



# Idaho State University

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Faculty Workload

#### ISUPP 4090

##### *POLICY INFORMATION*

**Policy Section:** *Academic Affairs*

**Policy Title:** *Faculty Workload*

**Responsible Executive (RE):** *Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost*

**Sponsoring Organization (SO):** *Office of Academic Affairs*

**Effective Dates:** *5-10-2009; December 14, 2023*

**Last Reviewed:** *December 14, 2023*

## I. POLICY STATEMENT

Idaho State University is committed to equitably distributing Faculty Workload according to transparent measures and processes that offer flexibility with accountability. ISU prides itself on excellent teaching and is a doctoral-granting university with high research activity (R2) as recognized by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. As a complex institution made up of diverse disciplines, programs, and individuals that fulfill different roles within the broader mission of the University, ISU thrives best when Workload assignments align with these roles. Within the structure outlined herein, colleges and equivalent units shall create and implement Workload policies specific to their roles under the guidance of the following core principles:

*Equity:* Each member of a unit is offered a fair balance of professional opportunities and obligations appropriate to their appointment.

*Flexibility:* Individual Workload distributions are guided by unit-wide norms, but also reflect the different strengths, interests, and circumstances of different Faculty members.

*Credit:* Workload measurements recognize all of each Faculty member's professional contributions.

*Transparency:* Units clearly communicate the criteria, measures, and procedures that guide Workload distribution, and share documented Workload information openly among Faculty.

*Accountability:* Faculty are responsible for fulfilling their assigned Workload obligations, and administrators are responsible for assigning Workloads that are fair to all Faculty and fulfill the mission of the unit.

The total Workload of a given Faculty member is divided among Instruction, Scholarship, Service, and sometimes Administration to a total of fifteen (15) Workload Equivalency Units each semester. Criteria for defining Workload areas, assigning Workload credit to specific activities, and assigning Workload distributions to individual Faculty are set by the Faculty of the unit and approved by the Dean. Faculty are evaluated in the context of their assigned Workload distributions.

The overriding intent of this policy is that a full-time Faculty member's assignment in Instruction, Scholarship, and Service shall not exceed or result in less than a full-time effort.

## II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Administration:** the Workload category describing tasks related to the supervision of other Faculty and the oversight of programs. Roles bearing Administrative Workload include, but are not limited to: department chair/administrative unit head, assistant or associate chair/academic unit head, program director, center director, assistant or associate dean, student advisor for a college or large department/academic unit, chair for special institutional projects, and clinical coordinator or supervisor.
- B. **Faculty:** all Faculty appointments described by ISUPP 4050 *Academic Rank and Other Appointments*.
- C. **Instruction:** the Workload category encompassing the teaching, supervising, and training activities that fulfill the academic mission of a Faculty member's unit and discipline. These activities include, but are not limited to: graduate, professional, and undergraduate coursework; supervision and direction of students' scholarly works such as research projects and theses/dissertations; works and performances in the fine arts, clinical experiences, and student teaching; and other activities such as advising necessary for students to complete degree and program requirements at ISU.
- D. **Scholarship:** the Workload category associated with research, scholarly work, and creative activity. Such work includes, but is not limited to: original investigation and discovery, translational research, the development of improved technologies, creative performance, original composition and academic writing, the investigation and improvement of pedagogy, and the interpretation and integration of knowledge.
- E. **Service:** the Workload category associated with Service delivered in a professional capacity to the University, the academic discipline, and broader communities. Such contributions fall into two primary categories:

1. Professional Service Workload is allocated for activities including, but not limited to: serving on committees and councils at the University, college, and department levels; serving as Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) for graduate students outside the Faculty member's discipline; serving professional societies and organizations in one's discipline; serving in a professional capacity when addressing public and community needs; advising student organizations; formally mentoring other Faculty; and delivering academic advising at the program level.
  2. Clinical Service is performed by Faculty who have professional practice responsibilities such as providing patient care services as part of their assigned Workload.
- F. **Workload:** all assigned and required duties of a Faculty member.
- G. **Workload Equivalency Unit (WEU):** a measure of Faculty effort equivalent to 1/15 of a semester's total Workload, and corresponding to approximately 1/3 of a working day each week. Three (3) WEU roughly correlate to a 3-credit course with associated preparation, delivery, student support, and grading responsibilities.

### III. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy will be subject to periodic reconsideration and revision by the ISU Faculty Senate and the University administration. Specifically, the Office of Academic Affairs has the authority and responsibility to update and review this policy as necessary in consultation with the Faculty.

