

ME Faculty Instructional Workload Policy
Approved by the Budget Council on January 17, 2020
Revised October 20, 2022 and February 4, 2025

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.
 - Note: the time-periods counted in tabulating support for GRAs include only the fall and spring semesters. Per Cockrell school policy, summer support for GRAs is not included in the workload calculation. Nevertheless, it is expected that PhD students will be supported for the full calendar year, including summers. Since summer support is not factored into the workload calculation, support during the summer can be provided via a wider variety of options (e.g., internships) without negatively impacting the faculty's workload calculation.
 - Note: Per Cockrell school policy, mentoring of more experienced post-PhD researchers who have titles other than "Postdoctoral Fellow" does not count towards the faculty workload calculation. For example, researchers with the following titles are not credited towards the workload calculation: Research Associate, Research Engineering/Scientist, Engineering Scientist, Engineering Scientist Associate, Senior Research Fellow, and Research Fellow. The rationale for excluding these mentees is that their additional profession experience does not require the same time commitments needed to mentor GRAs or postdocs.
- **New Faculty Members.** New faculty who are hired at the rank of associate/full professor will have their teaching loads reduced for an initial period of time. The duration of the course reduction is at the discretion of the chair, but an initial reduction period of 3 years is recommended. Following this timeline, the new faculty member would transition to the regular teaching policy at the start of their 4th year. The workload calculation for the 4th year may include students/postdocs at the prior institution who continue to be mentored by the faculty member during the tabulation period (years 1-2 at UT).
- **Assistant professors** are assigned to teach two courses per year during the probationary (pre-tenure) period and for the year following their promotion to associate professor. For example, an assistant professor who started in fall 2020 and was promoted to associate professor effective fall 2026, would no longer receive the assistant professor course reduction starting in fall 2027. For a typical assistant professor this amounts to a total of 7 years of reduced teaching during the assistant professor time period.

For assistant professors that are promoted early, including those that elect to combine service from a prior institution, the initial course reduction period will end after the first year in rank as Associate Professor. [Example: an Assistant Professor that combines 3 years of service at their prior institution (and undergoes tenure review in their third year at UT) would transition to the regular teaching policy at the start of their 5th year at UT = 2nd year as Associate Professor.]

- **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 |
| 2023-25 | June 2025 | Fall 2026 |