



TEACHING LOAD AND COURSE BUYOUTS FOR TENURED AND TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

Approved: June 7, 2021
 Revised: August 4, 2021

Next Scheduled Review: June 7, 2024

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GUIDELINE SUMMARY

The purpose of this guideline is to establish faculty teaching load expectations for tenured and tenure-track faculty within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (COALS) and a uniform process for course buyouts.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.0 GENERAL

The 15 departments of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (COALS) encompass a broad range of disciplines and scholarly expertise of the faculty, ranging from the biomedical life sciences (Biochemistry and Biophysics, Nutrition), the agricultural life sciences (Animal Science, Horticulture), to the social sciences (Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communications). The COALS curricula reflect this academic breadth.

The number of courses taught by tenured or tenure-track (T/TT) faculty per annum varies among academic disciplines at all universities. In our college, T/TT faculty members in the social sciences typically teach three to four fixed credit courses per year; T/TT faculty members in the agricultural life sciences typically teach two to three fixed credit courses per year; and, T/TT faculty members in the life and biomedical sciences typically teach one to two fixed credit courses per year (Table 1). Differences in teaching expectations among the academic disciplines result from several factors, including market pressures and access to research funding.

Percent teaching effort should be reviewed annually by the department head during T/TT faculty annual reviews, based on research productivity and departmental needs.

Table 1. Standard Teaching Loads. Expected number of fixed credits to be taught by tenured faculty and corresponding percent effort in teaching per 9-month academic year by department¹

Discipline	Credits	Percent Effort	Department(s)
Biomedical Life Sciences	5	30	BCBP, NUTR
Agricultural Life Sciences	6-7	35 - 45	ANSC, BAEN, ECCB, ENTO, FSTC, HORT, PLPM, POSC, RWFM, SCSC
Social Sciences	9 +	50 - 65	AGEC, ALEC, RPTS

¹Multiple concurrent sections of the same course are counted once. Excludes 291, 484, 485, 491, 685, and 691 variable credit courses.

COALS T/TT faculty members are expected to contribute to the undergraduate and graduate curriculum.

Distribution of teaching assignments within COALS must acknowledge the expectations associated with the various disciplines, be sensitive to equity among faculty, and encourage equal opportunity for all T/TT faculty to engage in entrepreneurial activities in teaching, research, outreach, and service. Furthermore, teaching expectations must support the financial structure of the College.

2.0 STANDARD TEACHING EXPECTATION

The standard teaching load of fixed credits for COALS T/TT faculty varies by discipline (Table 1). Current teaching loads and associated percent effort in teaching by department, which was the basis for establishing standard loads by discipline are summarized in Appendix I. This contribution represents the range of teaching responsibility for biomedical life science to social science faculty in COALS; expectations for individual faculty members within this range will reflect the expectations for the most relevant discipline. This assumes direct student contact in the classroom of 50 minutes/week or its equivalent per credit hour by the faculty member. Teaching contributions by postdoctoral research associates, graduate teaching assistants or other academic staff do not count towards a faculty member's teaching effort. Summer teaching appointments are negotiated agreements between the department head and faculty member depending on teaching needs in the summer and do not count toward the standard teaching expectation. The standard teaching expectation by department will be reviewed every three years.

3.0 ADJUSTMENTS FROM THE STANDARD TEACHING EXPECTATION

The Department Head may make adjustments to a faculty member's teaching load, and this change should occur with a change in % teaching effort associated with the faculty member's appointment and commensurate with the change in teaching load. Examples of adjustments follow:

Achievement in research/outreach adjustment. The Department Head may adjust the standard teaching expectation down to the minimum of three credits per year to reward extraordinary excellence and distinction in research and/or outreach.

Administrative/service adjustment. The Department Head may adjust the standard teaching expectation for faculty with intensive administrative obligations, including serving as associate department head, principal investigator of a training grant or program project grant, and/or participation in time-intensive department, college, university or academic committees. The magnitude of the reduction is negotiated with the Department Head but cannot be reduced to a level less than the minimum teaching responsibility. This practice is an exception, as the preferred mechanism to compensate intensive administrative obligations is through adjustment of percent appointment or payment of an administrative stipend.

Any change in teaching effort for tenure-track assistant professors must be approved by the Chair of the Department P&T committee, Department Head, and the Exec Assoc Dean.

Other adjustments.

