

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Workload Policy Guidelines
(Approved by SOCA Faculty: March 26, 2025; Revised March 10, 2026, June 8, 2026)
Approved by Provost's Office: July 13, 2026

West Virginia University is a Carnegie R1 and land-grant institution that embraces the importance of rewarding excellence in teaching, research, and service. As a mechanism for evaluation, the workload agreement serves as a starting point for equitable distribution of faculty workload toward achieving the University's larger academic mission.

WVU Mission: As a land-grant institution, the faculty, staff, and students at West Virginia University commit to advancing education, healthcare, and prosperity for all by providing access and opportunity; by advancing high-impact research; and by leading transformation in West Virginia and the world through local, state, and global engagement.

As part of West Virginia University, an R1, land-grant institution, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology (SOCA) strives to foster through teaching, research, public engagement, and service, a systematic and critical understanding of human societies and cultures. The purpose of these workload policy guidelines is to establish clarity and facilitate transparency in the workload assignment process, with the goal of establishing equity and accountability across similar and differentiated faculty workload assignments.

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology recognizes that different faculty members contribute to its collective teaching, research, and service missions in diverse ways. Annual workload assignment plans reflect collaborative discussion between faculty and the chair. They provide opportunities to review progress, set goals, guide faculty toward success, and clarify metrics of evaluation. All service, research, teaching, and tenure-track/tenured faculty participate in formalized annual assignment planning and feedback. Faculty are expected to contribute to the broader missions of the Department, College, and University in the general areas of research, teaching, and service in accord with their work assignments, which are made in accord with the workload guidelines established by the University, the College, and this document. The guidelines and expectations outlined below inform teaching assignments and workload plans, with the caveat that flexibility may be appropriate or required based on overall departmental resources or needs.

Standard Workload Assignments

In the SOCA Department, for tenured and tenure-track faculty, the appointment letter normally defines the position as 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% service. The standard teaching expectation for full time, tenure-track/tenured faculty who are research active and active in the graduate program (grad active) is two courses or course equivalents per semester (see Table 1), totaling four courses or course equivalents per academic year. In some exceptional cases, tenure-track and tenured

faculty may have their workload redistributed as either teaching-intensive or research-intensive. Tenured faculty members can be considered for a change in areas of significant contribution following the process described in Section XI of the WVU Procedures document. This requires approval by both the Dean and the Provost. Designated research-intensive workloads are normally defined as 30% teaching, 50% research, and 20% service while designated teaching-intensive workloads may be 50% teaching, 30% research, and 20% service.

Teaching track faculty responsibilities are normally defined as 80% teaching, 0-10% research, and 10-20% service. Service track faculty responsibilities are normally defined as 60% service, 0-10% research, and 30-40% teaching.

Any modification of workload assignments must be balanced with the curricular and service needs of the Department. Reassignments of a faculty member's teaching load must be approved both by the Chair and the Eberly Dean's office and documented via their annual workload document or a Memoranda of Understanding.

Given the curriculum needs of the department, course equivalences are rare but may be necessary to fulfill the mission of the academic unit. Course equivalencies are not automatic and may only be granted by the Chair and after approval from the Eberly College. No reductions in teaching loads will occur without prior approval(s) from the appropriate academic leaders. Equivalent Teaching Credits must be identified by each academic unit, but not every College or academic unit within that College will have the exact same teaching, research, and service equivalencies. Below are University approved reasons to vary a faculty member's standard workload.

Teaching

All faculty members in SOCA are expected to make significant contributions to the program's teaching mission. Research and grad active tenure-track and tenured faculty have a teaching load of five courses but are normally expected to teach a 2/2 load (40% teaching effort) with a course equivalence for meeting the criteria for being active in the graduate program. Faculty serving as chair, associate chair, director of graduate studies, and director of undergraduate studies, are eligible for course reductions. Typically, the Department Chair (appointed by the Dean) teaches 1-2 courses per year. The Associate Chair, the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS), and Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), who are all selected by the Chair and approved by the faculty, typically receive a 1 course/year reduction. Terms for these positions typically range from 3-5 years. For teaching track faculty, the normal expected teaching load is 4/4, or in some cases 3/3 with accepted course equivalents (see chart below). Service track faculty normally have a teaching load of 2/2 or 2/1 if they have designated research in their workload assignment.

