



TO: VSU Faculty

FROM: Robert T. Smith, Ph.D. *R.T.S.*
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Professor of Mathematics

DATE: May 29, 2019

RE: Revised Valdosta State University Faculty Workload Policy

Below is the revised VSU Faculty Workload policy, developed over the past academic year by a faculty task force and recently approved by the JDSAC and by President Carvial.

PREAMBLE

A workload policy for Valdosta State University's faculty must recognize that faculty contribute to the life of the institution through their teaching, their service to the university, to the community, to their academic disciplines. All of these activities contribute to VSU's mission, quality of instruction, and the lives of our students, on and offline. To provide excellence in teaching, faculty must make a commitment to all of their professional lives.

Finding a balance among these activities is a challenging task, which is further complicated by the nature of faculty work. Faculty work does not fit into a neat box, nor is it confined to the office; faculty spend in direct contact with their students, either face-to-face or online. Moreover, the distribution of effort varies significantly among disciplines, and across time, term-to-term or year-to-year, depending on the mission and priorities of their program, college, and the university. However, the distribution of effort should always balance the scholarly, creative, and service interests of individual faculty members with their responsibility to deliver academic programs and services of high quality.

Any policy must recognize the diverse needs and expectations of our 25 different colleges and units; therefore, a university should provide the basic principles on which each college or unit will build its own workload policy, with guidance from faculty in all of its decisions.

PURPOSE OF POLICY

As part of the University System of Georgia (USG) General Policy on Academic Affairs, which states that the Chancellor, the President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the University System of Georgia (USG) presidents, their administrative

officers of the institution, and each institution shall determine the desired procedures to be most effective in promoting effective teaching and learning." These functions include "prescribing the teaching load to be assigned to members of the faculty" and "determining the maximum number of classes to be assigned to any one class." In addition, this policy prescribes that "Each USG institution president and his or her administrative officers, faculty, and staff shall promote effective higher education and efficient service having in view resources available to the institution." <http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section3/C336>.

Furthermore, as a comprehensive university of the USG, Valdosta State University's mission is defined as follows: "...offer a number of undergraduate and graduate programs with some doctoral programs, typically associate-level degrees, and offer a number of master's degree programs. While teaching is a core focus at all USG institutions, the emphasis and nature of applied research is more prominent at comprehensive universities than at research universities, but not emphasized as heavily as research universities. It is expected that institutions within this sector will be committed to being world-class academic institutions." <https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section3/C334>

This language from the University System of Georgia Legislative Act for Valdosta State University (VSLU) is a welcoming message to serving our communities' rich and diverse heritages. Through teaching, learning, basic and applied research, and service, VSLU provides rigorous programs and opportunities that enrich our students, our university, and our region. <http://www.valdosta.edu/about-us/mission-statement>

Thus, as established by the University System of Georgia and as defined by VSLU's mission statement, this policy sets the general parameters for faculty teaching load at a comprehensive university and provides guidelines, aims, and best practices to establish clear processes and practices to determine faculty teaching load and workload within the institution.

POLICY

VSLU's teaching load is as follows:

For tenured and tenure-track academic year (fall/spring) faculty, no more than 24 credit hours, 24 contact hours, or equivalent, per academic year, guidelines for maximum number of course preparations per term. Maximum/minimum values should correspond to program policy.¹

¹ For credit and contact hour guidelines, consult <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/dod/documents/academic-affairs> for the academic year faculty (fall/spring). Summer is an additional term of teaching under different guidelines.

• For non-tenure track academic year (fall/spring) faculty: no more than 30 credit hours 30

applied consistently within a department and must be approved by the dean and the Provost (see Appendix B for further definitions).

OTHER APPLICABLE POLICIES

Faculty workload and/or teaching for the course of an academic year or a term, either for personal or professional reasons. Other university-wide policies may come into play should a faculty member seek the modifications.

- **Educational and Professional Leave**

Leaves of absence of one year or less with or without pay may be granted by the institution's president.

The absence must be entered into the appropriate HR data system.

Recommendations for extensions of one-year leaves of absence of the initial granting of leave for more than six months require the Chancellor's approval.

<https://www.usg.edu/academic-affairs-handbook/section4/C695>

VSO's Policy and Application Form for Leave with Pay.

<http://www.usg.edu/academic-affairs-handbook/section4/C695>
[leave.php](http://www.usg.edu/academic-affairs-handbook/section4/C695)

- **Faculty Overload**

Under certain circumstances, qualified teaching faculty and administrative faculty may be called upon to take on additional educational, teaching, research, or service responsibilities at their institution.

In such situations, institutions should consider adjusting the individual's primary duties to incorporate the extra duties.

If it is determined that a workload adjustment cannot be made, the faculty member's contract should be modified.

A contract modification should be made to reflect the additional responsibilities.

Agreements that warrant additional compensation at a higher rate than the institution (see Section 5.3.3 in the Business Procedures Manual).

<https://www.usg.edu/academic-affairs-handbook/section4/C698>

- **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

Any employee (including part-time or temporary) of the University System of Georgia who has:

- been employed by the University System of Georgia for at least twelve months (or 12 months), and
- worked at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months.

...is eligible to be granted family leave for conditions as well as

Family and Medical Leave Act.

The Act provides that employees are entitled to 12 weeks of job-protected

- <https://www.usg.edu/faculty/retirement/buy-out>
Greene, J. (2017). Faculty Retirement Buy-out. Retrieved from <https://www.usg.edu/faculty/retirement/buy-out>
time if allowed by the Department of Education.

