

Instructional Faculty Workload Report

Office of Faculty Affairs and Curriculum

Division of Academic Affairs

James Madison University

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Executive Summary

How do we ensure that instructional faculty workload practices 1) serve the university's mission and 2) position faculty to thrive as teacher-scholars, broadly considered? These are complementary goals. We broach this question by gathering department/school-level workload data aggregated by faculty stream (tenured, tenure-eligible, and RTA). The data demonstrate that across areas of professional responsibility (teaching, scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and service), JMU's faculty are essential stewards of the university's mission.² Many faculty members, however, report high levels of burnout and concern related to workload. While fully exploring this dynamic goes beyond the report, we hope to provide a constructive framework for discernment and candor among and between faculty and administrators. The report discusses the importance of workload, gives an overview of the data, and offers a set of suggested practices and norms designed to promote transparency, consistency, fairness, and good stewardship.

Studying Faculty Workload

James Madison University's mission is to be "a community committed to preparing students to be educated and enlightened citizens who lead productive and meaningful lives." Through their **teaching, scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and professional and university service**, the university's instructional faculty serve as essential stewards of that mission. All three areas of professional responsibility "are vital components of the work of faculty. Ideally, they reinforce each other, to the benefit of students and [the] institution and as major motives and sources of satisfaction in the life and career of each faculty member."³

While all three comprise core faculty responsibilities, teaching traditionally dominates workload discussions. References to 4/4 or 3/3 loads reflect an early-twentieth-century model developed by the Carnegie Foundation to measure how much face-to-face time an instructor spent with students. Three hours of contact a week equated to three credit hours, and a full-time teaching workload was defined as

¹ A typographical error has been corrected from the August 15 version of this report.

² By extension, faculty are integral to the positive relationship between higher education participation and wages, health outcomes, civic engagement, voluntarism, and charitable giving. For an overview of the literature, please see "Making College Worth It: A Review of the Returns to Higher Education," by Philip Oreopoulos and Uros Petronijevic, *The Future of Children*, 2023, pp. 41-65. See also "How do college graduates benefit society at large?" APLU: <https://www.aplu.org/our-work/4-policy-and-advocacy/publicvalues/societal-benefits/>.

³ "The Work of Faculty: Expectations, Priorities, and Rewards," AAUP Policy Documents and Reports, eleventh edition, p. 241.

24 credit hours per academic year (12 credits per semester), which divided by three credits equaled a 4/4 load. In 1969, however, the AAUP (American Association of University Professors) declared that 4/4 should be the maximum appropriate load, with 3/3 as the preferred load.

Over time, critics have noted serious problems with the Carnegie “seat-time” model, which masks important differences in class size and pedagogy while ignoring scholarship and service. Today, some institutions correlate those numerical representations of “seat-time” to percentages of faculty effort, where over an academic year, most tenure-system faculty expend 60% effort on teaching (10% per course), with the remaining 40% on research and service. Alternatively, some institutions use the economics of credit hour production to measure faculty productivity, but that is also criticized as inadequate to the task. At JMU (James Madison University), the Carnegie model continues to influence contemporary understandings of faculty workload.⁴

Acknowledging the complexity, this report explores instructional faculty workload patterns at JMU, intending to address this fundamental question: **How do we ensure that instructional faculty workload practices 1) serve the university’s mission and 2) position faculty to thrive as teacher-scholars, broadly considered?** We broach this question in a challenging moment, when, nationally, faculty report high levels of burnout and mental exhaustion. In a recent Chronicle of Higher Education survey of college and university faculty, 35% of respondents indicated they have seriously considered leaving higher education, while 38% have considered retiring.⁵ Some of this is owed to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the larger context likely aggravates faculty distress. Against a backdrop of state budget cuts and delegitimizing discourse, “more work is spread across fewer faculty members and administrative support staff.”⁶ Meanwhile, Americans’ confidence in higher education (across age, partisan, and educational demographic categories) is in decline.⁷

Exciting things are happening at JMU—we have learned to work through crises, hired exceptional faculty, developed new programs, and grown our student body in a time of broad contraction. According to the 2021 COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) study, a faculty job

⁴ “The Carnegie Unit: A Century Old Standard in a Changing Education Landscape,” by Elena Silva, Taylor White, and Thomas Toch, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2015, pp. 7-11. This 2015 report signaled Carnegie’s acknowledgment that the standard unit did not measure anything but seat time, and it generated multiple op-eds and follow-up studies. For a recent overview of the workload problem, see Kerryann O’Meara, Dawn Culpepper, Joya Misra, and Audrey Jaeger, “Equity Minded Faculty Workloads: What We Can and Should Do Now” American Council on Education, 2022. “Statement on Faculty Workload with Interpretive Comments,” AAUP Policy Documents and Reports, eleventh edition, p. 245.

