

## **Multidisciplinary Studies (MDS) Programs Workload Policy** **Approved by the Office of the Provost on 4/17/2023**

The MDS Programs (which include the MDS, BIS, and RBA degrees) prepare students to address great challenges which cannot be solved by any single discipline on its own. In addition to instilling interdisciplinary methods and skills, our programs are central to the university's land grant mission to increase the percentage of West Virginia residents with college degrees and the skills needed for today's workforce. Through our flexible degree and course delivery options, our programs advance the university's goals with respect to retention and graduation rates. Our faculty and advising staff are uniquely dedicated to student success through the connectedness of teaching, mentoring, and advising in the unit. With more than 800 majors, our programs are not only large but also broad, serving the needs of traditional and non-traditional student populations with a wide range of interests. We embrace students who have encountered obstacles during their undergraduate studies, help them to find a sense of purpose, and prepare them to achieve their personal goals.

All faculty members and advising staff have an obligation to foster the quality and value of our program. The workload policy for MDS Programs at West Virginia University is intended to:

- Ensure a fair and equitable distribution of the workload among teaching faculty members, such that all faculty are making important contributions to the productivity of the unit.
- Ensure that our teaching faculty can meet (or exceed) the performance levels at peer institutions, as defined by the university, by setting comparable workload expectations in the areas of teaching and service.
- Ensure that meritorious performance is properly weighted with respect to an individual's teaching and service expectations.

### **1. Standard Expectations for All Faculty in MDS Programs**

#### ***Teaching Faculty***

Appointments in MDS Programs are primarily for Teaching-track Faculty. Faculty in the teaching-track category make an essential contribution to the mission of the University, College, and the MDS program by having a workload which emphasizes undergraduate teaching. The typical workload for MDS teaching faculty is 80% teaching and 20% service. Teaching is the primary need and focus of faculty in this unit. Equity is thus promoted in this unit when teaching faculty have similar course distributions, enrollments, and expectations of teaching and service.

#### ***MDS Director***

Appointments to the role of MDS Director have an increased service expectation. The typical workload allocation for Chairs/Directors in Eberly College is 20% teaching and 80% service.

#### ***Service Faculty***

One new category of appointment in MDS Programs is for Service-track Faculty. This pathway applies to persons who undertake large-scale service projects that serve critical needs of the unit, college, and/or university. Their typical workload is 40% teaching and 60% service.

## Pathways for Associate and Full Professors

	Teaching	Service	Research
<b>Pathway 1 Teaching Faculty</b>	80%  4+4 or 24 cr. hr	20-10%  Member of MDS, ECAS, or university wide committees Advising/mentoring	0-10% (up to 10% reallocation) Completing book project, article, etc.
<b>Pathway 2 MDS Director</b>	20%  1+1 or 6 cr. hrs	80-70%  Oversee all Dept. Operations De facto Member of all MDS Committees and Chairs/Directors Committee	0-10%  (up to 10% reallocation) Completing book project
<b>Pathway 3 Service Faculty<sup>1</sup></b>	40%  <b>2 + 2 or 12 cr. hrs.</b>	60-50%  Member of MDS Committees Chair a MDS committee Lead College or university-wide initiatives	0-10%  Completing book chapters, articles, conference presentations

### Performance Expectations for Teaching Faculty

*Teaching:* The standard teaching load will be 4+4 at the undergraduate level (24 credit hours or equivalents per academic year). Each year, faculty should make a significant contribution in the area of teaching and meet or exceed the unit's expectations for teaching and the performance of recently promoted peers. The standards and process for evaluating teaching effectiveness will be delineated in the unit's faculty evaluation guidelines.

*Service:* The standard expectation for service-related activities and/or the assumption of leadership roles includes committee work, participation in department activities, mentoring/advising. All faculty are expected to do at least some advising of students. At least half (10%) of service should be undertaken at the department level, and the remaining 10% of the service allocation can be dedicated to either the department, college or university levels. Each year, faculty should meet or exceed the expectations for a significant contribution to the service needs of the unit, College, and/or University. The standards and process for evaluating service will be delineated further in

<sup>1</sup>If Service-track faculty have full-time administrative appointments outside the unit, their load shifts entirely to their appointment (or as otherwise specified by the terms of the administrative appointment).

the unit's faculty evaluation guidelines.

*Criteria for promotion:* The criteria for annual evaluation and promotion are currently being defined in the development of MDS faculty guidelines. These guidelines will differentiate expectations in these areas according to rank and specify the guidelines for promotion. Promotion will require a combination of years of service plus a preponderance of evidence meeting or exceeding expectations in the areas of teaching and service as well as meeting or exceeding the contributions of recently promoted peers.

### **Performance Expectations for MDS Director**

The MDS Director will have an allocation that focuses on service and typically make a significant contribution in the area of service (80%) and in the area of teaching (20%). The performance standards in this role are established by the dean, and the director is evaluated annually by the dean or the dean's designee.