### IV. PROCEDURES TO IMPLEMENT

#### A. Delegation of Responsibilities

Each college will further define, implement, and maintain a Workload policy that is consistent with the principles and procedures in this document and reflects the unique needs and obligations of its own Faculty.

Workload policies and procedures developed by colleges must:

1. apply uniformly to all Faculty members of a unit.
2. describe a procedure for arriving at and documenting any Workload expectations differing from unit defaults.
3. describe a mechanism to share individual Workload assignments (at minimum, the WEU assignments of all Faculty) within the unit.
4. link the annual Workload description to the annual Faculty evaluation.

5. establish criteria for equitable distribution of Instructional course releases.
6. in accordance with the processes articulated hereafter, award credit to aspects of Instructional Workload not encompassed by the 3:3 course teaching load (IV.C) or directly addressed by its potential adjustments (IV.F; IV.H).
7. award meaningful credit to departmental, University, and Professional Service.

Workload policies at the college level must be ratified by a vote of Faculty according to the established voting procedures of the unit, and approved by the Dean and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Policies will be subject to review and re-approval every five (5) years.

#### B. Total Workload Expectations

Full-time academic Faculty on 9-month contracts are assigned thirty (30) Workload Equivalency Units (WEU) each contract year, typically fifteen (15) each in Fall and Spring semesters. Workload assignments for Faculty on 10- to 12-month contracts and for part-time Faculty are proportional to those for full-time 9-month Faculty (e.g., 12-month Faculty shall be assigned forty (40) Workload units per year).

#### C. Workload Distribution for Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty

Workload is typically distributed among Instruction, Scholarship, and Service. Some Faculty may also be assigned Administrative Workload. The standard Instructional load is nine (9) WEU of Instruction consisting of nine (9) units of credit-based teaching and allied instructional activities per semester (i.e., excluding low-enrollment independent study-style courses such as thesis, dissertation, or capstone classes), totaling eighteen (18) WEU per standard academic year between Fall and Spring semesters. When justified by allied teaching obligations or exceptional activities in other Workload areas, assignments may be modified from this default according to the procedures below (see sections IV.C.1-3; IV.F and H). All reductions to the default course load must be forwarded by the Department Chair to be approved by the Dean of the college and shall be submitted for review to the Office of the Provost. This is the equivalent of a 3:3 course teaching load, which will be considered the standard at ISU for tenured and tenure-track Faculty.

Typical Faculty will also commit an average of 3-5 WEU to Scholarship, and 1-3 WEU to Service each semester. The intended allocation of these six (6) total WEU among Workload areas is determined annually by the Department Chair or academic unit head after considering input from the Faculty member, and the college Dean is responsible for oversight of the departmental allocation of WEU within the college. The Faculty member's discipline norms, type of appointment, and professional circumstances will be considered in assignment of Workload to each area. No Faculty member will be assigned a Workload

distribution that conflicts with promotion and tenure expectations or other fixed evaluation standards. Concentration of Faculty effort in one area of work to the near-total exclusion of other areas, except as dictated by specific Faculty appointments, is discouraged under this policy. Every Faculty member deserves the opportunity to contribute in measurable ways to the Instruction, Scholarship, and Service functions of the University.

Deviations from these norms at the college, departmental, or individual level may be justified in situations, including but not limited to the following cases:

1. Faculty with reduced research and/or Service expectations may be assigned higher Instructional Workloads. Conversely, Faculty with higher Scholarship and/or Service and Administrative expectations are expected to qualify for reduced Instructional Workloads under this policy (see IV.D, F, and H).
2. WEU may be differently distributed as described by the approved employment contracts or position descriptions of individual Faculty.
3. Workload may be redistributed according to course buy-outs, Instructional course releases, and restructuring as described in IV.H and IV.I below.

#### D. Workload Distribution for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

There is no uniform Workload distribution expected for all non-tenure-track Faculty, who may have no assigned Workload in one or more areas. Workload distribution for non-tenure-track Faculty will vary with the type of appointment, and will depend on expectations described in the offer letters, position descriptions, and contracts of these Faculty. Workloads for full-time 9-month positions must still total thirty (30) WEU annually, and will be delineated among Instruction, Scholarship, Service, and Administrative activities as described above. As with tenure-track faculty, the allocation of a non-tenure-track Faculty member's WEU is determined annually by the Department Chair or academic unit head after considering input from the Faculty member, and the college Dean is responsible for oversight of the departmental allocation of WEU within the college.

