

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
WORKLOAD POLICY

May 2025

To take effect in Academic Year 2026-27

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Section I. Workload Assignments to Serve the Goals and Aspirations of the School of Law

This policy describes guidelines for the allocation of workload among full-time faculty members at Northeastern University School of Law, in accordance with the Faculty Senate Workload Policy Directive adopted on April 5, 2017 and the Workload Distribution Guidelines issued by the Office of the Provost, updated on September 13, 2017. This policy will supplant the previously adopted workload policy of March 2020.

The School of Law's mission is to be a global leader in experiential legal education, providing students of law with the knowledge, skills, and ethical and social values essential to serving clients and the public interest. Through teaching, scholarship, and public service, we work to promote social justice and enhance understanding of law's impact on individuals, enterprises and communities, at home and around the world. In striving to achieve these goals, full-time faculty members have workload responsibilities defined in this policy in terms of teaching, research/scholarship/professional development, and service.

Section II. Types of Appointments and Distribution of Duties

Subject to modifications in Section III, workload responsibilities are allocated among full-time faculty members under the following guidelines:

A. Tenured Faculty & Untenured Tenure-Track Faculty

1. 40% Teaching

- (a) Teaching Load: Tenured and untenured tenure-track faculty shall teach (a) a 1L podium course and at least two upper-level courses, for a total load of 10-13 credits, or (b) at least four upper-level courses, for a total load of 12-13 credits, in an academic year. For faculty whose typical teaching is primarily within the clinics, the teaching expectation is defined in II(B) for clinical faculty.
- (b) Co-Teaching: Team-taught courses are a partial load, proportional to the number of faculty teaching, such as a half-load for each of two faculty, or other equitable division of workload as agreed by the faculty. For co-taught courses within the clinics, the teaching expectation is defined in II(B)(c) for clinical faculty.

- (c) Teaching Overload: Courses that meet the above requirements are on-load. Additional courses beyond the minimum required to meet both the credit and course minimums (including one and two credit courses) are an overload, with monetary compensation commensurate with credits.
 - (d) Other Teaching Responsibilities: As part of their teaching responsibilities, all full-time faculty members should be available to students for general academic advising; responsibilities may also include serving as faculty advisor for a student organization. Faculty should likewise remain available for supervision of student work, including review and evaluation of directed study projects and papers submitted for the law school's Rigorous Writing Requirement. Teaching responsibilities may also include coaching student participation in moot court and other competition, unless formally dedicated as a service assignment. See Section II(A)(3).
 - (e) Teaching Portfolio and Service Courses: All faculty shall be prepared to teach one service course as part of their teaching portfolio and are encouraged to consider their portfolio as encompassing four or more courses that they are prepared to teach. Tenure-track faculty shall not be required to change their teaching portfolio until after receiving tenure. Service courses consist of (1) 1L courses and (2) upper-level courses that many students are expected to take, that are offered multiple times per year, and that a broad range of faculty could reasonably be asked to teach, regardless of individual faculty specialty. The following upper-level courses are defined as service courses: Administrative Law, Corporations, Evidence, and Professional Responsibility. Over time, the definition of service course may change depending on student enrollment and frequency of the course offering. Faculty who teach two service courses in a year shall have the option to teach a limited-enrollment course as part of their workload.
2. 40% Research/Scholarship (50% for untenured tenure-track faculty)
- (a) General Definition: As specified in NUSL regulations concerning tenure and promotion, scholarly product normally consists of work published or accepted for publication. The scholarly product may also include unpublished work, including documents produced in the practice of law (e.g., briefs, legal opinions or memoranda, study reports for governmental agencies, etc.), and written materials produced for clinical legal education (e.g., course schemata, simulations, and problems). For purposes of the present workload policy, research and scholarly activity may also include knowledge translation (e.g., via blogs and social media, participation in interdisciplinary endeavors, creative activity manifested in performances or exhibitions, efforts to obtain internal and external funding, and engagement of students in scholarship).
3. 20% Service (10% for untenured tenure-track faculty)
- (a) General Definition: Service includes leadership of and engagement in committees, professional organizations, and groups both within and outside the university. At the discretion of the Dean, it may also include coaching student participation in competitions such as moot court.

