

Variable Workload Policy

Adopted by vote of the GES Faculty, 28 April 2016

- 1 **In general.** The College of Arts and Sciences and the Office of the Provost expect all UNM departments to have a variable workload policy. The intent with this policy is to allow the department to use its resources efficiently and equitably and to allocate teaching responsibilities accordingly. The standard classroom teaching assignment (annually) for all full-time faculty in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies (GES) at UNM has been a base 2+2 load (two assigned classroom courses in both Fall and Spring semesters), with the assumption of a research program that meets department expectations, as defined in the Annual Evaluations of Faculty process outlined in Section ___ of the GES Governance document. This can be reduced through administrative or contractual agreements, and through signed course buyouts for external research grants (maintaining at least one classroom course each semester). Higher teaching loads for individual faculty members can also be implemented based on a reduced focus on research (a voluntary choice), or reduced research productivity (a triggering mechanism).
- 2 **Voluntary.** Any tenured faculty member, with their salary line in the department budget, may voluntarily choose to move to a higher classroom teaching load (e.g., 3+3) through a signed agreement with the Department Chair (kept on file in Department and forwarded to College of A&S). The signed agreement would be expected to articulate any reduced research expectations, as well as the increased teaching expectations including more than just additional course assignments.
- 3 **Triggering Mechanism for Additional Teaching.** Based on the recommendation of the Personnel Committee and at the discretion of the Chair, an increased teaching load may be assigned for the next academic year (AY) to any tenured faculty member, with their salary line in the department budget, who fails to meet minimum research expectations based on procedures outlined in the Annual Evaluations of Faculty process. Research expectations are generally 40% of a faculty member's overall workload and scale with percentage of workload (for example, excluding time during approved leaves of absences except sabbaticals).
 - 3.1 If the conditions described above are triggered for an increased teaching load for any faculty member, the increase in the first year will be to a 3+2 (or 2+3) assigned classroom-teaching load. Absent meeting the conditions in the 1 in the subsequent year, this will then increase to a 3+3 teaching load. The 3+3 teaching load would continue until the conditions are met. Notification of the faculty member of any increase in base teaching load for the next AY should be made within the required Annual Review process (kept on file in Department and submitted to College of A&S).

- 3.2 For the first time that the increased teaching load assignment is triggered for any faculty member, the individual may request in writing to the Department Chair a one year delay to the initial increase in the base teaching load. The faculty member would work with the Chair to identify current plans for moving their research program forward and has the option of working with the Chair and Personnel Committee in a mentoring process to assist in this process. It is expected that this request for a one year delay would be granted, conditional on the faculty member submitting a plan for current and future research activities. If minimum research expectations are not subsequently met after the additional year, then the initial increase in the base teaching load would be triggered.
- 4 **Triggering Mechanism for Course Load Reduction.** A decreased teaching load may be assigned for the next academic year (AY) to any tenured faculty member, with their salary line in the department budget, who “shows extraordinary accomplishment” in research based on procedures outlined in the Annual Evaluations of Faculty process, based on the recommendation of the Personnel Committee and at the discretion of the Chair based upon available resources during a given year and other relevant factors. If the Chair determines that absence of available resources is the only reason why a course reduction is not granted in a given year, the faculty member’s eligibility for a course reduction will be retained for up to an additional 2 years, allowing a course reduction to be assigned at the discretion of the Chair. The course reduction is non-automatic, and a faculty member may decline an offer of teaching reduction.
- 5 **Course Release Request Guidelines.** The Chair will evaluate each request for a course release according to the following guidelines:
- 5.1 All requests for a teaching release must provide: a) an explanation of why a temporary shift in expected work effort is requested; b) documentation of reasons for increased research (or service) expectations; c) a statement on whether the requesting faculty member controls and can offer funding equal to the buyout cost of the teaching release; and d) an identification of the specific course(s) and semester(s) for which a teaching release is sought.
- 5.2 The Chair will return without review any requests that fail to provide appropriate and sufficient information and/or documentation to support the request. The Chair will also return a request for additional supporting information and/or documentation.
- 5.3 The department Chair will seek input from the Personnel Committee before making a final decision to grant or deny a course release. The Personnel Committee will review bona fide requests, and provide a written recommendation to the Department Chair whether to grant or deny the request. This recommendation will be based on evaluation of the justification provided for the request, and in consideration of the requesting faculty member’s recent annual evaluations of professional work performance. Strong justification must be demonstrated for faculty members who have recently failed to meet minimum performance expectations.

- 5.4 Requests to buy out courses with research grants or other funds will generally be honored unless submitted too late to make arrangements for a replacement instructor. Normally, these arrangements must be completed prior to the semester that precedes the semester for which a teaching release may be granted. Advance notice is particularly important when the release will impact core, capstone, or specialized courses for which the pool of qualified PTIs is limited.
- 5.5 Any requests to buy out courses with departmental funds (or other funds internal to UNM) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Priority will normally go to requests that are justified by major departmental service responsibilities that can be demonstrated to the College as a justification for additional PTI funding. Only in exceptional instances will teaching releases be granted for increased service expectations associated with responsibilities outside the department.