- The Department Head may increase the standard teaching expectation for faculty who do not fulfill minimal expectations in research and/or service.
- The Department Head may adjust the standard teaching expectation for:
 - Level and type of student-faculty interaction (lecture vs. laboratory)
 - Class size
 - Writing intensive course
 - First year on the faculty

4.0 MINIMUM TEACHING RESPONSIBILITY

All COALS T/TT faculty members with teaching appointments are expected to contribute no less than three credit hours of classroom teaching per year, unless the faculty member is participating in a university program such as faculty development leave. The three-credit minimum assumes direct student contact equivalent to 150 minutes per week in the classroom over a semester by the faculty member (i.e. a 3-credit course shared by two professors would count for 1.5 credits per faculty member unless both faculty participate in all sessions). All COALS T/TT faculty are expected to contribute to research and independent study courses, but these contributions do not count towards the 3-credit hour minimum unless approved by the Department Head. Teaching contributions during the summer sessions or through continuing education do not count

towards the 3-credit hour minimum unless approved by the Department Head. Teaching contributions by postdoctoral research associates, graduate teaching assistants or other academic staff do not count towards a T/TT faculty member's minimum teaching effort.

5.0 COURSE BUYOUTS

For current purposes, university programs such as faculty development leave do not count as course buyouts and the payments made under these programs towards replacement teaching costs are not a guide to course buyout rates.

The buyout rate for a single credit is $[\% \text{ effort in teaching} \times 9 \text{ mo} \times 1/(\# \text{ std credits from Table 1})]$ of the faculty member's 9-month salary plus fringe benefits.

Example 1. A T/TT faculty member in NUTR whose annual teaching appointment is 30% effort and who teaches 5 credits per academic year wants to buy out one credit. The buyout rate is $(0.3 \times 9 \times 1/5)$ or 0.54 mo of the faculty member's 9-month salary plus fringe benefits.

Example 2. A T/TT faculty member in ALEC whose annual teaching appointment is 50% effort and who teaches a 2:1 load (9 credits) wants to buy out one three credit course. The buyout rate is $(0.5 \times 9 \times 3/9)$ or 1.5 mo of the faculty member's 9-month salary plus fringe benefits.

Buyouts from extramurally funded research grants are approved by the department head. Buyouts from other funding sources (e.g. endowments, faculty salary savings) must be approved by the dean. Buyouts by APT faculty would be rare, will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and must be approved by the dean. Faculty must still meet the college's minimum teaching load requirements. Faculty may only use buyouts to reduce their fixed credit course load and must continue to be involved in both undergraduate and graduate instruction. Buyouts cannot be used to reduce one's overall work effort or be construed as approval for a full-time research appointment. Course buyout approvals are valid for one year only and can be renewed. Any proposed course buyout that will leave a faculty member below the faculty workload requirement in a semester, as governed by [Texas A&M University Rule 12.03.99.M1](#), [Texas A&M University System Policy 12.03](#), and the [Texas Education Code Section 51.402 \(b\)](#), must be approved by the dean.

All course buyout requests will be subject to the following criteria:

- Overall teaching needs of the department, as determined by the department head.
- No more than 14% (1/7) of a given department's total tenured and tenured-track faculty may be exempt from teaching during any given semester as a result of any program (FDL, IPA, course buyouts, etc.).

All approved course buyouts will be documented in the faculty member's annual appointment letters. Any revisions to a faculty member's appointment throughout the year will result in a revised annual appointment letter.

Salary savings generated after costs of teaching replacement are accounted for will be split 1:1 between the Department and COALS.

6.0 APPENDIX 1. CURRENT TEACHING LOADS

Average number of fixed credits taught by tenured faculty and corresponding self-reported percent effort in teaching per 9-month academic year by department¹

<u>Credits</u>	<u>Percent Effort</u>	<u>Department(s)</u>
4	30	NUTR
5	30	BCBP, HORT
5	45	PLPM
6	30	ENTO
6	35	ECCB, SCSC
6	40	POSC
7	35	FSTC
7	40	RPTS
8	40	ANSC
8	45	BAEN
9	45	AGEC
9	55	RWFM
12	45	ALEC

¹Based on 2019 and 2020 faculty data in Interfolio F180. Average is rounded to the nearest credit and percent effort is rounded to the nearest 5%. Multiple concurrent sections of the same course are counted once. Excludes 291, 484, 485, 491, 685, and 691 variable credit courses.

RELATED STATUTES, POLICIES, OR REQUIREMENTS

[Texas A&M University Rule 12.03.99.M1](#)

[A&M System Policy 12.03](#)

[Texas Education Code Section 51.402 \(b\)](#)

CONTACT OFFICE

For questions, contact the Office of the Executive Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, at 979-847-9325.

REVISION HISTORY

Approved: June 7, 2021

Revised: August 4, 2021

Next Scheduled Review: June 7, 2024