



# Northeastern University

## College of Social Sciences and Humanities

### **Department of Political Science Full-time Faculty Workload Policy**

Approved by the Department 11/15/2024

Approved by the Dean 2/21/2026

Approved by the Provost 3/16/2026

#### **1. Overview**

The Department of Political Science approves this policy in compliance with the Faculty Handbook statement on faculty workloads as approved by the Faculty Senate on April 4, 2017, and by the Board of Trustees on June 7, 2017, and with workload guidelines subsequently issued by the Office of the Provost.

The mission of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities in the Experiential Liberal Arts is to produce cutting-edge knowledge about and solutions to the political and social problems of our contemporary world; and to foster ethical reasoning and critical thought, with attention to the enduring significance of history, literature, and culture. The goal for faculty in the College is to cultivate engaged researchers, excellent teachers, and equity in distribution of service obligations. The Department and the College recognize that within the experiential liberal arts model, research, teaching, service, and professional development complement one another and often overlap.

The mission of the Department of Political Science is to help address the most important issues in today's world through excellence in learning and scholarship on government and politics in their local, national, and global forms at a theoretical, applied, and experiential level.

Full-time faculty are involved in three types of activities: research and/or professional development, teaching, and service. Teaching includes the developing and leading of courses and independent studies that serve the Department's mission and curricular needs. Teaching activities also include the advising and mentoring of graduate students, participation on dissertation committees, and the supervision and training of teaching assistants where applicable.

Being research active means engaging in some substantive combination of these types of activities: an ongoing program of scholarship, disseminating scholarly work in peer-reviewed journals or scholarly books and presenting at scholarly conferences, disseminating knowledge or engaging with academic and non-academic audiences and communities, actively seeking internal and external funding, and meaningfully engaging students in scholarship.

Service activities within the university include leading and serving on committees, advising student organizations, participating in student recruitment events and orientations sessions, or involvement in roles that contribute to the Department, College, and University. Faculty are expected to contribute to the professional development of disciplines by promoting the discovery and dissemination of knowledge in their fields through activities such as participation in professional organizations, seminars, and colloquia relevant to the individuals' academic interests and teaching missions. Service to the profession also includes serving as a reviewer, editorial work, or serving as an officer or committee member within professional organizations. Service to the community includes public engagement with non-academic audiences and advising governments at local, state, national, and international levels.

Faculty will work with the Department Chair to effectively balance service with other professional responsibilities.

## **1. Appointments**

According to the Faculty Handbook, the full-time Teaching Faculty of the University is composed of tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty. The tenured and tenure-track (TT) faculty of the Department carry special responsibilities with respect to the creation and maintenance of high-quality research programs, and tenured faculty with respect to the promotion of tenured and tenure-track faculty. Non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty are responsible for advancing the teaching, engagement, and service missions of the Department and engaging in professional development to those ends. They also contribute to the governance of the Department, the College, and the University. Each type of appointment carries a distinct workload effort that reflects the responsibilities and performance expectations of each faculty member. Percentages and ranges of assignments are approximate standardizations appropriate to ranks.

Jointly appointed faculty carry a primary obligation to the tenure-home unit and a secondary obligation to the non-tenure unit. The work effort of jointly appointed faculty is proportional to the percentage of the appointment. The work effort of jointly appointed faculty reflects the expectations of the type of appointment (e.g., tenure-track, tenured, etc.). Work effort between the two academic units should total 100%. For joint appointments that are not evenly split, the relative responsibilities in teaching should rotate on a regular basis. The Department Chair, in consultation with the jointly appointed faculty member, will coordinate these arrangements with the secondary unit head.

Full-time faculty with 50% or more administrative load (e.g., Department Chair or Associate Dean) are not covered in these guidelines.

The workload policy in Department of Political Science specifies the distribution of effort, by type of appointment, as follows:

**1.1. Tenure-Track Faculty** (Assistant Professors and Associate Professors without Tenure) Tenure-track faculty hold appointments as untenured, probationary members of the faculty. Tenure-track faculty are expected to be research-active and develop a research program.

- Tenure-track faculty normally teach 4 courses over two semesters in fulfillment of 40% of their work effort. Any exceptions to this norm are laid out in hiring letters.
- Tenure-track faculty are expected to engage in research and scholarship in fulfillment of 50% of their work effort.
- Tenure-track faculty are expected to engage in service activities in fulfillment of 10% of their work effort.

**2.2 Tenured Faculty: Research-active (Associate or Full Professor with Tenure)** Tenured faculty hold appointments with continuous tenure. All tenured faculty are expected to be research-active and maintain an ongoing commitment to the development of a research program.

- Research-active tenured faculty teach 4 courses over two semesters in fulfillment of 40% of their work effort.
- Research-active tenured faculty engage in research and scholarship in fulfillment of 40% of their work effort.
- Research-active tenured faculty engage in service and professional development activities in fulfillment of 20% of their work effort.

**2.2.1** A faculty member will be considered *research inactive* if he or she fails over a period of the previous 4 calendar years to engage in an ongoing program of scholarship, including some combination of these activities: disseminating scholarly work in peer-reviewed journals or scholarly books, presenting at scholarly conferences, disseminating knowledge or engaging with academic and non-academic audiences and communities, actively seeking internal and external funding, and meaningfully engaging students in scholarship.