- (b) Committee Assignments: Tenured faculty members typically receive two committee assignments or service assignments involving an approximately equivalent time commitment. Untenured tenure-track faculty members typically receive one committee assignment, or two lighter service assignments involving an approximately equivalent time commitment. Chairing a committee with a particularly intensive work schedule may be treated as a single assignment equivalent to two standard committee assignments. Heading a particularly demanding program, center, or institute may be treated as a single assignment equivalent to two standard committee assignments or may entitle the faculty member to a teaching release and/or compensation as defined in Section III. Jointly appointed faculty's service load is calculated and determined in proportion to their full-time equivalent commitment to the law school.

B. Full-Time Teaching Faculty and Clinical Faculty

1. 60% Teaching

- (a) Teaching Load: All teaching faculty and clinical faculty shall teach 16 to 18 credits per academic year, which may be averaged over two years. A first-year course of four or five credits is treated as the workload equivalent of six credit hours. Teaching faculty and clinical faculty may teach a combination of clinical and non-clinical courses that satisfy the 16- to 18- credit requirement.
- (b) LSSC Faculty: The presumption is that faculty in the Legal Skills in Social Context (LSSC) Program teach two law offices during the fall and spring terms.
- (c) Clinical Faculty: The presumption is that clinical faculty will teach two terms of an eight-credit clinic with a limited enrollment of at least eight students each term. Team-taught clinic courses are considered a full load for each professor in a clinical course, so long as each professor supervises and teaches a full load worth of students (that is, at least eight students).
- (d) Academic Instruction Faculty: When a teaching faculty member's assigned teaching responsibilities involve academic instruction for students in class sessions without course credit (such as in the Academic Support Program), the teaching assignment is converted to credit hours for purposes of this workload policy, based on the time allocated.
- (e) Co-Teaching: Team-taught courses are a partial load, ordinarily proportional to the number of faculty teaching, such as a half-load for each of two faculty, or other equitable division of workload as agreed by the faculty. For co-taught courses within the clinics, the teaching expectation is defined in II(B)(c) for clinical faculty.
- (f) Teaching Overload: Courses that meet the above requirements are on-load. Additional courses beyond the minimum required to meet both the credit and course minimums (including one and two credit courses) are an overload, with monetary compensation commensurate with credits.
- (g) Other Teaching Responsibilities: As part of their teaching responsibilities, all full-time faculty members should be available to students for general academic advising; responsibilities may also include serving as faculty advisor for a

student organization. Faculty should likewise remain available for supervision of student work, including review and evaluation of directed study projects and papers submitted for the law school's Rigorous Writing Requirement. Teaching responsibilities may also include coaching student participation in moot court and other competition, unless formally dedicated as a service assignment. See Section II(B)(3).

2. 20% Professional Development

- (a) General Definition: Teaching and clinical faculty members are expected to remain current in their fields, engage in professional development programs, and attend relevant conferences. Professional development activities may, but do not necessarily, include work involving research and scholarship as defined for tenured and tenure-track faculty. The proportional allocation of workload to professional development for teaching faculty members, including research and scholarship, reflects the scope of their responsibilities as teaching specialists in understanding and developing innovations in legal education and training students for evolving roles in the legal profession. Similarly, the proportional allocation of workload to professional development for clinical faculty reflects the scope of their responsibilities as teaching specialists with an emphasis on experiential education who are maintaining legal practice skills, updating their substantive knowledge and participating in understanding and developing innovations in legal education and training students for evolving roles in the legal profession.

3. 20% Service

- (a) General Definition: Service includes leadership of and engagement in committees, professional organizations, and groups both within and outside the university. At the discretion of the Dean, it may also include coaching student participation in competitions such as moot court.
- (b) Committee Assignments: Teaching and clinical faculty members typically receive two committee assignments or service assignments involving an approximately equivalent time commitment. Chairing a committee with a particularly intensive work schedule may be treated as a single assignment equivalent to two standard committee assignments. Heading a particularly demanding program, center, or institute may be treated as a single assignment equivalent to two standard committee assignments or may entitle the faculty member to a teaching release and/or compensation as defined in Section III.

C. Other Faculty & Relevant Loads

1. Professors of Practice

Professors of Practice have workload responsibilities similar to Teaching Faculty or Clinical Faculty, depending on the nature of their role, but specific duties may vary according to the terms of their contracts.