⁵ “‘On the Verge of Burnout’ Covid-19’s impact on faculty well-being and career plans,” The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020: https://connect.chronicle.com/rs/931-EKA-218/images/Covid%26FacultyCareerPaths_Fidelity_ResearchBrief_v3%20%281%29.pdf.

⁶ “The Hollowing Out of Higher Education,” by Kevin R. McClure and Barnett J. Taylor, Chronicle of Higher Education, 2023: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/are-colleges-bad-employers>. See also “Equity Minded Faculty Workloads: What We Can and Should Do Now,” by Kerryann O’Meara, Dawn Culpepper, Joya Misra, and Audrey Jaeger, American Council on Education, 2021, p. 3.

⁷ “Americans Confidence in Higher Education Down Sharply,” by Megan Brennan, Gallup, 2023: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/508352/americans-confidence-higher-education-down-sharply.aspx>; “Americans’ Confidence in Higher Ed Drops Sharply,” by Karin Fischer, Chronicle of Higher Education, 2022: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/americans-confidence-in-higher-ed-drops-sharply>.

satisfaction survey, JMU faculty reported seven areas of strength, ranging from Appreciation and Recognition to Support of Colleagues, and had “fewer areas of concern as compared to the larger cohort group.”⁸ JMU has also emerged as a national research university. Our new Carnegie status reflects the strength of the faculty and our shared commitment to discovery, and it redounds to the benefit of our students and community here in the Shenandoah Valley. Even so, faculty concerns about workload imbalance raised in the COACHE report surfaced again in JMU’s 2022 Climate Study. In the 2022 study, 67% of instructional faculty respondents said they had seriously considered leaving JMU, with 34% of them identifying workload as a contributing factor.⁹ The qualitative data group staff and instructional faculty together, but the common concern is that “unreasonable” workload expectations contribute to stress and undermine healthy work-life balance.¹⁰

In response to these findings and at the direction of the Provost, Faculty Affairs and Curriculum asked Associate Deans (A-Deans) to work with Academic Unit Heads (AUHs) at the end of the 2022-2023 AY to help gather department/school-level data on **typical workloads** across faculty streams (RTA, tenure-eligible, and tenured), and then explain the circumstances that inform departures from typical workload. The analysis includes data from 43 academic departments and schools across eight colleges. Participants are listed in the Appendix.

To the extent that workload and burnout affect faculty at JMU, the structural nature of these challenges makes it unlikely that we will find discrete, immediate solutions. However, this report provides a first step to understanding the lay of the land. We liken the report to an old-school Polaroid picture coming into focus rather than a highly pixelated snapshot of faculty workload at JMU. Nevertheless, the report should help us document the status quo, alert us to areas that need attention, and provide a basis for meaningful collaboration.

Faculty Handbook Guidance

The Faculty Handbook (section III.A.10) notes that an instructional faculty member’s workload, “encompasses a minimum of 40 hours per week, [and] is determined by the AUH or other supervisor in consultation with the faculty member, and with the approval of the dean. A faculty member’s workload may be adjusted to reflect cumbersome teaching assignments and other assignments.”¹¹ Based on their projected activities, faculty members and AUHs produce Faculty Anticipated Activity Plans detailing each faculty member’s assignments for each academic year. (Please see our suggested activity report template in the appendix.)

Findings

Workload data were collected at the departmental level and aggregated by faculty stream. The underlying assumptions are that 1) workload refers to 100% of instructional faculty members’ effort

⁸ See the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) report for JMU, 2021, p. 12: <https://www.jmu.edu/academic-affairs/policies-and-reports/coache.shtml>.

⁹ “James Madison University: Assessment of Climate for Learning, Living, and Working,” Rankin and Associates Consulting, 2022.

