

## FACULTY & STAFF RESOURCES

# UNC CHARLOTTE ACADEMIC PROCEDURE: TEACHING LOAD

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board of Governors policy on faculty teaching loads ([UNC Policy Manual 400.3.4](#)) assigns UNC Charlotte faculty responsibility for five courses per year. It is common practice in universities to vary teaching loads for individual faculty in order to meet institutional goals. The policy allows for variation as long as the standard is met in the aggregate. The purpose of UNC Charlotte's Teaching Load procedure is to provide guidance on how teaching loads may be differentiated to address the different facets of our institutional mission.

These guidelines apply to all full-time members of the faculty with the rank of Lecturer or above, including those with special faculty appointments such as clinical faculty, teaching faculty, professors of practice, etc. Research faculty paid from non-state sources are excluded. A course is defined as an organized section using the Delaware study terminology, as prescribed by UNC system policy [1]. Faculty teaching load includes both graduate and undergraduate instruction. The period of measurement for the teaching load procedure is the academic year and does not include summer terms.

[1] For reporting purposes the Board of Governors will annually review data from the National Study of Instructional Costs & Productivity (The Delaware Study) of teaching loads for full time equivalent faculty within the University. The Delaware Study provides comparable teaching data at the discipline level using the following faculty categories: regular tenure stream, other regular, supplemental and teaching assistants. Teaching load is derived by the number of organized class courses a faculty member is assigned in a given semester. Courses that are not conducted in regularly scheduled class meetings, such as "readings," "special topics," "problems" or "research" courses, including dissertation/thesis research, and "individual lesson" courses (typically in music and fine arts) are excluded from the Teaching Load calculation.

## II. PROCEDURE STATEMENT

### Principles:

1. It is our responsibility to offer high quality, accessible instruction to our students. Teaching loads must be assigned to ensure the availability of courses that will allow our students to meet the requirements for graduation in a timely manner.
2. Variations in teaching load must be administered fairly, consistent with general standards of faculty productivity, and standards for faculty rank.
3. A teaching load of five courses per year is considered the standard load for a faculty member whose performance is deemed satisfactory in instruction, research, and service.

### **Criteria for variations in teaching loads for individual faculty:**

1. **UNC Policy Manual 400.3.4** identifies possible grounds for teaching load reductions. Teaching loads may be increased or decreased depending on the responsibilities and performance of an individual faculty member.
  - a. Loads exceeding five courses per year may be assigned to faculty whose primary responsibility is in undergraduate teaching and advising.
  - b. For tenure line faculty, assignments of fewer than five courses per year must reflect strong, ongoing contributions to the university's research mission, a heavy commitment to graduate education, or significant administrative responsibility.
  - c. Non-tenure earning faculty who generally have a higher than average teaching load may be released from some teaching for training or grant activity in support of teaching or may be assigned other responsibilities such as advising, but must have permission of the dean for any release that reduces their teaching load below five courses/year.
2. In making teaching assignments, department chairs may consider time needed by new untenured assistant professors within their first two or three years of appointment to establish courses and research programs.
3. In adjusting teaching loads based on faculty productivity, a maximum time frame of three years that excludes periods of FMLA, unpaid leave, or full time administrative commitments should be assessed.
4. Buyouts of teaching time through extramural grants and contracts are encouraged, but full-time faculty may not reduce their teaching load below two courses per year through buyouts.
5. Emergencies, sudden increases in demand, or other factors may require that faculty occasionally teach courses in excess of their assigned load, generally referred to as an overload. Courses taught as overloads are limited to one per semester. In these instances, department chairs may reduce teaching loads in subsequent semesters. Additional pay for teaching during the regular term is subject to **University Policy 101.15, Additional Compensation for Professional Services to the University**, and may be used in those cases in which it is not possible to provide an adjustment in teaching load within the next two regular terms. Additional pay for overload teaching requires approval of the dean.

### **Responsibilities:**

In conjunction with the dean, departments are responsible for determining normal expectations for course structure, enrollments, research productivity, and engagement in graduate education, and ensuring that faculty meet those expectations. Changes in career trajectories should be assessed during the [annual review](#) with teaching load adjusted when there is a change from the normal expectations. Departments are responsible for documenting mutual agreement between administration and faculty on the deliverables and expectations of the course reduction, the process of evaluation regarding the productivity of the faculty member, and the outcomes if expectations are not met.

Reassignments of duties must take into consideration the availability of other faculty to assume the teaching load of the reassigned faculty. Colleges must assess the total impact of reassignments on the ability of the college to meet the teaching load procedure.

Just as individual faculty may have teaching loads differentiated based on their contributions to the University, departments may also play different roles in advancing the mission of the institution. College deans may approve variations in teaching loads for all faculty to reflect mission emphasis and to take into account other factors such as disciplinary differences in modes of instruction, team teaching, participation in interdisciplinary instruction, the mix of tenure line and non-tenure line positions, or the availability of teaching assistants. Variations in teaching load that result in a college not meeting the standard must be approved by the Provost.

### **Assessment and Monitoring:**

To ensure that the institution meets the standard set by the Board of Governors, the Office of Academic Affairs will monitor teaching loads annually, including independent study courses (in compliance with [UNC Charlotte Guidelines for Undergraduate Independent Study](#)), overloads (in compliance with [University Policy 101.15, Additional Compensation for Professional Services to the University](#)), and course reductions.

The dean is responsible for reporting to the Provost all faculty course reductions for the reporting year as part of the college annual report. The Provost will review all reports to ensure that instructional productivity is at acceptable levels.

### **Related issues:**

These guidelines must be interpreted in light of other policies including but not limited to the Carnegie definition for a course credit and accreditation requirements for faculty qualifications.

## **III. DEFINITIONS**

- **Faculty** – All persons who hold Professorial Rank (Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor) or a Special Faculty Appointment (Visiting Professor, Adjunct Professor, Instructor, Assistant Professor (Library), Assistant Professor (Military), Lecturer, Assistant Research Professor, or Artist-in-Residence).

## IV. PROCEDURE CONTACT(S)

- **Authority:** [Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs](#)
- **Responsible Office:** [Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs](#)
- **Additional Contact(s):** n/a

## V. HISTORY

- **Established:** March 6, 2014
- **Revised:** July 30, 2015

## VI. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND RESOURCES

- [UNC Charlotte Academic Personnel Review Process: Annual Review](#)
- [UNC Policy Manual 400.3.4: Monitoring Faculty Teaching Workloads](#)
- [UNC Charlotte Academic Procedure: Guidelines for Undergraduate Independent Study](#) (see also [UNC Board of Governors Policy 700.6.1\[R\]](#))
- [University Policy 101.15, Additional Compensation for Professional Services to the University](#)

## VII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Where is this procedure referenced?**  
The procedure is published on the Academic Policies & Procedures webpage of the [Provost website](#).

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