2. Research Professors

Research Professors have workload responsibilities defined by the terms of their

contracts.

3. Full-Time Faculty with Joint Appointments

Faculty members holding joint appointments with other university units who have their tenure home in the School of Law will receive a workload reduction at the School of Law proportional to the percentage of their appointment in the other unit. The School of Law Dean and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will engage in regular consultations with their counterparts in other academic units to ensure that the faculty members holding joint appointments are not subject to conflicting or excessive workloads, keeping in mind the nature of the faculty member's appointment. To accommodate curriculum needs and schedules in different units, as well as appointment percentages that do not readily lend themselves to proportional reduction on an annual basis, workload distributions may be shifted or otherwise adjusted as needed over multiple academic years. Jointly appointed faculty with their tenure home outside the School of Law will have a workload within the School of Law as determined by consultation between the deans of the respective academic units.

4. Full-Time Faculty with 50% or More Administrative Load

Full-time faculty with 50% or more administrative load are not covered in this workload policy. These positions include, but are not limited to, the Dean and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

D. Summer Teaching

1. One Term Off. All faculty who hold academic-year contracts are entitled to one term off from the workload responsibilities described above each academic year, which may be during any term of the School of Law's year-round schedule. The term off is taken during one of the three terms (Summer, Fall, and Spring) that comprise the School of Law's year-round academic calendar and must be scheduled in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. No faculty shall be required to teach more than four consecutive terms.
2. Summer Teaching Requirement. To ensure that the School of Law provides a year-round upper-level curriculum, all full-time faculty for whom summer teaching is appropriate given the nature of their teaching, are expected to be available to teach every fourth summer term. If a faculty member is required to be available for summer teaching but are not assigned to teach in that summer, they must make themselves available for summer teaching two years following that summer.
3. Summer Teaching Incentives.
 - (a) Clustering. Faculty who wish to teach on-load in the summer term more often than every fourth summer will be accommodated in that preference, if possible, to do so given curricular needs. Faculty who teach in a given summer will have the option to cluster their teaching load, so as to have two consecutive terms without teaching, subject to curricular constraints.
 - (b) Earning Release Credits.
 - (i) Summer Teaching: As an incentive to encourage summer teaching, any

faculty who teaches a 3, 4, or 5 credit course in the summer shall receive 1 Release Credit. Faculty who teach a 6 to 8 credit course in the summer shall receive 1.5 Release Credits. A maximum of 2 Release Credits can be earned in one summer term.

- (ii) Overload Compensation: Any faculty who teaches a 1 or 2 credit course in any term as an overload may opt to receive Release Credit equivalent to the number of course credits they teach in lieu of monetary compensation.
 - (iii) Maximum Release Credits: Release Credits accumulate until a faculty member has a maximum of 10 Release Credits or until the faculty has a request granted to exchange a designated number for a course release. If a faculty member has exchanged fewer than all of their accumulated Release Credits for a course release, the faculty member's unused Release Credits will persist.
- (c) Using Release Credits. Release Credits may be exchanged in a subsequent year for a course release if the release is consistent with curricular needs and is approved by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Release credits are also subject to the following provisions:
- (i) Release Credits shall be exchangeable for a course release on a one-to-one basis (Release Credits to course credits for a specific course), except that a course release from a 1L podium course shall require five Release Credits, regardless of the number of credits of the 1L podium course.
 - (ii) Any request to use Release Credits for a course release shall be made during the period in which the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs is discussing teaching assignments for that requested term with the faculty member and shall be accompanied by a brief proposal about how the faculty member will reallocate the time that would otherwise be devoted to teaching the released course toward other aspects of their workload, as described in this policy.
 - (iii) A course release obtained under this provision shall not affect service obligations.

