Guidelines for Workload Policies

Prepared by the Term Faculty Committee

September 2021

Defining and upholding Workload Policies for Term Faculty with Primarily Instructional Assignments at the level of the Local Academic Unit (LAU)

The Term Faculty Committee was convened in fall 2019 to oversee and facilitate the implementation of the Term Faculty Task Force recommendations. A primary theme of these recommendations pertained to instructional term faculty workload issues. After reviewing workload policies within Mason and informed by the guidance of professional organizations, the Term Faculty Committee recommends that Local Academic Unit (LAU) Workload Policies (WLPs) address the content areas described in this document.

Faculty workload policies are designed to guide the distribution of term faculty workload in equitable ways, as well as to provide an opportunity for workload plans to be tailored to the unique job responsibilities and specific needs of both the faculty member and the LAU. Having specific, transparent guidelines help faculty plan for their professional commitments and growth. Any research, service, or administrative obligations beyond teaching load may warrant reallocation of workload. Policies must be sufficiently flexible to enable the faculty and administration to take advantage of special opportunities that facilitate the organization's teaching, research, outreach, and/or service missions.

As a research comprehensive institution focused on providing all students access to excellence, the University is committed to teaching practices that lead to student engagement, learning, and success, and that reflect Mason's commitment to diversity and inclusive excellence. Instructional term faculty are critical contributors to meeting the mission of the University.

The intent of these guidelines is to help ensure that all LAUs at Mason have workload policies in place that are equitable and fair, transparent, consistently applied, and reflect best practices. Please note that all LAU Workload Policies should be consistent with the Office of the Provost Teaching Load Policy, Teaching Load Policy.

I. Purpose Statement

General guidance: The goals of any LAU WLP are to establish guidelines for assigning faculty work, ensuring workload equity, accounting for overall faculty activity, and providing transparency with regard to workload expectations among the faculty community. These policies are meant to be implemented across each LAU and to be holistically reviewed and revised regularly. The purpose statement section of the WLP should clearly indicate the governance structure(s) related to reviewing, modifying, approving, and communicating about revisions to WLPs.

This section of the WLP should answer the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the WLP?
- What function does the WLP play in practical terms?

- What is the timeline for WLP review, modification, approval, and communication of updates and/or revisions?
- What governance structure(s) (e.g., individuals, groups, committees) are responsible for overseeing these processes?

II. Mission/History of the LAU

General guidance: The Mission/History of the LAU section provides space to recognize the particular context and faculty constitution of a unit as it relates to its WLP.

This section of the WLP should answer the following questions:

- What, if anything, needs to be stated/recognized about the specific structure, history, or mission of the unit? [Note: this is an opportunity for the LAU to explain the unique nature and content of its WLP.]
- What details help distinguish or explain the nature of the unit and how it fits within the larger university context?

III. Content and Application of the LAU Workload Policy

General guidance: The Content and Application section of the WLP should explain the ways in which the WLP connects at the unit level to other governing documents (e.g., bylaws, policies and procedures).

This section of the WLP should answer the following question:

- How does the WLP connect to the LAU's other governing policies and procedural documents?

IV. Implementation of Workload Expectations/Responsibilities

General guidance: Any unit's WLP should establish the workload expectations and responsibilities for its faculty holding full-time 9-month and 12-month term instructional appointments. The WLP should also frame the expectations and responsibilities for individuals on term appointments that are less than 1.0 FTE. Specifically, WLPs should provide guidance for how workload assignments are made from contract to contract and the factors that influence these decisions. The WLP should also identify the individual(s) or group(s) that are responsible for making these decisions and clearly articulate the process for faculty to request their workload assignment to be reviewed and modified.

This section of the WLP should answer the following questions:

- Who is/are responsible for making workload assignments?
- What factors/needs are considered in the process of making workload assignments?
- What is the process for a faculty member to request a review and/or exception to their workload assignment?
- What is the timeline for review, modification, approval, and communication of workload assignments?
- What is the process for appealing a decision about one's workload assignment?

V. Equitable Assignments

General guidance: A significant aspect of any LAU's WLP is the description of the relationship between faculty commitments and expectations for instructional and other duties. This section of the WLP should articulate how workloads are calculated based on the labor of particular assignments, including teaching assignments, so that there is transparency, clarity, and a shared set of

expectations with respect to specific commitments. Modifications to standard teaching loads should be implemented equitably and in accordance with the guidance offered in Appendix A.

This section of the WLP should answer the following questions:

- How does the WLP address courses that require significant time for development and planning, instruction and delivery, coordination and staffing, and student learning assessment?
- How does the WLP address courses related to co-curricular student engagement, mentoring, and advising?
- How does the WLP address workload as it relates to meeting the unique needs of diverse student populations?
- How does the WLP address workload related to service, outreach, leadership and administrative responsibilities?
- How does the WLP address additional compensation or support opportunities (e.g., supplemental pay, overloads, summer teaching, access to teaching assistants)?

Appendix A: Common Instructional Term Faculty Workload Modifications

This list includes examples of the kinds of activities for which workload adjustments are commonly made. LAUs should have a process for adding/modifying this list according to its culture and needs.

- Writing Intensive (WI) and Written Communication courses
- Synthesis, Capstone, and Research-Scholarship Intensive (RS) courses
- Courses with accompanying labs and recitations
- Formal student mentoring, advising, and clinical/internship supervision
- Senior design courses
- Courses that meet particular needs of diverse student populations
- New course design, preparation, construction, and implementation, including but not limited to initial offerings of significantly redesigned courses
- The number of unique total course preparations in a given semester, including the teaching of the same course in multiple modalities
- Class size, particularly vis-a-vis the degree to which courses are provided additional resources, such as TAs or other teaching and learning support
- Significant administrative responsibilities, including program coordination, TA management duties, lab coordination, community-based learning supervision, etc.
- Service and leadership responsibilities