

ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

EQUITABILITY IN THE ASSIGNMENT OF DUTIES

Article 11 of the Collective Agreement between the University of Saskatchewan and the USFA

Assignment of Duties should be an open and transparent collegial process that requires your participation to ensure fairness.

THE FACE-TO-FACE MEETING

Why is a meeting of all faculty necessary before assigning duties?

Although duties are assigned by your Department Head or Dean (in non-departmentalized colleges), this follows consultation with faculty in committee, specifically, a face-to-face meeting of all faculty to discuss workload. Determining fairness in this collegial discussion means that workloads must be equitable, but not necessarily equal.

What does achieving equity actually mean in practice?

In some cases, there are straightforward answers:

- Many units recognize that a fresh hire has many startup challenges—designing and delivering new courses, recruiting graduate students, building a lab, applying for grants—not to mention the work associated with moving to a new institution and/or starting a family life. Accordingly, many units reduce teaching and administrative duties until the new employee hits her/ his stride.
- Some units also recognize that certain administrative jobs (typically, the headship, graduate/undergraduate chair) warrant teaching offloads or research support in some form.
- Faculty members awarded research chairs often receive teaching and administrative offloads to facilitate a research focus. In some cases, granting agencies provide resources to compensate the unit for these lost resources.

Other cases are not so easy, and the face-to-face meeting provides an opportunity to discuss workload with colleagues, to air concerns, and to talk out solutions. Do you fully understand the workload behind your colleague's contributions? And do they fully understand yours?

For example:

- How many hours a year does an active researcher spend writing grant applications, not all of which are successful?
- Is giving a graduate seminar with no exams as much work as teaching a first year class of 350 students? If “yes,” would you gladly exchange teaching assignments?

- Do you know how much time it takes (on average!) to supervise a graduate student through to graduation? Do your colleagues? Is graduate student supervision part of the workload in your unit or is it pro bono?
- What contribution is expected of a full professor with a large established research enterprise, as compared to an associate professor in mid-career?
- How much work is it to assess course equivalencies for transfer students?
- Should all faculty teach the same number of 3 credit unit classes? Do you know how many hours your colleagues spend on labour intensive committee work at the college/university level?

The solutions you find to meet your unit's circumstances could become part of your Guidelines for the Assignment of Duties.

GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSIGNMENT OF DUTIES

How can departments assign duties equitably?

A career can be ruined because the assignment of duties was not done right. All parties have a stake in ensuring that the final documents are the result of committee discussion and are open to amendment as circumstances change. By now, your unit should have developed (and approved by secret ballot) a set of Guidelines for the Assignment of Duties to address many of these questions and ensure fairness. Some are detailed and complex; others are phrased in terms of general principles.

Teaching and academic cultures differ enough that it is challenging to provide universally applicable recommendations for establishing Guidelines. Here are some exemplary solutions loosely adapted from actual situations.

Consider the situation mentioned above where one faculty member teaches 350 students in a single classroom and another teaches a small number of students in a seminar class. The two situations are certainly different. Are they equitable? If so, you are done. If they are not, faculty members in the unit should recognize that, in the long run, everyone takes a turn with the large first year classes, as well as other classes that pose particular challenges. Equitability is achieved over the long term.

Alternately, a faculty member who teaches 350 students in a semester might receive additional instructional support—more markers, more access to instructional support staff, for example, while the faculty member delivering the seminar class receives less. In addition, differential workloads arise due to the vicissitudes of life. A gap in the teaching program may arise when a faculty member experiences a health problem. Or, enrolments may unexpectedly double. Some units have decided that a heavy 3-CU load can be banked towards an eventual offload. Perhaps large class sizes are treated as overload and given extra compensation. It may also be possible that such a workload is considered meritorious and is rewarded with a special increase.

Managing equitability of research workload can be an even bigger challenge. Some research cultures require a large well-funded team to produce results; some require an intense one-on-one relationship between the supervisor and the student, but do not create the same funding opportunities externally or even internally, if, for example, you do not belong to one of the university "signature areas." Professors and librarians should have time allocated to do their research. Some units award faculty "credits" for publications, completed graduate students, and research grants that can also be banked towards teaching and administration offloads. In some units, the time to produce a measurable unit of research (paper, graduate student, patent, grant) can vary widely.

This also edges us towards the sensitive territory of the trade-off between research and teaching, and how equitability is achieved in units that make these tradeoffs. Again, it is important that equitability is achieved by faculty members discussing priorities at the unit level.

THE SHORT GAME AND THE LONG GAME

What if duties don't balance out in a given year?

Faculty members (including the Deans and Department Heads responsible for assigning faculty duties) should keep their eye on the long game. Tenure requires contributions in research, teaching, and administration, and promotion to full professor typically requires not only significant research contributions, but also significant contributions to administration at all levels, for all faculty (including those who hold a special chair).

