

DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING
University of Delaware
Approved December 3, 2025

Faculty Workload Policy

I. INTRODUCTION

The 2023 Collective Bargaining Agreement is hereby incorporated by reference. The workload policy shall be administered in a fashion consistent with the terms of the 2023 Collective Bargaining Agreement and any future agreements which supersede or replace it.

A. Teaching activities include:

1. In class course instruction;
2. Individual teaching of undergraduate and graduate students, such as the supervision of independent study coursework;*
3. Advisement of students in course-related, curriculum-related, and profession-related matters;*
4. Thesis and dissertation advisement toward the award of graduate degrees;*
5. Textbook writing; and,
6. Improvement and development of courses, curricula, instructional methods and materials. [For example, preparing lecture notes to be distributed to students, or in other ways going above and beyond what is usually required in teaching].

* These activities can only be counted as teaching as cited in Appendix A of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

B. Research activities include:

1. Performing individual and collaborative research and other scholarly activities,
2. Supervising and collaborating with undergraduate and graduate students, and postdoctoral associates, in research work,
3. Publishing significant contributions in scientific, technical, and professional journals, presenting results at scholarly meetings, and utilizing other effective methods for the communication of research findings; and,
4. Regularly seeking and receiving external support for research programs.

C. Service activities include:

1. Contributing on university, college, and department committees and on administrative assignments;
2. Serving for professional organizations on a local, national, and international level, such as active membership on academies, committees, boards, and conference organizing committees;
3. Serving as an editor or associate editor for a scientific or professional publication, reviewing books, proposals, and journal papers; and,
4. Contributing in other activities that serve to promote the mission of the department, such as degree accreditation and recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students.

D. Consulting activity, although important to faculty development, is considered to be a private professional activity. Its effect on the Department should be apparent in enhanced

teaching and in research that is pertinent to society's needs. Faculty consulting activities must comply with the University Policy on Consulting.

- E. Faculty workloads will encompass teaching, research, and service, but the distribution of these components may vary from faculty member to faculty member, depending on the needs of the Department and the interests of faculty members, and the nature of the faculty appointment. Workloads are generated by consultation between the faculty member and the chairperson. The responsibility of the chairperson is to ensure that the Department's total workload is distributed equitably, both within an academic year and over a period of years, taking into account the needs of the Department, its students, and its faculty.
- F. An individual's workload will be determined with the expectation that the faculty member will have the opportunity to meet the criteria for promotion and satisfactory peer review. The concept of balance among the three categories of teaching, research, and service is of utmost importance and will characterize the expectations of the chairperson and faculty member in discussions of the assigned workload.

II. ADMINISTERED WORKLOAD POLICY

- A. The total workload for tenure-track and continuing-track faculty is defined by the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the University and the AAUP. The agreement considers a 100% workload as 12 credit hours per week per semester.
- B. The percent of each faculty member's workload devoted to teaching, service, and research may vary because the College adheres to an "administered" workload policy. The policy's two intents are to allow optimal utilization of the skills and contributions of each faculty member in the College, and to ensure each faculty member's continued scholarly and professional advancement. These two considerations are used by the faculty member and their department chairperson to determine the individual's appropriate workload percentages allocated to teaching, research, and service. Priorities are given to meeting of departmental course offering requirements, and to each faculty member's obligation to provide an equivalent total workload as the result of teaching, research, and service activities. It is the chairperson's obligation and prerogative to administer workload allocations to address these priorities.
- C. In determining overall workloads, consideration is typically given to the following activities. This list is not meant to exclude other legitimate justifications for the modification of an individual's workload composition.
 - 1. Time devoted to course and curriculum development. This may constitute a greater portion of the overall workload when it is the first time a course is taught, and is expected to vary from year-to-year depending on the changes made;
 - 2. Proposal preparation and solicitation of research funds;
 - 3. Time spent for the active recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students;
 - 4. Responsibility for specific administrative or leadership activities;
 - 5. Participation in external activities so as to have an effective voice in national and international science and engineering policy affecting research funding directions, accreditation, and long range plans for the profession through participation in the governance of professional societies;
 - 6. Participation, on behalf of the department, in important university policy

- and administrative work;
7. Salary release through grants, contracts or other sources of funding defined by the College's Buyout Policy; and,
 8. Release time for those who are newly appointed at the Assistant Professor level (normally during the first two semesters of appointment).
 9. Workload specified in offer letters.

