

## AN OVERVIEW OF FACULTY WORKLOAD

### VCU School of Education Faculty Workload Policy<sup>1</sup>

#### General Information

Faculty are one of the most critical and important resources at any university. The aim of this policy is to articulate how faculty contribute to the success of the school through a combination of research/scholarship, teaching, and service while ensuring workload equity and efficient use of faculty resources. Specific attention has been given to enhancing the clarity of faculty activities to provide greater transparency while supporting flexibility and autonomy to enable faculty to make playful decisions about the nature of their work. This policy has been developed so that the areas where faculty are excelling are emphasized in their daily work.

This policy is designed to facilitate faculty contributions to the R1 mission of the university while maximizing and accounting for the instructional time faculty spend in direct contact with students within specific limits determined by research and service effort. As a result, the policy is designed to guide faculty effort allocation in ways that are flexible and accommodate differences in faculty activities across teaching, research and service activities.

In order to achieve these aims faculty workload is defined in terms of units, where 1% effort = .33 units and 10% effort = 3 units. Using a more incremental approach to defining faculty work affords greater flexibility and ensures the accounting of all activities where faculty expend effort. The allocation of units is individualized based on faculty appointment, commitments and goals. The specific activities within teaching, research, and service for a faculty member's evaluation are negotiated with the Department Chair. Any changes to a faculty member's Initial Work Plan must be approved by the Department Chair prior to implementation.

This policy will be re-evaluated periodically to ensure appropriate alignment with unit definitions and allocations and to maintain the school and departments' ability to meet short and long-term goals.

#### Workload Allocation by Faculty Appointment

This policy applies to all full-time faculty in the School of Education. The faculty in the school hold a variety of appointments that reflect different areas of focus and responsibility across teaching, research and service activities. These appointments include term, tenure-eligible and tenured faculty.

Specific to tenured faculty, this policy incorporates three different pathways - blended, teaching, and research focused – to guide faculty effort allocation. These pathways allow faculty to balance their

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<sup>1</sup> The November 2023 revisions to the School of Education faculty workload policy were based on the recommendations of a representative committee of faculty who piloted the unit-based approach to faculty workload allocation throughout the fall 2023 semester. This revised version is being piloted at the department level during 2024.

efforts across teaching, research and service in ways that are commensurate with their goals, interests and strengths. Table 1 presents an overview of unit and effort allocation for each type of faculty appointment according to the dominant focal areas of their work and contract parameters.

**Table 1**

*Overview of Workload Unit Allocation by Faculty Appointment*

Academic Appointment	Focus	Teaching Units per calendar year	Research/Scholarship Units	Service Units
Term 9 months	Teaching	24 (80%)	0	6 (20%)
Term 12 months	Teaching	30 (80%)	0	7.5 (20%)
	Research	0	30 (80%)	7.5 (20%)
Tenured	Pathway 1: Blended Focus	15 (50%)	9 (30%)	6 (20%)
	Pathway 2: Research Focus	12 (40%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)
	Pathway 3: Teaching Focus	18 (60%)	6 (20%)	6 (20%)
Tenure-Eligible <sup>1</sup>	Years 1-2	9 (30%)	18 (60%)	3 (10%)
	Years 3-4	12 (40%)	15 (50%)	3 (10%) <sup>2</sup>
	Year 5	12 (40%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)
	Year 6 (under P&T review)	12-15 (40-50%, determine pathway)	9-12 (30-40% determine pathway)	6 (20%)

1. Exact teaching, research, and service units may be negotiated with reference to their accomplishments documented in their FAR and IWP

2. Research/service units in years 3 and 4 may be flexible to ensure alignment with promotion and tenure guidelines and meet school and departmental needs.

## Tenured Faculty Pathways

Tenured faculty have three possible pathways for distribution of their 30 units.