Your standards for renewal, promotion, and tenure should specify the kinds of work necessary to meet these standards, and your assignment of duties over the long term must give you the opportunity to meet these standards. Your department head and/or dean should be aware of these needs, and should be able to explain to you how the committees that evaluate your promotion and tenure cases will evaluate your cases. As an extreme example, you may consider the reporting duties associated with teaching or the leadership contributions in the research community to be administrative work, but there is a good chance the committees reading your tenure case will not.

The various committees defined in the Collective Agreement (including USFA committees) and in the documents of University Council, or your College clearly constitute administrative service. For other tasks, it is not always so clear cut. Is being editor of a major journal a contribution to research or administration? Many would argue that it increases the university's research profile, but it is not a contribution to running the university. And not everyone would say that such an appointment is automatically meritorious. Yet almost everyone would say that it is a good thing for your career. Questions like these merit a good discussion at the unit level.

TEACHING IN ONLY TWO TERMS PER YEAR

What about programs that require teaching during spring/summer?

The 2014-17 Collective Agreement made an important change regarding assignment of duties during the spring/summer term (May–August). The spirit of this discussion at bargaining was to accommodate the needs of certain units whose programs necessarily deliver parts of their programs during the summer.

Are faculty members entitled to an annual non-teaching term?

Except for those at the rank of Instructor or Lecturer, all faculty, including term faculty, are entitled to a non-teaching term. A non-teaching term is not a term off. Our Collective Agreement stipulates that:

- Faculty are required to perform their duties on a 12-month basis, unless specified otherwise in the letter of appointment.
- The academic school year is comprised of three terms: T1 (Fall), T2 (Winter), and T3 (summer). Unless you are an Instructor or Lecturer, you cannot be assigned to teach in all three terms except by mutual agreement. You may be assigned to teach in T3 only once every three years, in which case no teaching must be assigned in another term.
- The non-teaching term (typically T3) is intended to give tenure track, continuing status and academic programming faculty the opportunity to perform scholarly work. This includes research and maintaining currency in your area of expertise. This is also the term when vacation is normally taken.
- You may agree to teach during your non-teaching term. In this case, either:
 - a. you have agreed to distribute your teaching load over three terms. That is, if you would normally teach two three-credit classes per term, you may elect to teach two three-credit classes in one term, and one three-credit class in each of the other two terms; or

- b. the teaching during your non-teaching term (in addition to the other two terms) is considered to be in addition to your regular duties—that is, overload—and you will receive extra compensation of \$5,500 for a 3-credit unit course (Article 18.5).

Faculty at the rank of Instructor or Lecturer will be expected to focus on teaching and instructional duties in the delivery of academic programs in academic units. Assignment of duties for Instructors and Lecturers will be in accordance with Article 11, with a few differences:

- Yearly assigned teaching duties shall be distributed as evenly as possible across all three terms.
- Instructors and Lecturers will not have a non-teaching term. However, duties must be assigned to allow for vacation to be taken as an unbroken period of time during the spring session, the summer session, or at another time of the year.
- Instructors and Lecturers will not be eligible for extra compensation for teaching in T3. This does not preclude extra compensation for extraordinary duties (Article 18.5.5.).
- Teaching assignments will not exceed 30 credit units per academic year. However, 30 credit units is not an appropriate teaching assignment in every circumstance. Remember the example above of a class with 350 students, or preparation and updating of classes. Is 30 credit-units of teaching, even if the faculty member is assigned nothing else, equitable?

The assignment for Instructors and Lecturers must still be fair and fairness is determined by comparison to the assignment of duties of others in your department.

SERVICE OUTSIDE YOUR UNIT

How can academic units accommodate service outside the unit?

All faculty members are expected to serve on collegial committees at the university level. By service outside your unit, we refer to certain special arrangements that might be made with other academic or administrative units.

One example is Joint Appointments in more than one unit. The Collective Agreement deals in considerable detail with such appointments, and specifies how units are to share decisions about workload, about how performance is evaluated. Members with Joint Appointments should look at these clauses carefully.

However, the Collective Agreement says little about secondments, whether formal or informal, full-time or part-time. If you or a colleague have been seconded to work in some other unit, the parties should follow the principles discussed in the articles on Joint Appointments. In general, the secondee and the affected unit should be aware of the following:

- How does the secondment affect the rest of the unit? Will other members have to perform the secondee's usual workload, will certain activities or programs have to be dropped, or will the unit receive fall-in resources?
- The secondee should always keep in mind the long and the short game. A secondment may benefit you and/or your unit in the short term, but remember that you must still meet the standards for promotion and tenure in all categories.

The unit should clearly understand the secondee's new duties and how to evaluate them.