Faculty Workload Guidelines
Approved 2011; Revised 2014: Revised 2016

The following reflects the practices of S-CAR institutionalized during the Directorships/Deanships of Sara Cobb, Andrea Bartoli, and Kevin Avruch, and approved by the Faculty Board. The latest Revision reflects University policies adopted by Mason college/school deans and mandated by the Provost, March, 2016. The S-CAR Faculty Board approved these Guidelines December 7, 2017.

Preamble

Faculty are among the most important and consequential resources of any university and so it is essential that the university, and each of Mason’s academic units, ensure workload equity while also maximizing the efficient use of our teaching, research, and service resources.

Recognizing and allowing for differences among units, these guidelines are designed to assure consistency of workload expectations both across our university and aligned with related policies and practices in our peer institutions. This document applies to all S-CAR instructional faculty, and is consistent with the university’s Faculty Handbook (University Policy 3008 - Faculty Teaching Loads and University Policy 4012 – Roles and Responsibilities of a Principal Investigator), Mason’s Supplemental Pay procedures and State and Federal guidelines.

Standard Faculty Teaching Load

Tenure-Track/Tenured Faculty
Standard faculty teaching load is 4 courses per academic year (2-2 base load)

Term Faculty
Faculty load is defined by the contractual terms of employment and based upon the academic needs the particular faculty member is meeting. Contracted standard loads for term faculty are one of the following:

- 4 courses per academic year (2-2 base load)
- 5 courses per academic year (3-2 or 2-3 base load)
- 6 courses per academic year (3-3 based load)

Term faculty loads reflect that term instructional faculty at S-CAR are on the graduate faculty and are expected to serve on thesis and dissertation committees and fulfill equivalent service requirements to that of tenure track faculty.

Each tenure-track/tenured faculty member and term faculty on 2-2 loads teaches 4 courses: 1 undergraduate, 2 graduate required courses, 1 elective course every year (Fall and Spring). These courses should be “on FTE”, in other words paid for out of student enrollment money. Courses that are not “On FTE” do not count toward the standard teaching load (ex: Malta is
contract or “Off FTE”). The exception to this is tenure-track faculty on their first contract (first 3 years) who teach 2 undergraduate course and 2 graduate courses.

The distribution across academic programs for term faculty varies based on the terms of the hire. Term faculty are usually hired to serve a specific academic program, so the teaching load is predominately in that program. Teaching distribution is determined by the Dean and Program Director. These include:

- A term faculty member teaching all undergraduate courses – load is 4 courses plus Dialogue and Difference Program Director
- A term faculty member teaching all undergraduate courses- load is 3-3
- A term faculty member teaching a 5 course load, of which 1 is reduced since she is the Graduate Certificate Program Director. Her courses can all be in the certificate program or she can choose to teach others but her emphasis is on Certificate.

Every faculty member will teach at least one course per year and is expected to engage in service.

Research Faculty
Research Faculty do not have standard teaching assignments, unless specified differently in the teaching contract. Research faculty teaching assignments and compensation are negotiated with the Dean.

Research, Teaching, and Practice

S-CAR faculty value active involvement in research and scholarship while remaining fully committed to teaching. As part of our mission, we also recognize S-CAR’s longstanding commitment on the part of some faculty to practice and engagement.

Course Buyouts

Certain administrative positions carry with it a course buyout. Buyouts vary based on the relative intensity of academic work the position entails.

- Administrative Faculty do not have a requirement to teach but regularly do. Whether teaching is considered part of the normal work duties or as an overload is negotiated with the Dean, based on the schedule of the course and balance of other responsibilities.
- Undergraduate Director – 2 courses and a stipend (academic year and summer)
- Certificate Director – 1 course and stipend (academic year and summer)
- Master’s Director – 1 course
- PhD director – 1 course
- Rice Chair (Point of View development responsibilities) – 1 course

Additional course reductions

Course reductions are subject to the discretion of the Dean based on institutional needs. A system for rewarding additional reductions for extraordinary instructional or advising work (chairing unusually larger numbers of MS or PhD committees, or OSCAR research mentor for example), approved by the faculty in 2106, is elucidated in Appendix, attached. Beyond that, there are some general standards for course buyouts listed here.