- The **Blended pathway** is intended for faculty who engage in teaching, research and scholarship activities and represents the base distribution of units, with 15 teaching, 9 research, and 6 service units. Tenured faculty on the blended pathway are expected to maintain a rating of *at least very good in teaching and research/scholarship* on the appropriate annual evaluation rubric.
- The **research-focused pathway** is intended for faculty with an emphasis in their activities on the pursuit of external funding (e.g., non-VCU funding, foundation funding, state & federal agency funding, etc.) with 12 teaching units, 12 research units, and 6 service units. This pathway requires a faculty member to have:
  - a) bought out at least 10% of their research time on external funds during the academic year (excludes summer) AND have achieved a rating of at least *very good in research/scholarship* on the appropriate rubric for the previous evaluation period.
  - OR
  - b) applied for external funding to cover at least 5% of their salary during the academic year (excludes summer) on at least one award per year AND have achieved a rating of *excellent in research/scholarship* on the appropriate rubric for the previous evaluation period.
- The **teaching-focused pathway** is intended for faculty with an emphasis in their activities on teaching, with 18 teaching units, 6 research units, and 6 service units. A faculty member may choose to move to this pathway in consultation with their chair. Alternatively, they may be assigned to this pathway if they achieve a rating of *less than very good in research/scholarship* on the appropriate rubric for two subsequent evaluation periods. Tenured faculty on the teaching-focused pathway must maintain a rating of *at least satisfactory in research and scholarship* on the appropriate rubric for the previous evaluation period or they may be assigned to a 80% teaching and 20% service load.
- **Pathway Assignments and Modifications: All initial pathway assignments and modifications require discussions between the department and faculty member and dean approval.**
  - Faculty Initiated:
    - Tenured faculty who would like to change their pathway (e.g., research to blended; blended to research) should consult with the chair of their department who will work with them on an appropriate plan and timeline for doing so, with approval from the dean.
  - Department Chair Initiated:
    - Research → Blended pathway: Department chairs can recommend that tenured faculty move from the research to the blended pathway based on:
      - Annual evaluation ratings in research/scholarship ratings of below “very good” and grant activity over a two-year period
      - Annual evaluation ratings in teaching of at least “very good”
      - Example: A faculty member has consistently received “very good” research/scholarship ratings for several years. They have a year when

they receive a "satisfactory" rating. The faculty member would have one more year to improve their research/scholarship before moving to the blended or teaching focused pathway.

- Blended → Teaching pathway: Department chairs can recommend that tenured faculty move from the blended to the teaching-focus pathway based on:
  - Annual evaluation ratings in research/scholarship ratings of below "satisfactory" over a two-year period
  - Annual evaluation ratings in teaching of at least "very good"
  - In cases where faculty members have a combination of "very good" and "satisfactory ratings" in teaching, additional professional development in teaching will be planned.
- Blended → Research pathway: Department can recommend that faculty move from the blended to the research pathway based on grant submission activity and awards and/or research/scholarship evaluations of at least "very good" over a two-year period.

### Term Faculty Effort Allocation

- **Term teaching faculty** have a standard work plan as follows: for 9-month faculty, 24 teaching units, 0 research units, and 6 service units; for 12-month faculty, 30 teaching units, 0 research units, and 7.5 service units. These unit allocations align with the 80% and 20% effort distribution for teaching and service.
- **Term research faculty** have a standard work plan as follows: for 9-month faculty, 0 teaching units, 24 research units, and service units; for 12-month faculty, 0 teaching units, 30 research units, and 7.5 service units. These unit allocations align with the 80% and 20% effort distribution for research and service.

### TEACHING

Teaching effort includes a variety of activities that includes direct interaction and support of student learning, including assignment to a credit-bearing course, mentoring and supervision activities. As shown in Table 1, the number of teaching units expected of faculty is dependent on appointment (tenured, pre-tenure, term). Fewer teaching units for tenured and tenure-eligible faculty are balanced by greater accountability in the area of research/scholarship.

**Minimum Expectations:** All faculty, with the exception of department chairs, deans, and term research faculty, are responsible for – at a minimum – 6 teaching units in the School of Education per academic year, with at least 3 units based on course instruction. Teaching activity types and units are found in Table 2.

**Maximum Expectations:** Teaching units accumulated based on non-course related teaching (e.g., fractional) activities should not exceed 3 units per year.

**Teaching Activities:** Different types of teaching activities involving direct interactions with students and related units are shown in Table 2. An essential part of teaching is maintaining a balance across different types of courses and student audiences to the extent possible. Department Chairs will work with faculty to ensure there is a balance of types of courses/levels across a two-year period. Teaching activities may

involve providing sustained support, guidance and mentoring to other full-time and part-time faculty. Department chairs may negotiate with faculty appropriate fractional teaching unit allocations or other support for this type of work, not to exceed 3 units per academic year.