All Mechanical Engineering faculty are expected to contribute in a significant and continuing way to teaching undergraduate as well as graduate students and to fulfilling the instructional priorities of the Department. It is a faculty norm that on-going programs of externally funded research are expected of all tenured/tenure-track Mechanical Engineering faculty and are not a justification for further reducing teaching and instructional contributions. In some circumstances, however, faculty may seek permission to buy-out additional instructional time through salary release from external grants and contracts defined by the College's buy-out policy.

- D. A typical administered workload for research-active tenured/tenure-track faculty in the Department would include the equivalent of teaching three 3-credit contact hour courses per academic year. The teaching load will typically be assigned as one course per semester plus educational supervision of graduate students equivalent to a third course, but may alternatively be assigned as two courses in one semester and one course in the other semester. The chairperson assigns the teaching load in consultation with each faculty member, to meet the needs of the Department according to the principles described in section I above. In addition, the faculty member is expected to develop and support a nationally recognized and externally funded research program of high quality involving graduate students, which would represent the remainder of the 100% workload.

Departmental academic standards and the faculty norms that support these standards affirm an expectation for all faculty of excellence in teaching and scholarship that is at the level of well-respected departments across the nation. The typical administered workload in the department reflects and supports this standard of excellence. The typical workload reflects the assessment that each tenured/tenure-track faculty member is actively engaged in an on-going externally funded research program involving graduate students that meets the standards of academic quality and scholarly productivity among nationally respected Mechanical Engineering departments¹. This typical workload assignment for research reflects the fact that much of the assigned faculty research effort constitutes University support for activities funded by external contracts and grants at a level approved by the chairperson and dean.

A typical administered workload for continuing-track faculty in the department would include the equivalent of teaching three 3-credit contact hours per semester, substantial service to the Department, University, and profession at a minimum level of 10% workload effort, with the remaining of the 100% workload in research.

Variations on a faculty member's workload may include the teaching of a four-credit hour course, or additional courses as required by demands on the Department. Other variations may include an exceptional load for advisement, recruiting of graduate or undergraduate students, or substantial service to the College or University.

As stated in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, administered workloads must be in accordance with the actual contributions of the individual faculty members, reflect expected quality of teaching and are not automatic. Thus, workload assignment variations to support research and scholarship must be reflected in the research and scholarly productivity commensurate with that workload responsibility. The chairperson may assign or approve requests for nonstandard workloads that are otherwise consistent with the Collective Bargaining Agreement and University policies and procedures. The chairperson may assign one or more additional courses during the year beyond the typical assigned workload to faculty members who are not, over time, actively engaged in scholarship, publication, or securing extramural funding.

In order to assure that each faculty member meets his or her full obligation to the Department, workloads may be readjusted when a faculty member is unable to perform the work that was previously allocated. Such reassignment may occur, for example, when enrollment by the first session of a class demonstrates that the course should be cancelled. In general, reassignment to alternative work can occur whenever the chairperson establishes that the faculty member is unable to discharge any element—teaching, research, or service—contained in the original workload plan, and after consultation with the faculty member.

- E. As stated by the Faculty Handbook, all faculty are fully engaged for the whole year of fifty-two weeks. While normally members of the teaching staff are required to teach for only nine months annually, responsibilities of faculty to the University do not cease during the summer months. Indeed, the international stature of the department depends strongly on the vigorous and continuous level of scholarship, research, and professional leadership by the faculty. Faculty must make an annual request to the chairperson that their workload and performance evaluation include summer activities. Research summer activity will change the overall workload percentages allocated between teaching, research, and service. For example, a faculty member may have a teaching assignment of three 3-credit courses during the academic year (38% teaching workload) and a 10% service workload. If that faculty member carries out an approved summer research program included in the workload of two months of summer research activity, the overall workload distribution for the 11 month period would be 31% teaching, 61% research, and 8% service.

¹ The group of nationally respected Departments would be those in the upper half of the most recent National Research Council (or equivalent) evaluation.

