# Teaching-Load Policy

*(Approved: General Faculty, February 7, 2007)*

## I. Introduction

For the last six years, we have operated under a teaching-load policy proposed by Bernd Schüttler that sought to link faculty teaching loads to the two major goals specified in the last departmental long-range plan, namely increasing the level of external funding and expanding the size of the doctoral program. In particular, teaching loads were tied to two important contributors to achieving these goals: external funding and support for graduate students. Annual threshold levels were set for both, such that: (a) if a given faculty member met or exceeded both thresholds, then he or she could request a 1-course release for the coming year, (b) if a given faculty member failed to meet both thresholds, then he or she would be considered available for a 1-course overload, and (c) if a given faculty member met or exceeded only one of the two thresholds, then he or she would get neither a course release nor a course overload. Faculty teaching an overload (whether mandated or voluntary) would receive 3 merit points.

The policy proposed here seeks to revise and make more explicit the criteria that determine a faculty member's teaching load, preserving the principles described above. It also redefines how the teaching load is input into the determination of a faculty member's annual raise.

A few provisos are worth mentioning beforehand:

(1) Every aspect of this proposed policy is subject to the 'sum rule' of every class needing an instructor. As with our present policy, qualifying for course releases under this policy does not mean automatically getting those course releases. See Section V.

(2) To account for the fact that no single policy suits all circumstances all the time, the Head is explicitly authorized to make adjustments to the way this policy is implemented on a case-by-case basis, as the circumstances warrant, provided it is done in as fair a manner as possible and as close to the spirit of this policy as possible. (For example, the Head may consider small adjustments to the formulas in Table 1 warranted if a faculty member demonstrates that his/her research field is significantly outside the norm in terms of average publication rates or funding levels.)

(3) No faculty member will have a course load less than 1 semester course in any year, even if the number of releases from this policy plus additional releases (*e.g.*, for chaired professorships, etc.) would result in a course load less than 1. An exception is if a faculty member uses 'course banking' to arrange for a year of no teaching.

(4) If a faculty member 'buys out' a course with funds from grants, contracts, or other sources, then he or she will get credit within this policy for having taught that course.

(5) Throughout this policy, a baseline course load of 3 per year is assumed. If this baseline changes in the future, then this policy would need to be adjusted accordingly.

## II. Definitions

*Course*: Throughout this document, the word 'course' is construed to mean a 'standard 1-semester course of 3-4 credit hours'. Courses worth fewer credit hours will count as half a course. However, freshman seminars will not count towards teaching loads.

*Adjustment*: This policy deals with course releases and overloads. The generic term 'adjustment' refers to both types.

*Earned Adjustments*: An 'earned adjustment' is one determined by specific criteria pertaining to level of research activity, as specified in Section III. The parameter $ea_i$ stands for the earned adjustment awarded to the $i$th faculty member. Negative values stand for releases and positive values for overloads.

*Requested Adjustments*: A 'requested adjustment' is an additional release or overload requested by a faculty member, as specified in Section IV. The parameters $rr_i$ and $ro_i$ stand for the requested course release and course overload, respectively, for the $i$th faculty member. Both parameters are nonnegative, and only one may be nonzero at a time.

*Year*: For the purposes of this policy, a 'year' refers to the period beginning on September 1 and ending on August 31, except where specifically noted otherwise.

*External Funds*: For a given faculty member, 'external funds' refers to the sum of his/her single-PI grants or contracts and all portions of multi-PI grants or contracts credited to him/her, excluding all internal funding. The funds must be applicable to the period specified in Table 1, and only *new* funds awarded during this period or the 12 months preceding it may be included. A faculty member will get credit within this policy for funds generated by a subordinate (*e.g.*, research scientist, postdoc) if the acquisition of those funds resulted from the guidance and mentorship of the faculty member.

*Graduate Student Support*: For a given faculty member, 'graduate student support' refers to the amount of full-year graduate research assistantship (GRA) support provided by him/her from single-PI grants or contracts and portions of multi-PI grants or contracts credited to him/her, including both external and internal funding sources. For the purposes of determining GRA support for a given year, the year will be defined as the academic year plus following summer, and thus will run from mid-August to mid-August and not from September 1 to August 31. In calculating total GRA support, fall and spring semesters will count as 4.5 months each, and summer will count as 3 months. The unit '1 ninth' refers to 11.111% support. Special university or regents graduate assistantships received by a student working under a given faculty member's supervision are counted as equivalent to grant- or contract-based support provided by that faculty member.