**Table 2**

*Summary of Teaching Activities and Unit Allocation*

<b>Teaching Activities</b>	<b>Credits per semester</b>	<b># of students</b>	<b>Teaching Units</b>
<b>Course Instruction*</b>			
Undergraduate (e.g., EDUS 301)	3	~20-50	3
Masters (e.g., EDUS 607/617)	3	~12-25	3
Doctoral (e.g., EDUS712)	3	~8-15	3
<b>Fractional Teaching Activities</b>			
<b>1. Course-based Supervision</b>			
<i>a. Undergraduate</i>			
Independent Study (EDUS 400)	3	1 (max 4 per semester)	.25 per student
Practicum/Supervision	1-2		approximately .1-.2 per student depending on program
Internship/Student teaching	4-6		
<i>b. Masters</i>			
Independent Study (EDUS 641)	3	1 (max 4 per semester)	.25 per student
Practicum/Internship (e.g., SEDP 655/656)	1-3	8-12	approximately .1-.2 per student depending on program
Externship (e.g. SEDP 700, ECSE 700 student teaching)	2-3	1-8	
<i>c. Doctoral</i>			

Independent Study (EDUS 641)	3	1 (max 4 per semester)	.25 per student
Internships	3	1 (max 4 per semester)	.25 per student
Directed Research (e.g., EDUC 797)	1-3	1 (max 4 per semester)	.25 (per student, max 3 semesters)
PhD Dissertation Research (e.g., EDUC 899; dissertation committee chair)	1-9	1	.5 (per student, per semester)
EdD Capstone (e.g., EDLP 798; EDLP 799 capstone committee chair)	3	3-5 students per capstone; 2 capstones per section	3
<b>2. PhD &amp; EdD Committee Membership</b>			
PhD Dissertation Chair – see above for EDUC 899	NA	NA	NA
EdD Capstone Chair – see above for EDLP 798 and EDLP 799	NA	NA	NA
Non-chair dissertation and capstone membership	NA	1-5	.25 (once per student/once per capstone)
<b>3. Program Coordination**:</b> number of units and allocation to teaching and/or service should be determined in consultation with the Department Chair with 1-3 unit range.			1-3 50% of units in teaching; 50% of units in service based on negotiated units

\*Very small classes (defined as a class with enrollment *below* the minimum) can fulfill **a fraction** of the assigned teaching load. This constraint applies to all courses, all levels. Very small classes may be offered in exceptional circumstances if justified from an academic perspective and with chair approval; however, faculty can only earn proportional fractional teaching units.

\*\*Program coordination varies widely across the SOE and credits for teaching and/or service will be determined in negotiation with the department chair in consultation with the dean's office to ensure equity across the SOE.

### ***Variations in Teaching by Faculty Appointment***

Term research faculty should not have teaching expectations that exceed 9 units per academic year.

### ***Banking Teaching Unit Credits***

In cases where faculty exceed the expected teaching units faculty will be able to bank, or carry over, units earned each academic year. Fractional unit credit earned through teaching activities will be reported each semester using the faculty activity reporting process. Banked credits need to be approved by Department Chairs during workload planning and annual evaluation meetings and are reviewed annually. Department Chairs will ensure that faculty are able to utilize banked credits once they have accumulated 3 units. Once faculty accumulate 3 units, they are expected to use the banked credits within the next academic year. Earned credits may be used to cover no more than two courses per academic year. Credits less than 3 do not expire.

**RESEARCH/SCHOLARSHIP**

The time allocated for research and scholarship differs based on faculty appointment to address expectations specified in promotion and tenure guidelines. Tenured and tenure-eligible faculty have time devoted to research/ scholarship in alignment with their role. Tenure-eligible faculty effort may shift from the research-focused to the standard pathway as they approach the tenure and promotion review (see Table 1).

Faculty with salary support *from external funding sources* may receive reduction in teaching according to Table 3. The maximum number of courses faculty can buyout is 3 to 9 instructional units based on the minimum standard for teaching contributions of 6 units. On occasion, faculty may negotiate additional time (with reduced teaching or service effort) as part of their Individual Work Plan (IWP) for a specific scholarly assignment as resources allow (e.g., Study-Research Leave).

