

KNOW YOUR CA

Workload Standards

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Article 37

Your academic Unit probably has a Workload Standard. If it does not, it should. And if it does, you should

know what it says. Workload Standards govern how much work you are expected to do and how that work is assigned. They set out the academic obligations of Members in each Unit (for example, by identifying a “normal” annual teaching load). They are developed under Article 37 of the Collective Agreement by Members of each Unit subject to approval by the Dean, who may reject them only in narrowly defined circumstances.

The Purposes of Workload Standards

The Workload Standard in your Unit is there to protect you and to improve your working conditions:

- to allow you to arrange your responsibilities in a way that provides the most efficient allocation of work and time, given the academic obligations of your Unit;
- to provide transparency by allowing you to see and understand the calculation of your own responsibilities and those of your colleagues;

- to distribute responsibilities equitably;
- to integrate teaching and research; and
- to define teaching loads in a manner that encompasses all teaching responsibilities (i.e. to ensure that you get credit for all the teaching activities that you do, such as supervision, labs, and coaching, not just classroom teaching).

Improvements to Article 37 of the Collective Agreement

Article 37 was substantially improved in the latest round of bargaining. For example, despite elaborate processes and provisions for developing and reviewing Workload Standards in the old Article 37, nowhere did it say that the Unit Head had to assign workload in accordance with the Unit’s Workload Standard. These matters have now been fixed. Any teaching or service responsibilities must be assigned by the Unit Head in accordance with the Workload Standard for the Unit.

This means that you may refuse to take on anything that is not contemplated as a normal workload by the Workload Standard, such as extra service or teaching.

One of the main thrusts of the changes made to Article 37 was to provide Members with increased control over their own workload, thus improving working conditions without

cost to the University. Among the improvements now contained in the Collective Agreement are the following:

a) Flexibility in teaching loads from year to year

Article 37.2.4 provides that Members may carry a “credit” or “debit” balance in teaching duties by teaching more or less than the normal load described in the Unit’s Workload Standard as long as their total load over a five-year period is consistent with the Workload Standard. The Unit Head is to maintain and make available a list of the running balances of Members in the Unit. The purpose of this provision is to provide additional control to Members over the timing of their teaching duties, so that if they wish, they can provide themselves with periods of lighter teaching duties for research and other endeavours by taking on heavier loads at other times.

b) Endorsement of creative teaching arrangements to enhance best use of time

Article 37.2.5 endorses creative ways to arrange teaching, such as team teaching (two or more Members teaching different parts of the same course) and “doubling-up” (one Member teaching more than one section of the same subject at the same time). Such arrangements are to be accommodated and encouraged by the Unit Head provided the program obligations of the Unit can be met. For example, two Members assigned to teach two

sections of the same full-year course might decide that they wish to “double-up” on the teaching, with one teaching both sections in the fall term and the other teaching both sections in the winter term, thus cutting the amount of preparation work they each need to do in half (with no reduction in teaching credit), and concentrating their teaching in one term to free up time in the other.

c) One day each week free of teaching and administrative responsibilities

In Article 37.2.10, the University promises to make reasonable efforts to assign and schedule teaching responsibilities in a manner that provides each Member with one day each week in each academic term that is free of teaching and administrative responsibilities in order to be able to concentrate on research activities.

d) Assignment of teaching within areas of research interest and expertise

Under Article 37.1.5, each Unit's Workload Standard is to provide for the assignment of teaching within a Member's area(s) of research interest and expertise, subject to the Unit's ability to fulfill its academic program obligations. When Members teach within their areas of expertise, teaching enhances research and vice versa: the teaching is superior, preparation work is shorter, and research activity is facilitated. When Members are assigned teaching in subjects with which they have no familiarity, preparation is an enormous amount of work and teaching detracts from research.

The Importance of local Workload Standards

The contents of your Unit's Workload Standard have direct relevance to your working conditions and your

terms of employment. You may find out whether your Unit has a Workload Standard and what it says by referring to the QUFA Web site at http://www.qufa.ca/workload/qwk_ld_2007/workload.php.

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