*Peer Reviewed Publications*: In this document the term 'peer reviewed publications' refers to publications in scholarly, peer-reviewed journals with publication dates in the period specified in Table 1. Publications designated as 'in press' by the end of the specified period will not be included in the count. Other scholarly publications (*e.g.*, book chap-

ters, monographs, etc.) with publication dates during the specified period may be included in the count at the Head's discretion.

III. Earned Releases or Overloads

Table 1: Criteria for $i$th faculty member to qualify for a given value of $ea_i$.

| $ea_i$ | Criteria |
|---|---|
| −1 | Faculty member must have $F_i + G_i + P_i \geq 3.5$, where:<br>$F_i$ = External funding level in preceding year, in units of \$50,000.<br>$G_i$ = Graduate student support in preceding year, in units of 4 ninths.†<br>$P_i$ = Number of peer-reviewed publications in preceding two years combined, in units of 4 papers. |
| 0 | Faculty member must have $F_i + G_i + P_i \geq 2$, where:<br>$F_i$ = External funding level in either year of preceding two, in units of \$50,000.<br>$G_i$ = Graduate student support in either year of preceding two, in units of 4 ninths.†<br>$P_i$ = Number of peer-reviewed publications in preceding two years combined, in units of 4 papers.<br>(Note: Definitions of $F_i$ and $G_i$ in this category account for short-term loss of external funding by allowing either of preceding two years to be used.) |
| +1 | (i) Faculty member does not qualify for any other $ea_i$ values. |

† After full support of one student, full support of postdocs may count for 4 ninths each.

Provisional values of $ea_i$, for $i$ running over all faculty members, are determined according to the guidelines given in Table 1. Final values of $ea_i$, $rr_i$, and $ro_i$ (see Section IV) will be determined by the Head according to the procedure described in Section V.

IV. Requested Releases or Overloads

Different faculty members have different priorities and work habits. In recognition of this, faculty members will be permitted to request additional teaching-load adjustments beyond the earned adjustments described in Section III. Requested adjustments will be awarded at lower priority than earned adjustments and other teaching-load demands.

Requested overloads: Any faculty member may request to teach additional courses ($ro_i > 0$). If a requested overload is awarded, then the additional course(s) will be added to that faculty member's total course count and will be eligible for overload merit-point credit.

Requested releases: Any faculty member may request an additional course release ($rr_i = 1$). If this request is awarded, the faculty member will pay for the privilege of this additional course release by losing a number of merit points equal to the number gained by teaching a one-course overload. Only one of $ro_i$ and $rr_i$ may be nonzero.

V. Procedure for Determining Course Loads

The Head will compute a provisional course load for each faculty member. Let $q_i \geq 0$ be the number of course releases awarded to the $i$th faculty member for situations unrelated to this policy (*e.g.*, for administrative duties, chaired professorships, editorships, unusual FTE distributions, etc.). A provisional course load for the $i$th faculty member, $L_i$, for the academic year in question is computed as follows:

- If the faculty member is the Head, then $L_i$ is set by prior arrangement with the Dean.
- If the faculty member is an entry-level tenure-track assistant professor with a substantial research FTE, then $L_i = [\max(1, 1 - q_i) + ro_i]$ in each of the first 2 years of service and $L_i = [\max(1, 2 - q_i) + ro_i]$ in the third year of service. After the third year and until the award of tenure, $L_i = [\max(1, 3 - q_i) + ro_i]$.
- If the faculty member is an entry-level tenure-track assistant professor with primarily a teaching FTE, then $L_i = [\max(1, 4 - q_i) + ro_i]$ in each of the first 3 years of service.
- Otherwise $L_i = [\max(1, 3 + ea_i - rr_i - q_i) + ro_i]$.

Let $C$ be the total number of courses to be taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty members in the academic year in question (*i.e.*, subtracting out those to be taught by visitors, temporary faculty, etc., but retaining those associated with course buy-outs). There are three cases to consider:

(1)  $\sum_i L_i = C$ :  In this case there are no sum-rule violations. Final course loads are equal to provisional course loads for each faculty member.

(2)  $\sum_i L_i > C$ :  In this case the sum rule is exceeded. All earned and requested releases are awarded. Requested overloads ($ro_i > 0$) will be declined, starting with faculty with an earned release (*i.e.*, $ea_i = -1$), until the sum rule is satisfied. If the sum rule is still exceeded after declining all requested overloads, then earned overloads will be reduced until the sum rule is satisfied. If multiple faculty have the same $ea_i$, then they will be put in random order, unless circumstances warrant a different ordering, as determined by the Head.