Research-active and graduate active faculty can expect to teach graduate-level courses at a rate of one every 2-3 semesters, based on demand and assuming the faculty members' expertise aligns with graduate teaching needs.

Courses taught as part of the faculty member's teaching load must also enroll no fewer than the required student minimum. Faculty whose courses are cancelled for not meeting enrollment minimums can expect to teach a midsemester (e.g., "recovery course" that is taught in 8 weeks) or an additional course assignment in a future semester.

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology houses a PhD program and a graduate certificate. To maintain a 40% teaching assignment, a tenure-track or tenured faculty member must satisfy the criteria for being research active **and** an active participant in our doctoral graduate program.

Active in the graduate program (grad active): Must meet both quantity and quality criteria.

Quantity: Based on a three-year rolling average, faculty are expected to work with graduate students, whether as chair, co-chair, or regular committee members on their second-year research papers, comprehensive exams, and dissertations. Grad active faculty may also include first-year cohort advisors, either chosen by incoming students or assigned to them, as needed, to help with their transition from student to scholar. A point system will be applied to accommodate for these different roles and work efforts: 3 points for chairing or co-chairing, 2 points for co-chairing or advising first-year students, and 1 point for committee memberships, whether internal or external. A grad active faculty member will be expected to serve as principal advisor (chair, co-chair, or first-year) for at least one student and to accumulate an average of 8 points, to demonstrate active and ongoing involvement in the graduate program. Faculty new to graduate program advising will have a two-year grace period, with the period of rolling averages beginning in their third year.

Quality: Whether as chair, co-chair, first-year cohort advisor, or regular member of research committees, faculty are expected to advise and provide regular feedback to graduate students. Methodologists or subject matter experts that expect to contribute more time/effort to a research committee than is typical for a committee member are encouraged to be a co-chair on the committee. If a committee member finds themselves performing the role of the chair, they can request to become a co-chair. Further details about faculty advisory roles are outlined in the Graduate Handbook.

Inactive in the graduate program (grad inactive): Does not meet the criteria for grad active based on a three-year rolling average. Similar to programs with no graduate program or an MA only program, per the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences workload document, grad inactive tenure-track/tenured faculty members who are research active may be assigned to teach five or six courses per year depending on their level of participation in the graduate program and departmental curriculum needs.

Research

For tenured/tenure-track faculty, typically 40% effort towards research is assigned. Tenured/tenure-track faculty are expected to maintain an active and ongoing research agenda, reflected in regular scholarly contributions and output.

Research Intensive: This describes a faculty member who engages in “outstanding” research contributions, typically publishing frequently in high-impact journals and securing substantial external research funding. Their research assignment is typically 50%. Must have 2 or more active, large external grants with sufficient funds to cover instructional costs either through direct or indirect costs **and** publish 1.25 times the average of faculty member with a regular (40%) research assignment, based on a three-year rolling average.

Research Active: To maintain 40% research effort, a tenure-track/tenured faculty member must minimally meet the quality/quantity expectations for a “satisfactory” descriptor in research productivity using a three-year rolling average as outlined in SOCA’s Promotion and Tenure document.

Research Inactive: The faculty member has not met the criteria for research active, as outlined above. Research inactive but grad active tenure-track/tenured faculty members may be assigned to teach five courses per year until they meet the criteria for research active. Research inactive and graduate inactive tenure-track/tenured faculty members may be assigned to teach six courses per year until they meet the criteria for research and grad active. In either case, the faculty member’s workload designation for research would remain at 30% effort unless altered through a university and college-level MOU, and they would be assigned to the “Teaching Intensive” workload category (Table 2, Pathway 1C).

Service

As outlined in the SOCA P&T guidelines, service is defined as activities that draw on a faculty member’s professional expertise, which have some relation to the department, college, university, profession, or community. To protect and mentor junior faculty, it is expected that service contributions will increase with promotion in rank.

