

Workload Policy

Department of Physics

The workload

The workload for physics faculty is expected to be based on a combination of research and scholarly activity; classroom teaching and student mentoring (undergraduate and graduate); and service to the department, the college, the university, and to the field of physics in general. The combination of research, teaching, and service furthers the Department and College mission of integrating intellectual discovery and use-inspired research to improve the human condition and the environment.

Research and scholarly activity is generally taken to be performing research, either independently or in collaboration, that can lead to publications in recognized journals. Grant funding from agencies outside of Northeastern such as NIH, NSF, NASA, or DOE is a strong indication of productive research activity. As part of this, a faculty member may also be expected to mentor graduate students, post-doctoral associates, and staff in a professional manner.

The breakdown of the expected distribution of faculty time among these activities is given by academic rank in the following table with a total workload of 6 units per faculty member. Faculty categories not covered below are as negotiated during the appointment process. Modifications to the fractions below are also subject to negotiation.

Rank	Research	Teaching	Service
Tenured faculty	3	2	1
Tenure track faculty	3	2	1
Non-tenure track teaching faculty	0	5	1
Non-tenure track research faculty	6	0	0
Joint faculty (adjusted by % in physics)	3	2	1

Research-active tenured or tenure track faculty are expected to teach two courses per year, consistent with expectations at peer institutions. Research and scholarly activity is exemplified by a combination of the following: (a) grant funding from nationally recognized agencies, (b) publications in recognized journals in the field, (c) publication of monographs, (d) participation in review panels for national agencies. Tenured faculty who are not active in research and scholarly activity are expected to carry up to twice the teaching load as research active faculty, with a transition period of five years to allow for the continued pursuit of research funding opportunities. The transition period is defined as follows: 2 courses/year for the first three years after significant decrease in research activity, 2.5 courses for year 4, and 3–4 courses for the fifth and later years depending on the level of research activity. In those cases, the research fraction is reduced accordingly and moved to teaching and/or service in the above table. Non-tenure track teaching faculty have an expected course load of five courses per year with one unit of service. A modified workload of six courses with no service may also be considered. Tenure track

faculty may be entitled to one or more semesters of release from teaching before tenure evaluation to concentrate on research and research related activities, as determined during the hiring process.

All full-time faculty are expected to engage in service. Examples of basic service are attendance at faculty meetings and participation in departmental events. Examples of additional service include participation in the Department's graduate program and committee service.

Types of appointments

The department policies recognize five distinct categories: tenured faculty, tenure track faculty, non-tenure track teaching faculty, non-tenure track research faculty, and faculty falling into one of the first three categories but holding a joint appointment in another Northeastern unit. Those faculty are evaluated by the department on the same basis as a full-time faculty member of the same rank, but with a weighting proportional to the percentage of their appointment in the department. Each department for joint appointments is expected to share its evaluation of work performance with the department listed as tenure home.

Workload assignment and modification

The Department attempts to create a distribution of work in teaching and in service within the University that matches the breakdown described above for each faculty member. Faculty are consulted concerning their preferences when options are available. The Executive Officer, in consultation with the Department Chair, uses that information in determining the teaching assignments. Modifications in the distribution of research, teaching, and service are made for cases where a major service duty is assumed (such as Executive Officer, Undergraduate Curriculum Chair or Graduate Director, SAC Chair, etcetera). Any modifications to the workload must be made in advance of the year of evaluation. All faculty members have the option to buy out of teaching one course per academic year at a cost of 1/6 academic salary plus benefits; however, all faculty members must still teach at least one course per academic year. Workload adjustments are also made for parental leave, leaves of absence, or similar situations in accordance with the appropriate University Policies and College guidelines.

Appeal of workload assignment

The Department Chair in consultation with the Executive Officer will consider appeals. A faculty member must file a written appeal with the Executive Officer within two weeks of the original notification of the workload assignment. The Department Chair will consider the appeal on its merits and determine whether a modified workload assignment is warranted. The Department Chair must respond within two weeks of receiving the appeal.

About this document

This document is available on the SharePoint site of the Department of Physics. It is reviewed every five years by the Department Executive Committee, at a minimum.

Date approved by the Department October 13, 2023. Date of next review: October 2028.

Date approved by the COS Dean: November 6, 2023

Date approved by the Provost: November 10, 2023

Date approved by the Provost:

Checklist for unit workload policy documents

- Document is consistent with published College and University policies.
- Document clearly reflects the goals/aspirations of the unit as these relate to workload.
- Document clearly defines the types of activities that constitute each of teaching, research/scholarship/creative activities/professional development, and service for the unit.
- Document describes the different types of full-time positions in the unit.
- Document clearly defines the teaching, research/scholarship/creative activities/professional development, and service expectations for the different types of appointments.
- Document describes all unit policies related to workload for full time faculty.
- Document describes criteria in which workloads may be modified, including pre-tenured minimum course reductions, family leaves, maternity/adoption leaves, and medical leaves. Document states how frequently the workload policy document will be reviewed.
- Document indicates where and how the unit's current workload policy document can be found.
- Document indicates where and how the workload assignments for each full time faculty member can be found.
- Document describes the process for faculty to address any concerns with their workload in the unit.
- Document indicates date of approval, any subsequent modifications by the unit, and anticipated date of next review.
- Document indicates date of approval of the unit's dean.
- 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. If the unit has one or more faculty with joint appointments in other units:
- 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.
- 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.