(3)  $\sum_i L_i < C$ :  In this case the sum rule has a shortfall. All earned and requested overloads are awarded. Requested releases ($rr_i > 0$) will be declined, starting with faculty with an earned overload (*i.e.*, $ea_i = 1$) until the sum rule is satisfied. If the sum rule still has a shortfall after declining all requested releases, then earned releases will be reduced until the sum rule is satisfied, starting with the faculty member with the lowest value of $F_i + G_i + P_i$ (see Table 1).

VI.  <u>Overload Parameter for Merit-Point System</u>

Once final values of $L_i$, $ea_i$, $rr_i$, and $ro_i$ have been determined according to the procedure in Section V, an overload parameter, $n_i$, is computed for each faculty member. The number of merit points received by the $i$th faculty member for overload teaching will be proportional to $n_i$, with the proportionality factor to be set elsewhere (see Raise Allocation Policy). For each faculty member, the following quantities are defined:

$L_i$  =  Final teaching load for the academic year in question, as determined in Section V.

$ea_i$ = Final earned adjustment, as determined in Section V.
$rr_i$ = Final requested release, as determined in Section V.
$ro_i$ = Final requested overload, as determined in Section V.
$q_i$ = Releases awarded for administrative positions, chaired professorships, etc. ($q_i \geq 0$).
$eo_i$ = Earned overload awarded by this policy (*i.e.*, if $ea_i > 0$, then $eo_i = ea_i$; else $eo_i = 0$).

The overload parameter for the *i*th faculty member is then given by:

$n_i$ = Overload parameter = $eo_i + ro_i - rr_i$

Faculty members earn merit points for all course overloads, earned or requested. However, faculty members are penalized merit points *only* for requested course releases, not earned course releases or administrative course releases.

## VII. Policy Review

This policy must be reviewed by a departmental committee in 2-3 years after its adoption, and periodically thereafter, in order to assess its effectiveness and make recommendations for improvement.

VIII.  Examples

(1) Ann had \$180,000 in new external funding and fully supported three students and a postdoc in the preceding year.  In the last two years, she published 15 papers in peer-reviewed journals.  For the coming year, she has requested (and been awarded) a 1-course overload ($ro_i = 1$).  She presently holds the Ursula G. Andersen Chair of Natural Sciences, for which she is entitled to a 1-course release ($q_i = 1$).  Ann qualifies for $ea_i = -1$, because $F_i = 3.6$, $G_i = 4$, and $P_i = 3.75$, so that $F_i + G_i + P_i = 11.35 \geq 3.5$.  For Ann, $L_i = 2$, $eo_i = 0$, and $n_i = 1$.

(2) Ben had \$75,000 in new external funding and supported two students for a total of 6 ninths in the preceding year.  In the last two years, he published 5 papers in peer-reviewed journals.  For the coming year, he has requested (and been awarded) an additional release ($rr_i = 1$).  Ben qualifies for $ea_i = -1$, because $F_i = 1.5$, $G_i = 1.5$, and $P_i = 1.25$, so that $F_i + G_i + P_i = 4.25 \geq 3.5$.  For Ben, $L_i = 1$, $eo_i = 0$, and $n_i = -1$.

(3) Carl's grant was not renewed, so he had no new external funding in the previous year.  However, the year before that he got the final \$40,000 installment of his grant.  He supported a student at the level of 3 ninths in each of the previous two years.  In the last two years, he published 2 papers in peer-reviewed journals.  Carl qualifies for $ea_i = 0$, because $F_i = 0.8$, $G_i = 0.75$ (only one of two preceding years counts), and $P_i = 0.5$, so that $F_i + G_i + P_i = 2.05 \geq 2$.  In addition, he serves as the graduate coordinator ($q_i = 1$) and has requested (and been awarded) a 1-course overload ($ro_i = 1$).  For Carl, $L_i = 3$, $eo_i = 0$, and $n_i = 1$.

(4) Donna no longer has grants nor applies for them.  She served as major professor to one Ph.D. student in the preceding year and has published 4 papers in the preceding two years combined.  Based on Table I, she qualifies for $ea_i = +1$.  She does not qualify for a nonzero $q_i$ value; however she has requested (and been awarded) a 1-course release ($rr_i = -1$).  For Donna, $L_i = 3$, $eo_i = 1$, and $n_i = 0$.

(5) Evan has largely stopped conducting research, apart from the occasional thesis project with an undergraduate major.  Since he has no external funding, is not a major professor for any graduate student, and has not published at all in the last two years, he qualifies for $ea_i = +1$.  However, he serves the department as undergraduate physics advisor ($q_i = 1$) and has requested (and been awarded) a 1-course overload ($ro_i = 1$).  For Evan, $L_i = 5$, $eo_i = 2$, and $n_i = 3$.