#### E. Alternative Contracts/Special Situations

ISU recognizes that some Faculty members have contractual obligations that differ from the standard Faculty contracts outlined above. Center directors, dual appointments, research or outreach affiliations are examples of these kinds of special situations. With these appointments, it is the responsibility of the Faculty member and their reporting chain (i.e., Chair/academic unit head, Dean, Vice President, Provost, etc.) to negotiate Workload obligations which deviate from those listed above.

## F. Quantifying Workload

Colleges must meaningfully quantify Workload via policies guided by the criteria below. Activities that naturally bridge multiple categories may be assigned to either one, but shall not be counted twice.

1. One WEU generally equates with one semester credit hour of teaching and related Instructional activity. In recognition that some courses may require Instructional effort that does not equate with the semester credit hours associated with the course, and that Instructional loads may be assigned that support but are not reflected in classroom Instruction and credit-hour based courses, (e.g., overseeing the activities of learning environments such as labs, health clinics, etc.) it is expected that units will propose WEU/credit hour equivalencies for such activity in order to adequately quantify this Instructional effort. Such activities and their equivalencies will be proposed by the unit, and approved by the college Dean and the Office of the Provost. Once approved, these equivalencies will become part of the standard WEU/credit hour calculations for the college/unit and applied to Faculty Workload assignments when WEU/credit hours of Instruction are being calculated and reported. Evaluation of the ongoing appropriateness of such equivalencies shall occur:
  - a. at least every five (5)-years;
  - b. when significant curricular revision has significantly impacted the nature of the Instructional effort associated with such an equivalency; or
  - c. at the request of the Department Chair, college Dean, or Provost.
2. Scholarship Workload can be quantified based on hours devoted to activities including but not limited to:
  - a. composition and publication of technical reports, scholarly articles, books, or creative works.
  - b. preparation and delivery of technical or scholarly presentations or artistic performances.
  - c. development and acquisition of patents.
  - d. design and execution of basic and applied research, including supervision of a research team.
  - e. organization of professional scholarly and creative events.
  - f. preparation and submission of grant proposals and establishment of other partnerships supporting research, scholarship, or creative work.

- g. fulfillment of grants (including administration and management), contracts, and other partnerships aligned with research, scholarship, and creative work.
  - h. enhancement and maintenance of ISU's infrastructure supporting scholarship (including setting up new facilities).
  - i. scholarly and artistic presentations serving and engaging the community.
3. Service Workload is typically quantified based on the hours dedicated to specific activities (as described in II.E.1 above).
  4. Administrative WEU will be allocated by the College Dean or in certain instances by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Faculty member.

#### G. Workload Documentation

Each Faculty member's Workload distribution must be quantified and reported according to college policy as part of the annual Faculty evaluation process, wherein the Faculty member's activities and accomplishments must be evaluated in the context of their Workload. Workload expectations for the following calendar year will also be addressed within the evaluation cycle, and policies must describe the means to document any adjustments to those expectations over the course of the year.

Any Faculty Workload assignment differing from defaults described by college policy or individual Faculty contracts must, having been determined with the input of the Faculty member, be documented within the annual Faculty evaluation or in other writing that becomes part of the Faculty member's official record.

Major discrepancies between intended and actual Workload distributions must be addressed within the evaluation process and may factor into adjustment of responsibilities. The purpose of this review cycle is to align Workload assignments with the mission of the University, the role of the unit within that mission, and the Faculty member's professional goals.

Colleges shall report Workload annually to the Office of the Provost.

#### H. Adjustments to Faculty Instructional Workload

##### 1. Instructional Course Releases/Course Substitutions

- a. An Instructional course release, also known as a course substitution, permits a Faculty member to have a reduced teaching load during their normal academic year appointment. In other words, the Faculty member is released from part of their teaching obligation in order to direct that portion of their Workload efforts toward other agreed upon activities. Some examples of such activities might include, but are not limited to:

