

**ME Faculty Instructional Workload Policy**  
**Revised December 18, 2019**  
**Approved by the Budget Council on January 17, 2020**  
**Revised October 20, 2022**

**Expectations for Classroom Teaching and Research**

- The purpose of the faculty workload policy is to determine the appropriate faculty teaching workload in organized courses. As an R1 university and leading college of engineering, the tradeoff on faculty workload is between externally-funded research and teaching in organized courses. For tenured and tenure-track faculty, the nominal classroom teaching responsibility is 3 organized courses per year, with the expectation that faculty teach both graduate and undergraduate courses as the teaching needs of the department dictate.
- Faculty supervision and financial support of graduate students and post-docs is essential to sustaining a significant, funded research program. Research activity will be measured by the number of research graduate students (GRA's) and post-docs being advised and funded during the academic year as follows:
  - Minimum research activity for tenured and tenure-track faculty is a total of 40 funded GRA hours per semester (80 GRA hours over the academic year).
  - A funded post-doctoral student will count as one 20 hour GRA per semester.
  - Funded GRA hours must be supported by sponsored research grants or a fully-funded (20-hour equivalent) prestigious nationally-competitive fellowship (e.g., NSF Graduate Fellowship, NDSEG, NSTRF, DOD), faculty start-up funds, or competitive internal grant/fellowship.
- The standard teaching workload is predicated on each faculty member having a significant funded research program and appropriate service involvement. Indicators of activity in this regard include support of GRAs, URAs, post-docs, and other staff on funded research projects; MS and PhD graduations; scholarly publications; research proposal preparation; research grants and expenditures; internal and external committee participation; and administrative assignments. Insufficient participation in funded research and service will necessitate an upward adjustment of teaching in organized courses to provide an appropriate workload.
- As described below, faculty members whose support of graduate students and post-docs falls below a threshold will be expected to be responsible for more classroom instruction. In addition, under a number of special circumstances, classroom responsibilities may be reduced.

**Decreases to the Standard Teaching Load**

- **Chair's Discretion.** Reduction of course workload may be granted by the Department Chair to those who have extensive commitment to service, administration, or new initiatives. In general, such course reductions apply to chaired professors, directors of large research centers and faculty leading the development of large, multidisciplinary research proposals as long as the teaching needs of the department are being met. In addition, courses are expected to be 3 or 4 credits. For courses carrying different amounts of credit, the department chair has the discretion to make course assignments in a manner that ensures

equity among the faculty and provides a teaching workload comparable to others.

- **Support of 4 or more funded GRAs/Postdocs.** For faculty who mentor 4 or more funded GRAs or postdocs based on a two-year average, the classroom teaching responsibility is reduced to 2 organized courses per year.
- **New Faculty Members.** New faculty generally have their teaching loads reduced by one course per year for a limited amount of time. The duration of the course reduction is at the discretion of the chair, but typically durations are one year for associate/full professors and during the probationary (pre-tenure) period for assistant professors.
- **Leaves.** Tenured faculty members have three options for taking a one-semester leave. In each case, the leave must be taken during the semester that the faculty member is scheduled to teach one course.
  - Faculty Development Leaves (faculty apply through the Provost’s Office) or externally-funded leaves.
  - Course Buyout. Although the primary mechanism for a reduction to the standard teaching load is via support for GRAs/postdocs, with permission from the Department Chair and Dean, faculty members may elect to buy out of teaching. For faculty with a three-course (two-course) teaching workload the contribution to buy out of a single course is 16.7% (25%) of their nine-month salary. This policy is predicated on the faculty member being resident in Austin and carrying out all other duties.

### **Increases to the Standard Teaching Load**

- Faculty members who do not meet the minimum research activity (two or more funded GRAs/postdocs, calculated as an average over two consecutive years) may be assigned one additional course to teach in the following and subsequent years until funded support returns to the minimum level.
- Faculty members who are supporting no funded GRAs (0 funded GRA hours, calculated as an average over two consecutive years) may be assigned two additional courses to teach in the following and subsequent years until they meet the minimum level

### **Timing of Adjustments in Teaching Load**

Course schedules for each semester are prepared far in advance of the start of the semester; therefore, changes in faculty teaching workloads must lag behind the workload analyses by an academic year to avoid disruptions in the teaching schedule. The table below provides examples of the timing for adjustments in faculty teaching workloads.

Workload Years	Analysis Completed	Changes Implemented
2020-22	June 2022	Fall 2023
2021-23	June 2023	Fall 2024
2022-24	June 2024	Fall 2025
2024-25	June 2025	Fall 2026

**FAQ added on 05/01/2024 based on questions from faculty and replies to those questions from the CSE**

**Q1 Does funding provided for students during the summer semesters get counted?**

For the purposes of the faculty workload calculation, the CSE only counts long semesters when computing funded students/post-doctoral researchers. Nevertheless, it is expected that faculty will fully support students during the summer since it is essential for their progress toward their degree and since it would be difficult to attract and maintain top graduate students and post-doctoral research without providing summer support.

**Q2 Can you clarify whether research fellows are counted?**

Post-doctoral researchers that are funded by the faculty member count. Other titles such as research fellow, visiting fellow, etc. do not count. The rationale for this is that post-doctoral researchers are supported by and mentored by their supervisors, much like graduate student researchers. Other titles that allow more established researchers, including research fellows, may be self-supported and/or require reduced mentoring. Unfunded visiting researchers are not counted.