III. OTHER WORKLOAD CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The faculty member is expected to meet classes during the regularly scheduled class periods; also to have open access to students in need of support and advice; this is helped by holding regularly scheduled office hours but meetings with students should be encouraged beyond that.
- B. The faculty member will be on campus as required by his/her workload.
- C. The role of faculty in providing academic and career advisement is critical to the continued success of the department. Distribution of student advisees may vary from faculty member to faculty member. These activities will be accounted for in the workload in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- D. The Department recognizes that childbirth and other qualifying circumstances can affect the working availability of a faculty member. In accord with University policy, an eligible faculty member may take continuous or intermittent FMLA leave, as described in Article 9.16 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. It is the University's practice to provide faculty with full pay during the period of continuous or intermittent FMLA leave. In addition, faculty members are entitled to the continuation of benefits during FMLA leave under the same terms and conditions as if they had continued to work.
- E. Talents, interests, and development needs of individual faculty will produce considerable diversity of teaching assignments vis-à-vis undergraduate vs. graduate courses, and elective vs. core courses. An equitable policy over time will provide faculty comparable opportunities to explore the range of teaching opportunities in which they have an interest, and to develop as teachers and scholars. It is the responsibility of the chairperson to consider equity of teaching assignments over time when administering faculty workloads.

IV. ASSIGNMENT OF EVALUATION AND MERIT SCORES

- A. Merit salary increases are intended to serve as incentives and recognition for exceptional faculty efforts that further the mission of the Department. Merit increases are awarded on the basis of each faculty member's three 9-point scale appraisal ratings as assigned by the department chair, are weighted by workload percentages for each of the three workload categories. See Article 12 of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement for further details.
- B. Merit salary increases are intended to reward faculty members who excel in teaching, research, and/or service. Faculty members are encouraged to make substantial contributions to more than one category among teaching, research, and service. The department chair determines evaluation scores for each faculty member in each workload category based on evidence of faculty effort and achievement. Appendix A of this document lists options of activities that faculty may use to establish effort and achievement in each workload category during the annual evaluation. To ensure meaningful evaluation, faculty should include multiple lines of evidence to be evaluated in each workload category. However, it is understood that individual faculty members contribute to the Department in different ways and will correspondingly demonstrate their effort and achievement in different ways. Appendix A provides a breadth of options, and is not to be construed as a list of expectations.

- C. Faculty on an approved sabbatical leave will receive merit consideration. The lack of contribution to teaching and service during the leave is expected.

V. REVISION OF WORKLOAD POLICIES

- A. These workload policies will be reassessed every three to five years, or when requested by a majority of the departmental faculty.
- B. Major curricular changes or the addition of new centers and programs may necessitate modification of this policy.
- C. Contract changes instituted through the Collective Bargaining Agreement might require reassessment of this policy. In case of conflict between this document and the CBA, the CBA prevails.
- D. Any modification to this workload policy must be approved by a majority vote of the faculty, in accordance with the departmental bylaws, the chairperson, the dean, AAUP-UD, and the provost.
- E. These workload policies will be provided to new faculty upon their appointment.

Appendix A
Mechanical Engineering Faculty Annual Evaluation Activities

1. Teaching:

- 1.1 Courses taught (course no., title, required or elective, no. of enrollment, new course?, independent studies)
- 1.2 Textbooks authored (authors, title, publisher, year)
- 1.3 Undergraduate students advised
- 1.4 Teaching improvements activities, e.g., workshop and seminars attended
- 1.5 Development of innovative teaching methods or materials
- 1.6 Teaching awards and honors
- 1.7 Participation in recruitment, e.g., Decision Days, telephone recruitment
- 1.8 Ph.D. students advised
- 1.9 M.S. students advised
- 1.10 Thesis, dissertation, qualifying, candidacy exam committee service
- 1.11 Others

2. Research

- 2.1 Books or monographs (authors, title, publisher, year)
- 2.2 Refereed journal publications and book chapters (authors, title, journal, page number, and year)
- 2.3 Conference proceedings (authors, title, conference title, location year)
- 2.4 Externally funded research projects and expenditures (co-investigators)
- 2.5 Research proposals submitted/pending (co-investigators)
- 2.6 Ph.D. students graduated
- 2.7 M.S. students graduated
- 2.8 Post doctoral fellows advised
- 2.9 Research awards and honors
- 2.10 Invited seminars
- 2.11 Keynote presentations
- 2.12 Others

3. Service

- 3.1 University committees
- 3.2 College committees
- 3.3 Department committees
- 3.4 Journal editor or associate editor or guest editor
- 3.5 Chairpersonship and office of professional societies
- 3.6 Chairperson/organizer of technical meetings, conferences and workshop
- 3.7 Conference editorial board memberships
- 3.8 Service awards/honors
- 3.9 Special assignments (e.g., local chapter of professional societies, search committee, Associate Chairperson, Associate Dean)
- 3.10 Others