

USC VITERBI SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING POLICY ON FACULTY LOAD PROFILE

Every tenured or tenured-track faculty member must have a well-defined annual faculty load profile; the load profile of non-tenure-track faculty is generally defined in the annual appointment letter or contract. Faculty load refers to the percentage of effort faculty will devote to activities in the areas of teaching, research and service.

Tenured or tenure-track faculty are expected to devote the majority of their efforts to teaching and scholarly research, roughly in equal amounts, (with the exceptions noted below) and to a lesser degree to service. In the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, the default load profile of tenured or tenure-track faculty is 40% teaching, 40% research and 20% service (except that tenure-track faculty should have minimal service responsibilities and an enhanced research expectation). If the individual has been performing more or less teaching, research or service than is typical in the Viterbi School, the Chair and the faculty after consultation, may adjust the profile so that total effort amounts to full-time service.

Specifically, 40% teaching refers to the effort required to teach in a satisfactory manner three typical (3-unit) engineering courses per year. Satisfactory performance cannot be based merely on time spent, but rather it is measured in terms of outcomes and performance.

A Lecturer has no obligation for research or University service, but by agreement with each individual the default profile of full-time lecturers is 80% teaching and 20% departmental and school service. Research faculty may engage only in limited teaching and only as an ancillary responsibility --- not more than one course per year, and only by special permission of the dean. Non-tenure-track faculty generally have a reduced role in service activities, but all faculty, including part-time and full-time non-tenure-track faculty, share in the responsibility of university governance and are eligible to be appointed to committees (except those dealing with tenure) under the Academic Senate Constitution and University policy.

The faculty load profile is set every year during the spring semester, following the merit review evaluation and prior to the formulation of the budget for the next academic year. It is formulated between the Department Chair (or the Department Chairs, in case of a joint appointment) and the faculty member. All faculty load profiles are subject to the approval of the Dean. Changes in the profile from the default case are dictated by a number of reasons, including administrative appointments, prior agreements with the Dean, course "buy-out", changes over time in the faculty member's interests or effort in a specific area, and special responsibilities. These will be described in detail below.

The following principles underlie the assignment of the faculty load profile. Any exceptions must be approved by the Dean:

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Teaching is not only an obligation, but more importantly a defining characteristic of the regular faculty member. It is expected that each tenured and tenure-track faculty member will make a significant contribution in teaching as well as research.
- In the context of faculty load profile, teaching is associated with tuition units.
- The educational experience of students is considerably enhanced if the teaching faculty member also engages in scholarly research.
- A regular faculty member should be given the necessary time and resources to provide high-quality teaching to the students of the School of Engineering.
- A regular faculty member should also be given the necessary time to engage in high-quality scholarly research.
- Faculty are expected to teach courses and perform service assigned to them by the department chair, after consultation with department faculty, on the basis of department, school and University needs.

THE USUAL TEACHING LOAD

- While containing important teaching aspects (and nominal tuition units), supervision of the Theses of graduate students and other Directed Research is counted as part of the research rather than the teaching effort.
- On average, the regular faculty members of a Department should have an equal share of the Department's teaching load.
- On average, the teaching load of a regular faculty member should be distributed between undergraduate and graduate courses in the same proportion as the number of undergraduate and graduate courses offered in the faculty member's Department.
- The teaching load of all the classes is considered the same, provided that adequate Teaching Assistant help is given. As a rule of thumb, a ¼- time TA is needed for a regular class of up to about 35 students.
- Department chairs should monitor the frequency at which an individual is asked to teach new courses. In particular, an effort should be made to check that tenure-track faculty members are not asked to teach so many new courses as to interfere with their research programs.

MINIMUM CLASS SIZE

- The Viterbi School has set enrollment lower limits of 8 for graduate classes and 12 for undergraduate classes.
- The lower limits do not apply to courses required for a degree, unless an appropriate course substitution can be made. Programs that fail over a persistent period of time to attract the above minimum numbers of students will be subject to a review.
- On occasion, regular faculty members should teach special topics courses of their research interest. Lower limits in such cases should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The same applies to new course offerings.
- Departments should make every reasonable effort to schedule classes that are expected to exceed the lower limits stated. If by the end of the first week of class, enrollments do not meet the minimum, then the course will be cancelled unless it is needed for a degree. The faculty member originally scheduled to teach the course will have his/her profile automatically adjusted towards research, and expected to perform accordingly for that

period of time. Correspondingly, the faculty member will teach an additional course in the subsequent academic year, and will have his/her profile accordingly changed.

SERVICE

- Faculty activity other than teaching or research is considered service. For example, this is the case with the coordination of graduate seminars, the supervision of student activities, student advisement, and the like.
- Tenure-track faculty (assistant professors) should have minimal service responsibilities and a higher research expectation.
- All tenured faculty share a particular responsibility for the service functions of the University.

ADJUSTMENTS FROM THE DEFAULT PROFILE

- In all cases, faculty performance is measured by the peer-review merit evaluation conducted annually in each Department.
- If the individual has been performing more or less teaching, research or service than is expected, the Chair in collaboration with the faculty will adjust the profile so that effort amounts to full-time service. Thus faculty with consistently low performance in research, as evaluated by the annual peer-review, will have their load profile changed towards a larger teaching or service percentage, depending on the particular case and the Department needs. The possibility of variation in the profile provides a concrete recognition that faculty can often better serve the University and themselves if flexibility in focus is allowed over a career. The performance of faculty is reviewed in accordance with the individual profile. Thus those who carry heavier than usual teaching responsibilities and are highly effective teachers will be recognized for their contribution
- Faculty may have reduced teaching (less than the default 40%) or reduced service (less than the default 20%) load as a result of agreements reached with the Dean at the time of their appointment. This is often the case with starting assistant professors. Tenure-track faculty (assistant professors) should have minimal service responsibilities
- In rare cases the Dean may also agree to a reduced teaching load, for an agreed period of time, to specific faculty of very high distinction.
- Faculty may “buy-out” one course per year by working 25% of their time during the academic year, and thus charging 25% of their academic salary, on external research contracts. Excessive “buy-out” is not encouraged.
- The faculty load profile of faculty in administrative positions, such as Associate Deans, Chairs, Associate Chairs and Center Directors is set by the Dean, to reflect the service effort required for the administration of the relevant unit.
- A profile different than the default profile may also be arranged with the Dean in infrequent situations, if a considerable service commitment is requested for a faculty member.