***Required percent salary (9-month) support from external funding sources for course buy-out (% is cumulative for each additional course)***

**Table 3**

*Total Percent Salary Support Needed for Course Reductions*

<b>Total CY percentage external funding for salary support</b>	<b>Research Effort</b>	<b>Teaching Effort</b>
10%	3 units	no reduction
15%	4.5 units	3 units = 1 course buyout
30%	6 units	6 units = 2 course buyout
45%	9 units	9 units = 3 course buyout
60% or higher*	12 units	9 units = 3 course buyout

*\*Faculty cannot reduce teaching loads below the minimum teaching load of 6 units per year, with a*

*minimum of 3 units allocated to course instruction.*

### ***Variations in Research by Faculty Appointment***

Term teaching faculty are not typically expected to participate in research/scholarship. However, ***term teaching faculty*** who are awarded teaching-related external funding with salary support (e.g. training, professional development grants) may receive a reduction in teaching, with approval of their department chair and with a maximum of one course (3 units) per year.

## **SERVICE**

Service is a fundamental component of the faculty role to complete the work required within an academic institution. All faculty members share in the service mission of the school. Service also extends to the university, community and profession. The level of engagement in service should be consistent with satisfactory to exemplary annual performance and with promotion guidelines; decisions about service should be made in consultation with the Department Chair or supervisor.

- **Service to the Department:** Examples of department-level service include, but are not limited to, serving on a department budget committee, academic program coordination, serving on the adjunct hiring committee or a department staff or faculty search committee, and participating in student recruitment activities.
- **Service to the School:** Examples of school-level service include, but are not limited to, serving on a School of Education standing committee, chairing a committee, serving on or leading a task force, participating on advisory councils, serving on a school staff, faculty or leadership search committee, and participating in student recruitment activities.
- **Service to the University:** Examples of service within the university include participating on University-level committees, initiatives or task-force committees.
- **Service to the Community:** Examples of community service include pro-bono service with schools, school divisions, educational or community organizations. Such as serving on advisory boards of local organizations; engagement in agencies; and organizations to build capacity, improve organizational functioning, or develop policy.
- **Service to the Profession:** Examples of professional service includes unpaid professional practice, service within a state, national or international professional organization, serving on a study section, reviewing manuscripts submitted to journals or grant applications, etc.

In rare cases, faculty may have dedicated service effort that may necessitate reduced effort in teaching or research and scholarship. Examples of such service may include serving in key leadership roles in the School of Education (such as Faculty Organization President or accreditation lead); key leadership positions in the university (such as President of Faculty Senate); key leadership at the professional level (such as journal editorship or president of a professional organization).

Service units cannot be banked or applied from one year to the next.

Decisions about service should be made in consultation with the Department Chair or supervisor as not all service activities may be listed. Service units for commitments outside of the university should be negotiated with the chair.

### ***Variations in Service by Faculty Appointment***

**Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty:** For all ***tenured faculty***, the expectation is a minimum 6 service units, with a minimum of 3 service units committed to the department, school, or university. ***Tenure-eligible***



**faculty** have variable service units depending on their pre-tenure year (see Table 1). For both tenured and tenure track faculty, the remaining service units may be allocated to commitments at the community, state, national, and professional levels.

**Term Faculty:** For all **term faculty**, the expectation is a minimum of 3 of the 6 service units are committed to service to the department, school, or university. The remaining service units could be for commitments at the community, state, national, and professional levels or could be further distributed to the department, school, or university.

#### ***Service Units to the department, school, or university***

Service units should be allocated based on the faculty-driven coding of department, school, university commitments by number of hours and intensity of the commitment using the following guidelines:

- Low Intensity = .25 service units
  - chair = +.10 service
- Medium Intensity = .50 service units
  - chair = +.25 service
- High Intensity = 1.0 service units
  - chair = +.50 service

#### **Policy Revisions and Modifications**

The effective and appropriate administration of this policy requires periodic review and evaluation to ensure the policy is working as intended and accurately aligns with the scope and variation in faculty work.

#### **References**

O'Meara, K., Culpepper, D., Misra, J., & Jaeger, A. (2021). *Equity-minded faculty workloads: What we can and should do now*. American Council on Education. <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Equity-Minded-Faculty-Workloads.pdf>

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