

Workload Standard in the Department of Geological Sciences and Geological Engineering

Preamble

This document describes long-standing practice in a department where the development of workloads is undertaken in a collegial and consultative manner, on the basis of cordial discussion between individual faculty members and the Head of the Department. Formal teaching and administrative responsibilities are negotiated between individual faculty members and the Head of Department, with the Head being responsible for ensuring that what needs to be done is distributed as fairly as possible, taking into account teaching (including preparation, supervision of assistants, counselling, marking, etc.), supervision of graduate students, research commitment and productivity, administrative duties, professional service, and community service.

Undergraduate Teaching

The Department has a long tradition of excellent teachers in two faculties and across the whole range of the earth sciences, and this is reflected in a large number of teaching awards. Systematic and meaningful evaluation of undergraduate teaching effectiveness has been departmental policy since long before it became Faculty or University policy.

On average, a full-time member of faculty normally teaching 2.0 full-course equivalents per academic year. Typically this consists of 1.5 undergraduate courses and 0.5 graduate courses or seminars. In consultation with the Head, a faculty member may temporarily take on higher-than-normal teaching due to a sabbatical leave or resignation of a colleague, etc., or lower-than-normal teaching due to higher-than-normal administrative duties, research commitments, graduate-student supervision, or service commitments (see below). No member of faculty teaches less than 0.5 undergraduate courses per year. In addition to their lecturing, faculty members supervise a variable number of undergraduate theses and/or term projects. The extra work of designing a new course does not normally lead to a reduction in teaching duties, but may be compensated by reduced administrative or other duties. Newly hired junior members of faculty are understood to deserve lower-than-average teaching duties, insofar as the departmental needs and commitments may accommodate.

Faculty members are diligent in their teaching. No more than one week of lectures is missed, for any reason, without provision of a substitute lecturer. Most courses involve carefully designed and integrated laboratory work, and many involve one or more half-day field trips or a full-day field trip on a Saturday or Sunday. Instructors mark their own final exams, and they ensure that all laboratory and/or problem assignments are marked in a fair and timely manner by the teaching assistants.

During a test or examination, the instructor is either present or is "on call" by the proctor to deal with any questions of interpretation that students may ask. In exceptional cases, where the instructor cannot be available, he or she arranges for a properly instructed colleague to fulfil this duty, with the understanding that any rulings provided by their colleague will be honoured during marking of the test or examination.

Field work is essential to geological education. Faculty members design and conduct numerous field exercises and field trips, some of which are extracurricular, ranging from several hours to 14 days in duration.

Research and Supervision of Graduate Students

All faculty members are actively involved in research, and their average number of graduate students is three, ranging from zero to 10. Supervision of graduate students is voluntary (except for the Mineral-Exploration M.Sc. Program) and does not normally justify a reduction in teaching duties, but faculty members with stronger-than-average commitment to the graduate program may have reduced undergraduate responsibilities, and vice versa.

Administration, Service, and Consulting

Full-time faculty members contribute to the functioning of the Department through service on committees, participation in comprehensive examinations and thesis defenses, and short-term administrative tasks as may be required. Acceptance of a particularly onerous longer-term administrative responsibility may justify a reduction in teaching or other administrative duties.

Members of the faculty perform many services outside the University, either within the local community or within their discipline or profession. Such activities do not normally justify a reduced departmental workload, but faculty members who hold positions of significant responsibility and commitment in professional organizations pertinent to their research and/or teaching are normally granted temporary relief from some of their departmental duties.

Some members of faculty engage in private consulting for pay, subject to the University guidelines for such activities. Such consulting does not normally involve any reduction in teaching or administrative responsibilities.