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 291-293.

¹¹ 2023-2024 Faculty Handbook, James Madison University, p. 14.

across assigned areas of professional responsibility and that 2) assigned percentages are linked to assigned tasks. Table 1 provides descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Typical Workload Proportions by Instructional Faculty Stream

	RTA	Tenure-eligible	Tenured
Teaching			
Mode	80%	60%	60%
Median	70%	50%	50%
Range	40-90%	30-80%	30-80%
IQR	64-80%	48-60%	48-60%
Scholarship/Creative Activity			
Mode	10%	30%	30%
Median	10%	30%	25%
Range	0-40%	10-45%	10-40%
IQR	10-10%	20-35%	20-30%
Service			
Mode	10%	10%	20%
Median	15.5%	20%	20%
Range	5-30%	10-30%	10-40%
IQR	10-20%	10-22%	16-22%

Note: Instructional faculty in the Libraries do not typically have a teaching workload. Their areas of professional responsibility include Job Performance, Scholarly Achievement and Professional Qualifications, and Service. Job Performance varies by position description and ranges between 50 and 68.4% of workload. When present, teaching assignments may be classified as Job Performance or Service, and many Libraries faculty serve as adjunct faculty in academic departments.

JMU's instructional faculty are teacher-scholars in the truest sense, supporting the university's mission across areas of professional responsibility. Tenure-system faculty typically have a balanced workload that prioritizes teaching, research, and service in that order; RTA faculty typically have a teaching-intensive workload.

It is helpful to consider what the data might mean. As an example, the median tenured faculty member holds a 50% teaching workload, equivalent to 20 hours in a hypothetical 40-hour work week. Considered as a proxy for all 639 of JMU's tenured faculty, that is equivalent to **12,780¹² teaching hours per week** and 511,200 teaching hours over the 43-week on-contract period, minus three weeks, to account for breaks and university closures.¹³ As impressive as this is, it underestimates tenured faculty efforts, as these figures do not account for work on thesis supervision, independent studies, student meetings, LMS organization, and more. Accounting for tenure-eligible, RTA, and part-time faculty as well, faculty work in this area generated 590,129 credit hours and supported the completion of 128 Honors Capstones in the 2022-2023 AY and led to the conferral of 27,240 degrees and certificates in the five years from AY 2017-2018 through AY 2021-2022.

¹² (639*20)

¹³ This example is meant to provide an illustration. One of the challenges is that not all departments assign percentages to each category. Even when they do, the percentages might not be linked to assignments. That limits the analysis, but it also demonstrates the transparency and transferability of thinking about workload in this way. It moves us toward a lingua franca while allowing local decision-making.

As another example, the median tenured and tenure-eligible faculty members, respectively, hold a 25% and 30% workload in scholarship/creative activity (10 and 12 research/creative hours per week). Considered as a proxy for all 798 of JMU's tenured and tenure-eligible faculty, that is equivalent to **8,298¹⁴ research hours per week** and 331,920 research hours over the 43-week on-contract period, minus three weeks to account for breaks and university closures. This is reflected in peer-reviewed publications, performance, the publication of books and monographs, and research funding. The Office of Research and Scholarship reports that in FY 2023, faculty and staff submitted 290 external grant proposals, which yielded 202 awards and \$34,158,773 in external funding.

Counting Classes and Doubles

Knowing a faculty member's workload percentage in teaching should tell us something about the number of classes they teach. Stated differently, a faculty member with an 80% teaching load should have more instructional responsibilities than a faculty member with a 50% teaching load. We suggest that a standard three-credit class should be weighted as 10% of workload, but **local circumstances, such as contact hours, class size, clinical components, or availability of teaching assistants and graders, might dictate something different.** A department might reasonably decide that an 8% or 12% weight for their classes is more appropriate. That is fully within their discretion, provided they have the approval of their dean and are transparent about their weighting. Based on the reported data, the modal and mean class weights are 10% and 9.06% ($\sigma=.02$), respectively.

Approximately 20 departments count large classes as "double." This means that if a faculty member is assigned three classes a semester, but one of those classes is a large enrollment section, then the faculty member will teach two classes and receive credit for three, given the increased work associated with large classes. The baseline for how large classes must be to count as two classes ranges from 32-200 students; seventeen departments do not double-count classes, and one department counts four-credit classes with enrollments above 149 students as three classes.