*Criteria for promotion:* The criteria for annual evaluation and promotion are currently being defined in the development of MDS faculty guidelines. For directors, promotion will follow the university's established process for the promotion of administrators.

### **Performance Expectations for Service Faculty**

*Teaching:* Service Faculty will ordinarily teach four courses per year (2+2 load) and maintain a 40% allocation in teaching as one of their significant contributions to the unit. Each course typically counts toward 10% of the workload assignment.

*Service:* Service Faculty are expected to undertake significant contributions of at least 50% or more to the unit in service. Service activities constitute their primary relation to the unit. They are expected to serve on the most important departmental activities, such as hiring committees, program review, faculty evaluation committees, curricular development, etc. Typically, this would include service on at least two department-level committees. Plus, they are expected to demonstrate significant contributions in service to the college, university and/or community, taking a leadership role on the most important committees.

*Research:* Service Faculty may have up to a 10% allocation in research. They would need to develop an individual research plan that is aligned with the interdisciplinary mission of the unit and dedicate their research efforts to the publication of articles or books and presentations at academic conferences related to the mission of the unit.

*Criteria for promotion:* The criteria for annual evaluation and promotion are currently being defined in the development of our faculty handbook. Promotion will require a combination of years of service plus a preponderance of evidence meeting or exceeding expectations in the areas of teaching and service as well as meeting or exceeding the contributions of recently promoted peers.

## **2. Factors That Differentiate Workload**

The standard expectation for full-time faculty in MDS Programs is four courses or equivalents per semester and eight courses or equivalents per academic year. A standard course is 3 credit hours and thus a standard teaching load is 24 credit hours per academic year. Several factors may differentiate annual workload assignments among faculty, based on increased teaching, service or research duties. The Director of MDS Programs will consult with each faculty member on an annual basis to establish appropriate teaching and service assignments. Adjustments in an individual’s workload will only be implemented in consultation with the relevant faculty member. It is within the purview of the MDS Director to reassign up to 10% of a faculty member’s workload in a given year (See Table 1). Reallocations of workload of more than 10% are subject to the dean’s annual approval on a case by case basis.

Table 1: Equivalent Teaching, Research, and Service Activities

Research	Teaching	Service
Book Manuscript Completion = 3 credit course	None	Advising $\geq$ 75 Students per semester = 3 credit course  Advising $\geq$ 125 Students per semester = 6 credit course  Host a national conference in discipline = 3 credit course

### 3. Workload Equivalencies in Teaching/Service

To justify a workload reassignment of 10% reduction of teaching, the work must be at least equivalent to the time and effort of teaching a 3-credit hour course (See Table 1). For example, 10% could be shifted from teaching to research for “book manuscript completion”, if a faculty member is completing the manuscript for publication to meet a contractual deadline. Or 10% could be shifted from teaching to service, if a faculty member is “hosting a national conference” for a large academic organization (e.g. AIS). Lastly, 10% of teaching can be reassigned for advising assignments as described in Table 1.

Similarly, to justify a reassignment of 10% of service to research, the reassigned work must be equivalent in time and effort to half of a faculty member's normal service duties. For example, 10% might be shifted, if a faculty member is preparing a book proposal and sample chapters, preparing an article for submission to a peer-reviewed journal, or preparing a grant proposal for a national funding agency.

### 4. Modification of Workload

Successful completion of activities related to workload reassignment needs to be documented annually in Digital Measures. Incompletion of these activities will be documented and will affect future workload requests.

For the most part, a shift of workload is not warranted. Preparing new material for a course,

developing a new course, participating in a training, mentoring students, etc., are commendable activities that fall under the ordinary expectations of teaching. Likewise, engaging in service to the department, college and university is an expected level of service that does not justify a shift of workload. Reassignments and/or other teaching assignments should not be requested or approved for the following:

1. Any private, professional services including, but not limited to, consulting, performance/exhibits, expert witness services, contract work, or other employment where there is remuneration over and above the faculty member's University compensation.
2. Community service activity that is not consistent with a faculty member's area of teaching and/or research or creative activity expertise.
3. Instruction, workshop organization, conference planning, curriculum development, clinical work for licensing requirements, and/or creative performance for any program where there is remuneration over and above the faculty member's University compensation.

### **5. Course Cancellation Policy**

Sometimes the director may need to cancel a course, for example, due to low enrollment. If a class is cancelled and pending the dean's approval, the faculty member may make up the cancelled course by teaching during the winter term, Maymester, or an eight-week course to satisfy their teaching load.

### **6. Course Overload Policy**

Sometimes the director may ask a faculty member to teach a course as an overload, for example, due to staffing issues. If the faculty member agrees to teach a course, the faculty member's teaching load may be adjusted during the following semester. Alternately, the faculty member may be paid for the overload at the per course instruction rate, approved by the dean. In no instance may a faculty member be assigned or teach an overload unless they are in compliance with their equivalent teaching credits and their previous annual evaluation is meritorious in areas of significant contribution.