- Upon the Department Chair's assessment that a faculty member has not met the criteria for research activity for the previous 4 calendar years, the Merit Committee will make a recommendation on the designation of research inactive status based upon its review of the faculty member's research-related activities over that period. The Chair then will make the final determination based on the recommendation of the Merit Committee, a review of 4 years of annual reviews (or their equivalent), and a review of the faculty member's up-to-date CV. The Chair will inform the faculty member of the recommended designation of research inactive status, and then will consult with the Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs and the Dean. If the faculty member is determined to be research inactive the Chair will consult with the Office of the Dean on a written improvement plan and possible reallocation of workload. The Chair will then meet with the faculty member to agree in writing with the faculty member and the Office of the Dean on needed improvements. The Chair also will indicate in this meeting and in the written improvement plan that the faculty member's workload will be reallocated if improvements are not successful by the end of the next academic year. A faculty member may submit a request to the Merit Committee to be considered for research-active status (See Section 4, page 5 , Procedures).
- Tenured faculty who are research-inactive will teach 6 courses over two semesters in fulfillment of 80% of their work effort.

- Tenured faculty who are research-inactive will engage in service and professional development activities in fulfillment of 20% of their work effort.

### **2.3 Full-time Non-Tenure-Track Teaching Professors**

**(Assistant/Associate/Full Teaching Professor)** Full-time non-tenure-track teaching professors hold contractual, term appointments as members of the Teaching Faculty.

- Full-time non-tenure-track teaching faculty teach 6 courses over two semesters in fulfillment of 80% of their work effort.
- Full-time non-tenure-track faculty are expected to engage in service and professional development activities in fulfillment of 20% of their work effort.

### **2.4 Full-time Professors of the Practice and Distinguished Professors of the Practice** appointed in faculty positions carry a teaching load based on the 4-course load standard; conduct research and scholarship or external engagement activities; and engage in external activities as well as service and professional development activities.

- Full-time Professors of the Practice appointed in a faculty position teach 4 courses over two semesters in fulfillment of 40% of their work effort.
- Full-time Professors of the Practice appointed in a faculty position engage in research and scholarship or external engagement activities in fulfillment of 40% of their work effort.
- Full-time Professors of the Practice appointed in a faculty position engage in service and professional development activities in fulfillment of 20% of their work effort.

## **2. Accessibility of information**

This workload policy and the model (e.g. the distribution of duties, such as, for example 40/40/20 or 80/20) of each full-time faculty member can be found exclusively in the Governance Documents folder of the Department's SharePoint site.

## **3. Procedures**

The Department will review and ratify by a majority vote the workload policy and its documentation every five years, and update posted materials as necessary. Any changes to the workload policy must be approved by a majority vote of the faculty of the Department, the Dean, and the Provost.

The two-semester workload assignment for an academic year for each individual full-time faculty will be confirmed by the Department Chair in April. Overload activities should occur only after 100% workload assignment is met. Variance in workloads will be addressed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Chair and with the Dean or designate. For faculty with joint appointments, the Chair will meet with the unit head of the secondary unit at the end of each academic year to coordinate workload expectations for the faculty member for the following two semesters.

Typical modifications in workload include those granted by contractual course reductions for tenure-track faculty, parental teaching relief, family- and medical-related leaves, grant-funded buyouts, and modifications to load related to administrative duties. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair to ensure equity in workload effort for all faculty on annual basis. In cases of workload inequity, the Chair will recommend a variation of workload for faculty on a case-by-case basis.

Research inactive faculty who wish to be considered once again research active can request this at the point of annual merit review with the Department Chair. The approval of the Dean will be required for any modifications to a faculty member's workload by the Chair.

Faculty with requests for modifications of, or concerns about, workload should first address them with the Department Chair. If a faculty member is concerned about a workload assignment and cannot resolve the concern with the Chair, he or she may appeal the assignment to the Office of the Dean. If a faculty member continues to have unresolved concerns after the Dean has made a determination on the appeal, he or she should consult the Grievance Process as specified in the Faculty Handbook.

Amended and approved by a vote of those faculty present on November 5, 2024.



### Checklist for Unit Workload Policy Documents

Each unit's chair and dean should initial each point on the checklist. By doing so, they attest that the full-time faculty workload policy document satisfies each of these requirements.

Name of Unit: Political Science  
 Name of Chair: Lauren M. MacLean

Chair Initials/ Dean Initials	Criteria
LM/ KT	Document is consistent with published College and University policies.
LM/ KT	Document clearly reflects the goals/aspirations of the unit as these relate to workload.
LM/ KT	Document clearly defines the types of activities that constitute each of teaching, research/scholarship/creative activities/ professional development, and service for the unit.
LM/ KT	Document describes the different types of full-time positions in the unit.
LM/ KT	Document clearly defines the teaching, research/scholarship/creative activities/professional development, and service expectations for the different types of appointments.
LM/ KT	Document describes all unit policies related to workload for full-time faculty.
LM/ KT	Document describes criteria in which workloads may be modified, including pre-tenured minimum course reductions, family leaves, maternity/adoption leaves, and medical leaves.
LM/ KT	Document states how frequently the workload policy document will be reviewed.
LM/ KT	Document indicates where and how the unit's current workload policy document can be found.
LM/ KT	Document indicates where and how the workload assignments for each full-time faculty member can be found.
LM/ KT	Document describes the process for faculty to address any concerns with their workload in the unit
LM/ KT	Document indicates date of approval, any subsequent modifications by the unit, and anticipated date of next review.
TBD	Document indicates when it was sent to the Provost's Office to be included in the master list of policies for all units, and date of approval of the provost. date of approval of the unit's dean

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If the unit has one or more faculty with joint appointments in other units	
LM/ KT	Document defines how the workload policy changes for faculty members with an appointment of less than 100% in the unit, include impact of tenure home.
LM/ KT	Document describes how the unit will coordinate workload policy decisions with other units for faculty members with joint appointments, and how differences in workload expectations across units will be handled.

Action/Approval	Date
Department Approval	November 5, 2024
Dean Approval	February 21, 2026
Sent to Provost	February 23, 2026
Provost Approval	March 16, 2026