Overloads

When departments lack sufficient full-time personnel to meet their instructional responsibilities, they frequently hire part-time faculty. Sometimes, however, full-time faculty are given the opportunity to teach an extra, out-of-load class to help fill the gap. Faculty almost always receive additional pay for teaching additional classes. The Office of the Provost has no objection to this practice, provided that:

1. Faculty are cognizant of the impact extra teaching may have on one's progress toward promotion and tenure;
2. Faculty truly have agency to decline opportunities for out-of-load teaching;
3. Faculty understand that choosing to teach a paid, out-of-load class does not necessarily reduce their assigned duties;
4. Faculty are not already on a reduced teaching load due to a service assignment or research buy-out. Teaching an overload under this circumstance should be scrutinized and truly exceptional.

Table 2 provides data on overloads. Sixteen departments report that overload teaching is rare; it would only be considered under emergent circumstances. Faculty in 23 departments regularly teach overloads,

¹⁴ $(10*639) + (12*159)$

ranging from one to 22 per academic year. Under both conditions—rare and regular—seven departments report that faculty occasionally teach a one-credit overload on an unpaid voluntary basis.

Table 2. Approximate Data on Overload Teaching

Overload Circumstances	Number of Departments	Annual Overloads
Rare, emergent circumstances	16	87
Regularly offered	23	
Routine one-credit overloads	7	

Note: These data do not include overloads taught for units outside one’s academic unit.

Instructional Activities Outside of Teaching Classes

Teaching includes an array of instructional activities in addition to serving as the instructor for a typical three- or four-credit class. Essential activities include supervising theses, supervising clinical work, writing letters of recommendation, and offering independent studies. Typically, these are considered unassigned activities that are acknowledged favorably in the context of annual evaluations.

One department bundles these activities and counts them as a class for the purposes of faculty workload. This means that when faculty are assigned, say, five classes per academic year, they teach four classes but receive credit for a fifth class to account for broader instructional activities. In the same way, Nursing faculty receive class credit for clinical hours. For example, an RTA faculty member in the School of Nursing typically teaches eight classes per academic year, with each worth 10% of workload; however, their workload assignment for teaching is 90%, given their clinical supervision responsibilities.

Either approach to capturing non-class instructional activities is acceptable, provided departments are transparent about how these activities inform their assigned responsibilities and the evaluation thereof.

Departures from Typical Workload Assignments

A-Deans were asked to work with AUHs to gather data on *typical* faculty workloads and contextualize departures. It would be challenging to account for every departure in this report. At a high level, however, we observe the following:

- Many departments assign a reduced teaching load to faculty in their first year at JMU.
- When a faculty member takes on a new contractual responsibility, such as serving as a General Education Coordinator or center director, a portion (or all) of the faculty member’s workload may be assigned to a different unit within the university.
- Assistant/Associate AUHs (A-AUHs), program directors/coordinators, graduate directors, and faculty tasked with assessment and accreditation work or other significant service responsibilities often receive a one- or two-course workload shift from teaching to service. Similar shifts occur in departments where faculty handle extensive student advising.
- Many departments allow faculty to buy out of courses with research grant funds or due to service compensation from another unit (e.g., JMU Libraries or CFI Faculty Associates), shifting their responsibilities from teaching to research or service.

Stipended Activities

From 2019-2021, units within the Division of Academic Affairs paid \$3,038,660 in stipends to JMU employees. Not all stipends went to instructional faculty, and unfortunately, it is impossible to query

stipend data by employee classification (instructional, A&P, or classified staff). We can, however, identify several patterns.

Stipends provide remuneration for temporary projects and responsibilities. They do not affect employees' base salary. Academic units routinely provide in-load stipends to instructional faculty with complex service tasks, such as A-AUHs, program directors and coordinators, interim leaders, and faculty working on accreditation/re-accreditation. Colleges/Departments also provide research stipends in support of faculty development and research efforts.