- i. professional/scholarly development activities (e.g., significant course or grant proposal development or sponsored activities not fully funded through course buy-outs (see IV.H.2));
  - ii. allied Instructional activities (e.g., significant/outsized thesis/dissertation advising and student research mentorship);
  - iii. Administrative appointments (e.g., Department Chair);
  - iv. Service activities (e.g., accreditation liaison); or
  - v. institution-wide grant fulfillment or administrative responsibilities (e.g., directing ISU interests in multi-university initiatives or consortia, needed releases when grant funding is insufficient to accommodate buy-outs (see IV.H.2)).
- b. Instructional course releases do not relieve the Faculty member from other responsibilities to the college or University such as advising, serving on committees, or participating in departmental business. Faculty members are expected to continue to be in residence and carry out their other duties during a term in which they have a course release/course substitution.
- c. The Dean of each college shall, in consultation with the Faculty of their college, create the criteria for awarding Instructional course releases/course substitutions. Such criteria shall reflect the principles articulated at the beginning of this policy, including the equitable pursuit of research opportunities across the institution. In order to better support and reflect our commitment to faculty and undergraduate/graduate research, colleges shall create equitable frameworks for granting Instructional releases for Faculty engaged in significant/outsized thesis/dissertation and research mentorship activity. Similarly, releases for serving in departmental and college level administrative positions (e.g., Department Chair, program director, etc.) shall be equitable across the college and articulated in the college level policy. Administrative service releases and releases for student thesis, dissertation, and research mentorship included in approved college level policy are not subject to replacement financial commitments (see below in d).
- d. Instructional course releases/course substitutions that are not justified by Administrative service or significant/outsized student thesis, research, and dissertation mentorship require a financial commitment on the part of the department, college, or University to cover the cost of replacing the Instruction the Faculty member would otherwise engage in. For each course released/substituted, the amount of this commitment shall be at least the equivalent of the department's

standard adjunct Faculty compensation for one course and may be more if the cost of securing replacement instruction is higher than the standard adjunct rate.

- e. Awarding an Instructional course release/course substitution requires that the individual fulfill all applicable criteria as established by the college. Instructional course releases/substitutions require the approval of the Department Chair and the college Dean, and shall be submitted for review to the Provost. At all levels, a course release shall be awarded in accordance with the principles articulated at the beginning of this policy, including ensuring the equitable distribution of such releases within and across units.
  - f. Instructional course releases must not impede the ability of the department to deliver their curriculum and meet student needs.
  - g. One course release may support activities particular to one semester, or an accumulation of effort across multiple semesters within a reasonable time period.
2. Course Buy-Out
- a. Supporting grant funded research is a significant institutional priority. In general, the below guidelines shall be followed in an effort to support such research while also ensuring that:
    - i. research opportunities are able to be pursued equitably by all research Faculty across the University; and
    - ii. a mechanism for doing so in a fiscally responsible and sustainable way can be achieved.

In accordance with the above, Faculty members may request a course buy-out in order to work on a sponsored grant or externally funded project. In general, the corresponding percentage of the person's appointment is charged directly to the awarded grant/project budget during the term of the course buy-out. In effect, the grant/project "buys" the Faculty member's released time so the equivalent amount of effort can be spent working on the grant/project activities.

Course buy-out requests shall be accommodated unless compelling demonstrable Instructional, clinical, or other needs of the department dictate otherwise.

- b. Guidelines for Course Buy-Outs
  - i. Faculty members requesting course buy-outs shall collaborate with their Department Chair to ensure that the scheduling of a course buy-out will not impede the department's ability to deliver the programmatic curriculum.

- ii. Course buy-outs for pursuit of external personal or business interests not related to the mission of the college and University shall not be granted.
- iii. The amount compensated by a grant/project shall be consistent with federal grant practice, as well as external sponsor and Office for Research practices.
- iv. In general, the course buy-out shall, at a minimum, cover the cost of hiring a replacement to offer the course (e.g., an adjunct instructor). A portion of the course buy-out amount is expected to be used for funding other related Instruction expenses.
- v. Buy-out of Instruction does not release Faculty members from performing their research or Service obligations on behalf of the college or the Faculty member's school/department.
- vi. The Provost's Office is responsible for delineating and publishing the process for requesting a course buy-out.

I. Workload Restructure

Variations that do not reduce the overall academic yearly Instructional Workload in totality but seek to restructure it (e.g., to a 2:4 rather than 3:3 distribution) are permissible upon petition with the support of the Department Chair, college Dean, and Provost. Such requests shall be accommodated unless the Instructional, clinical, or other needs of the department dictate otherwise.

J. Workload Conflicts

Faculty who are unable to informally resolve objections to a Workload assignment have recourse through ISU's grievance process outlined in ISUPP 4041 *Grievance Procedures for Institutional Faculty*.

**V. RELATED LAWS, RULES, AND POLICIES**

- A. State Board of Education Governing Policies and Procedures – Postsecondary Affairs
  - 1. III.B *Academic Freedom and Academic Responsibility*
- B. ISUPP 4040 *Academic Freedom*
- C. ISUPP 4041 *Grievance Procedures for Institutional Faculty*
- D. ISUPP 4050 *Academic Rank and Other Appointments*