Individual Faculty Workload Plans

The distribution of teaching, research, and service for faculty are specified each year in an annual workload plan in consultation with the Department Chair. Individual workload plans must be considered during each faculty members’ annual evaluation. Individual faculty workloads are assessed by the Department Chair annually based on a three-year rolling period of productivity. Additional rationales for modified teaching assignments (submitted by the faculty member to the Chair, and then submitted to the Dean’s office and then to the Provost Office) include formal or family-related leaves, sabbaticals, administrative assignments, and course buyouts related to research, which must ultimately be approved by the Office of the Provost. Faculty who are in endowed positions may also have teaching load modifications. Requests for such releases must include

documented justification (i.e., MOU agreement) and be approved in advance by the Chair and the Eberly College Dean's Office.

SOCA Course Equivalent Policy

Table 1 below lists research, teaching, and service responsibilities as well as other non-classroom teaching activities that require the same effort as an in-person three credit SOCA course. Courses and equivalences refer to assignments made by the chair in consultation with the faculty member. All course buy-outs, releases, and/or reassignments must be approved in advance by the Chair and the Eberly College Dean's Office.

Table 1: Examples of Common Equivalent Teaching, Research, and Service Activities

Research	Teaching	Service
Sponsored research activity, through a course buy-out or indirect cost reallocation Designation as Research-Intensive = 1 course equivalent Endowed professorship may specify a course equivalency	Undergraduate or graduate-level courses.	-Chair = 2-3 course equivalents -Associate Chair = 1 course equivalent -Director of Graduate Studies = 1 course equivalent -Director of Undergraduate Studies = 1 course equivalent
	Academic advising = 1 course equivalent per semester per approx. 50 students, in consultation with chair and subject to overall Department advising needs. Normally, such equivalents should not meet or exceed the number of courses taught by a faculty member in each semester in which	

	advising is also scheduled. Advising all WGST graduate certificate students, if there are at least 20 graduate students pursuing the certificate annually (.5 equivalency per year) Extensive curricular development, such as primary responsibility for a new on campus or online undergraduate or graduate academic major, minor, or degree program = 1 course equivalent or Departmental service assignment reduction	
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By mutual agreement and based on Department/university needs, it is possible that faculty members with the same title (e.g., tenured Associate Professor) could meet 100% effort in significantly different ways.

Table 2: Common Workload Assignments for Tenure-track/Tenured, Teaching Track, Service Track, and Research Track Faculty

	Teaching ¹	Service	Research
Pathway 1A: Tenure-track or Tenured Faculty with Traditional Focus (Research and Graduate Program Active)	40% 2/2 teaching load; Research and grad active criteria met, as outlined above; or 3/2 teaching load if grad inactive	20% At least 1 Departmental committee and additional service activities as described in SOCA's Promotion and Tenure document.	40% Research active criteria met as outlined above and outlined in SOCA's Promotion and Tenure document.
Pathway 1B: Tenure-track or Tenured Faculty - Research Intensive	30% 2/1 teaching load; research intensive and grad active criteria met, as outlined above	20% (see above guidelines and SOCA P&T document)	50% Research intensive criteria met as outlined above.
Pathway 1C: Tenure-track or Tenured Faculty - Teaching Intensive (Grad active, research inactive)	50% 3/2 teaching load, grad active criteria met as outlined above; or 3/3 teaching load if both grad and research inactive	20% (see above guidelines and SOCA P&T document)	30% Research inactive, does not meet research active criteria as outlined above. Research productivity expectations outlined in SOCA P&T document, section 6.1.3.

¹ Every time “courses” are listed this also includes activities approved as course equivalents by the proper authority for administrative assignments, academic advising, or other departmental needs.

	80%	10-20%	0-10%
Pathway 2: Teaching Track	4/4 teaching	(see above guidelines and SOCA P&T document)	(see above guidelines and SOCA P&T document)
Pathway 3: Service Track	40%	50-60%	0-10%
	2/2 teaching load	Specific to appointment Department service may include: Advising, administration, undergraduate recruitment and retention, curriculum development and assessment (with DUS/DGS); one or more committees); Application of expertise may include: College or university service; Professional service; Community service and public engagement	(see above guidelines and SOCA P&T document)