Faculty also receive stipends from outside their unit to compensate for added responsibilities. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but the following are a few examples:

- The Office of the Provost provides a stipend to part-time members of the Faculty Senate during the academic year and the Senate Steering Committee members during the summer.
- The Centers for Civic Engagement and Faculty Innovation routinely provide faculty stipends for workshop development and facilitation.
- The Madison Collaborative and the Gilliam Center for Entrepreneurship provide a stipend for faculty fellows.
- The JMU Libraries occasionally provides stipends or course buyouts for extraordinary service commitments by non-Libraries faculty.
- Many units pay faculty stipends to compensate for curriculum development.
- Many units pay faculty stipends for student advising. These are typically small stipends for discrete activities, such as advising at a summer event.
- The Office of the Provost provides stipends for specific roles associated with academic program reviews.
- Under unique arrangements, the Office of Research and Scholarship and its offices/units sometimes offer incentives in the form of stipends and course buyouts for faculty to participate in enhanced research activities.

Employees' base salary compensates for most assigned (in-load) work. When is it appropriate, then, to provide additional remuneration?¹⁵ We suggest units consider the following:

- When in-load assignments are especially complex, demanding, or outside of faculty members' typical responsibilities, such as serving as a program director.
- When faculty request additional out-of-load responsibilities that also serve the unit, college, and/or university's essential needs, such as summer teaching.
- When faculty are asked by their supervisor to take on new and significant responsibilities **without a workload shift** to accommodate the additional work.

¹⁵ Please also note that if the stipend is being considered for a faculty member on a 12-month faculty role, the work involved must be outside regular work hours (40-hour work week) and should not take time away from full-time work responsibilities. Moreover, faculty who have secured a federal grant are required by federal code to not earn compensation levels that exceed 133% of their base salary.

- When faculty on a 10-month contract are asked to complete out-of-load responsibilities during the off-contract period.

Irrespective of the circumstances, we encourage units to 1) be consistent and transparent concerning stipend decision rules and 2) consider the impact of additional workload on career progression.

Suggested Practices/Norms

The Office of the Provost supports local decision-making concerning workload, as is affirmed in the Faculty Handbook. As AUHs and faculty consult with each other on workload, we recommend adhering to the practices and norms listed below, which align workload practices with the norms of transparency, consistency, fairness, and good stewardship. We view these as essential in supporting faculty well-being and the promotion of healthy departmental cultures.

- Consistent with the university’s mission, AUHs should make workload assignments that ensure their respective units meet their instructional responsibilities while supporting faculty members’ professional goals.
 - Stated differently, provided unit instructional needs are met, workload assignments can be **flexible**, allowing AUHs and faculty to adjust over time to address the changing interests of the faculty and the university. Some faculty members may request a research-intensive workload, while others may prefer a teaching-intensive workload. In both instances, it is acceptable for these designations to be long-term or short-term.
 - In the same way, this means that AUHs may need to schedule more classes in the morning or across three days to meet student and space demands.
 - Faculty accomplishments should also inform flexibility. If a faculty member’s research productivity does not align with expectations based on their assigned workload over a locally determined period, it is appropriate for that faculty member to have additional teaching responsibilities. The key here is that the circumstances prompting this kind of adjustment be transparent.
- Subject to the dean’s approval and in consultation with the AUH, the faculty in each academic unit should **develop clear and transparent guidelines** that determine the typical weighting of each area of professional responsibility (scholarly achievements and professional qualifications, teaching, and service).
 - Transparency goes beyond clear guidelines. Transparency extends to implementation and information sharing. We suggest that AUHs provide “basic data about faculty workload made into transparent tables or charts and accessible to all the faculty.”¹⁶ O’Meara et al. provide guidance as to how departments can develop simple dashboards to increase transparency.¹⁷

¹⁶ “Needed: Allies for Equitable Faculty Workloads,” by KerryAnn O’Meara, Joya Misra, Audrey J. Jaeger, and Dawn Culpepper, *Inside Higher Ed*, 2019: <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2019/07/24/five-things-faculty-members-should-do-now-help-create-more-equitable-workplace>.

¹⁷ “Faculty Work Activity Dashboards: A Strategy to Increase Transparency,” by KerryAnn O’Meara, Elizabeth Beise, Dawn Culpepper, Joya Misra, and Audrey J. Jaeger, *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 2020: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2020.1745579>.

