consideration of the institution's mission and the prudent stewardship of fiscal resources.
3. Deans and Department Chairs^{iv} shall be responsible for working directly with faculty to establish individual workloads that support institutional and strategic objectives in alignment with institutional policies, procedures, resources, and mission.
4. Faculty share in the responsibility of ensuring their workloads are consistent with the 1.0 FTE requirement.

C. Institutions are responsible for ensuring that individuals serving in a supervisory capacity effectively carry out the duties identified in this policy. Individuals serving in a supervisory capacity should have the training and skills necessary to fulfill this responsibility. Institutions are responsible for having a process for reviewing and assessing workload assignments.

III. Required Components of Faculty Workload Policies.

Each constituent institution shall ensure that their faculty workload policies and procedures address the following:

A. **Workload Expectations.** Each full-time faculty member shall engage in approved work that totals to 1.0 Full-Time Equivalency (FTE). Institutional policies shall identify the process for establishing individual faculty workload expectations in accordance with the respective missions of each institution and the university. Faculty members have responsibility for teaching, research/creative activity, and service.

1. **Teaching.** Consistent with G.S. 116-1(b), teaching and instruction are the central responsibilities of the UNC System and form a critical base of workload expectations for faculty. In addition to organized courses, the faculty member's instructional workload also includes other instructional efforts such as developing materials for a new course, updating materials for an existing course, developing courseware or other materials for technology-based instruction, supervising undergraduate research and masters' theses and doctoral dissertations, directing students in co-curricular activities such as plays, preparing and equipping new laboratories, supervision of teaching assistants, supervision

of internships, academic advising, mentoring, and other activities that support student success.

2. **Research/Creative Activity.** Faculty members, particularly at constituent institutions whose overall missions include research, engage in the work of discovering, disseminating, and applying knowledge and professional expertise. These activities may include (but are not limited to) working in laboratories and studios, conducting empirical and/or theoretical research, engaging in development or translational work, and/or producing creative works. Toward that end, faculty write articles, monographs, and grant proposals, edit scholarly journals, prepare juried art exhibits, direct centers and institutions, or perform in plays, concerts, or musical recitals. Institutional policies shall specify the means and extent by which research/creative activity responsibility counts towards a faculty member's total workload. These research/creative activities have significant implications for teaching. They enable faculty members to design course materials that reflect the state-of-the-art and cutting-edge knowledge in their respective fields.

3. **Service.** As a public university, the UNC System provides substantial benefits to the people and State of North Carolina. Faculty members engage in service that advances the work of the institution and the institution's role in supporting North Carolina. Service work of faculty may include activities which enhance the scholarly life of the university or the discipline, improve the quality of life or society, or promote the general welfare of the institution, professional and academic societies, the community, the state, the nation, or international community. Faculty members may also be assigned administrative responsibilities, including but not limited to, department chair/head, program director, and center director. Institutional policies shall specify the means and extent by which administrative responsibilities count towards a faculty member's total workload.

As teaching and instruction are the primary mission of the constituent institutions, teaching shall serve as the first component of determining faculty workload expectations. In general, a teaching load of 24 credit hours (or equivalent contact hours) per academic year, along with routinely expected faculty duties such as advising, committee work, and professional development together constitute a full workload and a 1.0 FTE appointment. Faculty members holding additional responsibilities for research/creative activities and service as identified in their annual work plan can have their teaching workload adjusted on a commensurate basis.

Differential teaching loads may be authorized in recognition of differing individual circumstances including student success considerations, course level (bachelors, master's, doctoral), course pedagogies, programmatic accreditation requirements, team-taught courses, research productivity, time bought out by external grants, significant administrative or service assignments, significant advising responsibilities, or other activities aligned with the institution's mission and/or critical to student success as provided for in this policy and identified in the faculty member's annual work plan.

B. **Annual Work Plan.** Each faculty member shall work with their dean or department chair to develop a work plan for the upcoming academic year, in alignment with the institution's workload expectations and the needs of the academic department, college/school, or institution.

Institutional policies shall provide for the definition of the academic year, with both 9- and 12-month options available. The work plan shall identify the specific outputs and efforts a faculty member is expected to complete in the next academic year, recognizing that those items may be part of long-term or multi-year initiatives. The specific goals of the work plan should build towards and align with the expectations of the next summative/comprehensive review that a faculty member undergoes (e.g., reappointment, promotion, tenure, post-tenure review). The work plan shall include expectations for teaching, research/creative activity, and service via percentage time allocations that equal the faculty member's FTE status.

C. Annual Evaluation. Each faculty member shall engage in an annual review with their department chair/head. As part of that annual review, the department chair/head shall review the work of the faculty member relative to their approved work plan. A faculty member who does not adequately satisfy their workload expectations for the review period shall be subject to a faculty success plan. The plan must include specific steps designed to lead to improvement, a specified timeline in which improvement is expected to occur, and a clear statement of consequences should improvement not occur within the designated timeline. These plans must be approved by the second-level supervisor.

IV. Annual Reporting Requirements

A. Overview and Timing. Each constituent institution shall compile an annual report of the previous year's faculty activity to be presented to and approved by the board of trustees each year. The report shall cover an academic/fiscal year basis (July 1 – June 30) and must be approved by the board of trustees no later than September 30 each year, with a copy submitted to the president by October 15.

B. Requirements. The annual report shall include quantitative information on faculty workload such as organized course sections taught, student credit hours produced, faculty contact hours, measures of research/creative activity, and service rendered in the previous academic year. The annual report shall include an analysis of faculty FTE allocations by teaching, research/creative activity, and service at the department, school/college, and institutional level. The annual report shall also include information regarding the process by which the institution implemented the provisions of their policy and evaluated individual faculty workloads relative to the standards therein.

V. Other Matters

A. Effective Date. The requirements of this policy shall be effective with the 2024-2025 academic year. Institutions shall have internal policies in place at the beginning of that academic year.

B. Relation to Federal and State Laws. The foregoing policy as adopted by the Board of Governors is meant to supplement, and does not purport to supplant or modify, those statutory enactments which may govern or relate to the subject matter of this policy.

C. Regulations and Guidelines. This policy shall be implemented and applied in accordance with such regulations and guidelines as may be adopted by the president.

D. Periodic Review. Each institution shall review their institutional policy at least every five years and submit a copy of that review and any changes made to the president.

E. Approvals. All policies and procedures required under this policy must be submitted by the constituent institutions to the UNC System Office and approved by the president.

*Supersedes and replaces the prior UNC Policy 400.3.4, "Monitoring Faculty Teaching Workloads" as this version was approved by the Board of Governors on July 20, 2023.

ⁱ University of North Carolina Mission Statement. <https://www.northcarolina.edu/our-mission/>

ⁱⁱ UNC Policy 400.3.1 <https://www.northcarolina.edu/apps/policy/doc.php?type=pdf&id=181>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Code, Appendix 1, Section I.

^{iv} For the purposes of this policy, department chair shall refer to the individual with supervisory responsibility for an individual faculty member.