Section III. Criteria for Modifications in Workload Responsibilities of Full-Time Faculty

- A. Pre-tenure course releases: Untenured tenure-track faculty members receive one course release during their first year of teaching and a 50% release of their course load during an academic year prior to applying for tenure, the year and the course(s) to be determined in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
- B. Significant administrative or other service responsibilities and other circumstances warranting workload modifications:
 - 1. The Associate Dean for Academic Programs, the Associate Dean for Experiential Education, the Associate Dean for Research, the Associate Dean for Digital Strategy, and other faculty members with significant administrative responsibilities in a particular year, including directors of programs, centers, or institutes, may

- receive a release from part of their course teaching obligation and/or compensation.
2. Temporary workload modifications for full-time faculty members may also be made in order to accommodate other types of circumstances, such as retirement transition planning, developing a new course, or co-teaching a new course for the first time.
 3. When assigning service duties on a year-by-year basis, including, but not limited to, committee chair designations, the Dean will take into consideration above-average teaching obligations that do not rise to the level of an overload, including new course preparation, unusually heavy teaching-related duties (which may include a joint appointment in a school with a higher teaching load), and/or a temporary acceptance of a teaching load that includes more than one service course. This provides flexibility to acknowledge differences in teaching load that may be desirable for course scheduling and leave some faculty with more time to devote to service than others.
 4. Administrative and program responsibilities that do not entail a course release are service assignments that fall within this workload policy.
- C. Overload teaching: After meeting their teaching requirements under this workload policy, faculty members may arrange with the Dean and Associate Dean to teach an overload of courses and/or credits for monetary compensation. Such overload may include the teaching of short courses and intensive courses outside of the regular programming.
- D. Course buy-outs: A faculty member may apply to the Dean to buy out an assigned course.
- E. Sabbatical leaves: In accordance with the procedures in the Faculty Handbook, tenured faculty members may apply for a sabbatical leave.
- F. Professional leaves: In accordance with the Faculty Handbook, full-time faculty members may apply for a professional leave. The specific conditions of such professional leaves are determined on an individual basis. A professional leave results in a proportional reduction of workload responsibilities based on the amount of time allocated to the leave.
- G. Other leaves: In accordance with the Faculty Handbook or other University policies, which are available on the [University Policy Page](#), full-time faculty members are eligible for certain types of paid time off, including sick time, which accrues based on number of years of completed service, or other parental, family, or medical leaves. In addition, pursuant to the Policy on Leaves of Absence, full-time faculty members may obtain certain unpaid leaves of absence. When these paid and unpaid leaves will involve a significant absence from work, assigned workload responsibilities in the academic year are reduced, based on the time allocated to the leave or series of leaves.
- H. Parental teaching relief: In accordance with the University's Policy on Parental Teaching Relief, faculty who become parents are eligible for a one-term course load reduction without a reduction in salary or benefits, in addition to any paid medical leave or unpaid family leave. The scheduling of the course reduction is arranged with the approval of the Dean and in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

- I. Single Year Options: In support of institutional objectives, on an individual basis in any given year, the Dean (or by delegation, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs), may negotiate variations to these expectations with an individual faculty member, including, but not limited to:
 1. Teaching one of the three required 3- or 4- credit courses outside the law school; and
 2. Clustering teaching (e.g., teaching four courses in one year and two in the next; or three courses in one term; or, for clinical faculty, teaching more than eight students one term, and fewer another term, all without triggering the overload compensation requirement).

Section IV. Workload Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated by the faculty at least every five years. At a minimum, the next review of this policy and adoption of a new policy should occur during the 2029-30 academic year in order to implement it for the 2031-32 academic year.

Section V. Transparency and Appeal Process

- A. This workload policy will be electronically available to all full-time faculty members through the Provost's Office at <https://provost.northeastern.edu/resources/faculty-workload-policies/>. In addition, the Office of the Dean will maintain and make available to full-time faculty a list of the teaching, committee, and other administrative assignments for all full-time faculty members in each academic year.
- B. Faculty members who believe that their individual workload assignments are inconsistent with this workload policy may appeal their workload assignments by submitting a request to a committee composed of the Dean and two members of the faculty to be elected by the voting members of the faculty on an annual basis. Additionally, the faculty shall elect one alternate member to serve in the event that one of the elected committee members wishes to pursue an appeal. Faculty members may also make use of the grievance process described in the Faculty Handbook.

Approved by:

Vote of the Full-Time Faculty of the School of Law
Date: May 5, 2025

Endorsed by:

Dean James Hackney Signature:
Date:

Submitted to the Provost's Office:

Provost Signature:
Date: 6/24/2025