- Guidelines should indicate how classes count as a percentage of effort. Again, we suggest 10% for a standard three-credit class, but this is a local decision subject to the dean's approval. While the weight of a class may vary based on class size and other factors, *it is not permissible for a class weight to vary based on the instructor's rank or tenure eligibility.*
- Assigned workload percentages should align with the assigned tasks in each area. For example, if two faculty members in the same unit have identical teaching assignments—each will teach a 3-3 load—their assigned percentage for teaching should also be identical. If a 3-3 load for one faculty member is considered 60% of workload and 40% for another, the assignments raise concerns about fairness and consistency.
- We encourage departments to think about and make explicit how they “count” non-classroom teaching activities, such as student mentoring, independent studies, and thesis supervision. Can these activities be bundled and count as a class? Or are they extra, unassigned tasks that are considered necessary to achieve excellence in one's annual evaluations? Either approach is acceptable, but it is essential to specify in the interest of clarity.
- A few departments allow faculty to team-teach courses, where each faculty member gets credit for teaching a whole class. We encourage departments to reflect on the circumstances that make that practice sustainable and consistent with good stewardship of resources.
- Workload assignments should **align** with annual evaluation, promotion, and tenure performance expectations. To provide an obvious example, assigning a teaching-intensive workload with a minimal research component would be inappropriate if a tenure-eligible faculty member is expected to produce multiple peer-reviewed publications for successful promotion and tenure consideration.
- The Faculty Handbook notes that workload is “determined by the AUH or other supervisor in consultation with the faculty member, and with the approval of the dean.” We recommend that assignments and consultations occur each spring for the following academic year. Consultation is acceptable over email if that is agreeable to the AUH and the faculty member. The spring timing ensures that AUHs and faculty can think strategically about meeting departmental instructional needs and faculty professional development needs, and it may facilitate longer-term planning.
- Teaching and service responsibilities include various essential (yet unpopular) tasks, such as teaching in the early morning or mundane committee work. O'Meara et al. point out that units often assign these tasks on an “opt-in” voluntary basis, which can lead to resentment and inequitable workload assignments. We encourage departments to use “opt-out” systems that create a set **rotation of responsibilities** (e.g., everyone takes a turn teaching at 8:00 am.) “Opt-out systems can change the conversation from ‘Why would I agree to do that’ to ‘What is my argument for why I alone should not have to do this.’”¹⁸

¹⁸ “Equity Minded Faculty Workloads: What We Can and Should Do Now,” by Kerryann O'Meara, Dawn Culpepper, Joya Misra, and Audrey Jaeger, 2021, American Council on Education, 2021, p. 13.

- Tenured, tenure-eligible, and RTA faculty have **responsibilities** across all three areas of professional responsibility, pursuant to the Faculty Handbook. Tenured and tenure-eligible faculty responsibilities should typically focus on teaching and research, while RTA faculty responsibilities should focus on teaching and service.
 - RTA faculty should not typically have the same assigned workload distribution as tenure-system faculty. Whether a department hires an RTA or tenure-system faculty member should be informed by the unit's needs and the college's strategic vision. When units assign RTA and tenure-system faculty with identical workloads, it creates a financial incentive to hire RTA faculty and may undermine the tenure system.
- In-load assignments should not be eligible for a stipend unless the complexity or demands of the assignment merits additional remuneration. This includes service done for units outside the faculty member's home unit; if this kind of service is assigned and accounted for (e.g., via a course release or other workload shift if needed), providing an additional stipend may not be appropriate. Stipends should have the approval of the dean. Moreover, we encourage administrators to be consistent and transparent about the decision rules used to determine when an in-load stipend is merited.
- Faculty should work to avoid conflicts of commitment when accepting unassigned responsibilities. Faculty may take **unassigned (out-of-load) responsibilities**, such as teaching for SPCE (School of Professional & Continuing Education) or engaging in service, but that does not necessarily shift or decrease their assigned duties. Faculty should consult with their AUHs if this is a concern.
- The Provost's Office encourages departments to include a process for addressing **workload-related complaints and concerns** in their workload guidelines. While the Faculty Handbook tasks AUHs with making workload assignments, designating a faculty committee to hear concerns/complaints and make *recommendations* to the AUH ensures that faculty are heard and may avoid conflict escalation. This practice may require a change to the Faculty Handbook, given that section III.E.4.a states, "an academic unit may have standard relative weights for the three performance areas, which will apply if individual negotiations are not agreed upon by the faculty member and the AUH."¹⁹
- AUHs and A-Deans are instructional faculty, but they perform essential administrative roles. This work is often classified as "service" or "job performance." This may not adequately capture their (contractual) work as academic leaders, which includes management, supervision, and operations. We suggest establishing a new area of professional responsibility for AUHs and A-Deans—**administration**—which only deans would assign.