Grant/Contract Buyouts

Course reductions must be requested and approved by the Dean prior to the grant or contract submission, at least 3 months prior to the semester the reduction will occur in. If the funding
comes through closer than 3 months to the semester, the reduction will be deferred to the next term. The Dean will work with the Program Directors and the faculty requesting a buy-out to determine the best distribution of the remaining teaching load. Per a university-wide policy, the first course buyout will be at a rate of 15% of base salary, a second course buyout calculated at the same rate (15%), meaning a second course buyout will be for 30% of base. Multiple criteria will be considered when making decisions regarding buyouts, among them:

- Increasing the chance of the grant or contract being awarded by negotiating down the sum requested
- Highlighting the value of the personnel involved in the submission by requesting the highest possible sum as a way to signal the importance of work and quality of contribution that is offered
- Maximizing the benefit for the School as a whole
- Respecting the preferences of the submitting faculty member.

Study Leaves/Course Development Reductions

Course Reductions can be generated by approval of study leave by the University or S-CAR Dean or by contractual study leaves for tenure track faculty. Reductions have also been granted by the Provost’s Office or S-CAR Dean for development of new courses (specifically Distance).

Health/Personal Reasons

At the discretion of the Provost or Dean, additional reductions have been negotiated for personal circumstances.

General Scheduling Principles

Core required courses at the graduate level should be taught by full time faculty as often as possible. S-CAR will maintain a standard course offering schedule from year to year which can be modified as needed. Courses will be scheduled to limit the possibilities that required courses are offered at the same time. Within each academic year each MS required course will be offered in the 4:30 and 7:20 time slot.

Each faculty member will have a balance of teaching times across the year including 4:30, 7:20, and undergraduate times.

Process

The 4 program directors, working with the scheduling coordinator, will develop the course schedule for the year and a draft of faculty teaching assignments based on faculty interests and programmatic needs. The course schedule will be set up extending 2 academic years into the future. This schedule will then be presented at the fall faculty evaluation conversations by the Dean and changes and modifications made. In general, once the course schedule is set following the above principles, changes to course meeting times will be rare.

APPENDIX

Faculty Instructional Overload Policy

Following is a structure, designed and approved by the Faculty Board, for awarding course reduction for exceptional levels of service toward students over and above the regular teaching load is a response to the discussions at the Faculty Board about how to manage distribution of service or compensate for exceptional service.
This system is based on an understanding that within the general responsibilities of any instructional faculty member is a basic level of service on committees or individualized projects. If Faculty are not performing basic levels of service it is understood that the annual evaluation process is when that would be addressed.

*This structure is designed to recognize credit when a project or stage of a project is completed.* This means that faculty earn points in the semester that a student completes a discrete phase of a project. Mentoring a doctoral student entails earning points at the completion of the comprehensive, proposal, and final defense phases.

Here is a draft structure for assigning points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Project Completed</th>
<th>Faculty Points Per Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Study (CONF 499, 797, 897)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar Research Mentor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Thesis Chair</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Thesis Committee Member</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comps Committee Member</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Proposal Chair</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Proposal Readers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Chair</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Reader</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Up to 12 points earned in each academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer) would be considered part of the standards load expectation of faculty. Any points over 12 in an academic year would accrue toward a course reduction. These could be carried year to year until the faculty member achieves enough points to merit a course reduction. We propose making accumulating 10 points of overload service as a reasonable threshold for a course release. The decision on when and how the reduction would be awarded would be made by the Dean in consultation with the faculty member and relevant program directors.

As part of their annual evaluation with the Dean, faculty would report their “point count” for the preceding academic year.

Rev. and Approved by Faculty Board, 12/7/16