Next Steps

Workload practices reflect our commitment to being good stewards of the university's mission; at their most transparent, consistent, and fair, they support healthy departmental cultures in which faculty can thrive as teacher-scholars and members of the JMU community. As a next step, we ask faculty and academic leaders to reflect on their local practices and discuss whether and how change is in order. This

¹⁹ 2023-2024 Faculty Handbook, James Madison University, p. 35.

is a shared governance issue—faculty and academic leaders should engage closely and collaboratively on this. The report cannot address the structural issues associated with burnout and fatigue. However, culture is built in actions large and small, and this report creates opportunities for both. With a better sense of typical workload dynamics, we hope faculty and academic leaders will be better positioned to move forward constructively.

Appendix

Table 1A. Participating Departments and Schools by College

College of Arts and Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Studies English Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Cultures History Justice Studies Philosophy and Religion Political Science Media Arts and Design Sociology and Anthropology Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communications
College of Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting Computer Information Systems & Business Analytics Economics Finance & Business Law Hart School of Hospitality, Sport & Recreation Management Marketing Strategic Leadership Studies
College of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early, Elementary & Reading Education Educational Foundations & Exceptionalities Learning, Technology & Leadership Education Middle, Secondary & Math Education
College of Health and Behavior Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Sciences and Disorders Graduate Psychology Health Professions Health Sciences Kinesiology Nursing Psychology Social Work
College of Integrates Science and Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer Science Engineering Integrated Sciences
College of Science and Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biology Chemistry and Biochemistry Geology and Environmental Science Physics and Astronomy Statistics and Mathematics
Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Engagement Discovery, Access and Technology Learning Innovations and Design Libraries Administration
University Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interdisciplinary Liberal Studies

Note: The College of Visual and Performing Arts is not included in the analysis, as it was engaged in a different process of workload exploration in the 2022-2023 AY. The Department of Military Science is not included, given the unique status of its faculty.

This is a template that departments may use and adapt to suit their needs if they wish.

Faculty Anticipated Activity Plan

AUHs must consult with each faculty member during the spring semester to discuss their assignments for the following academic year. Taken together, these assignments comprise faculty workload. According to the Faculty Handbook, workload “is determined by the AUH or other supervisor in consultation with the faculty member, and with the approval of the dean.”

Faculty member name:

Academic year:

Consultation Date:

Assignment

Weight	Domain	Responsibilities
	Scholarly Achievement and Professional Qualifications	•
	Teaching (or Job Performance, in the case of librarians)	•
	Service	•
100%		

This is a template that departments may use and adapt to suit their needs if they wish.

Workload Guidelines

Date Approved:

The Department of _____ is committed to the fair and transparent distribution of workload. The AUH is responsible for ensuring compliance with these guidelines.

Process for Assigning Workload

The responsibility for assigning faculty workload rests with the AUH in consultation with each faculty member. Consultation typically occurs at spring meetings between the AUH and individual faculty members.

Faculty members may request workload adjustments from the AUH at the spring consultation or by request to the AUH at any other time. Faculty workload may be reevaluated and communicated at the beginning of each fall and spring semester, depending on departmental needs.

Typical Workload

Typical faculty workloads are listed in the table below.

	RTA	Tenure-eligible	Tenured
Teaching (or Job Performance in the case of librarians)			
Scholarly Achievement and Professional Qualifications			
Service			
	100	100	100

Workload Category Explanations

Teaching includes credit-bearing classes, special problems classes, Honors theses, thesis advising, dissertation advising, supporting student learning during office hours and meetings, formal student advising, and other teaching-related activities listed in the departmental Evaluation Criteria. For faculty on 10-month contracts, each three-credit class typically counts as 10% of annual workload. Online courses typically will count the same as face-to-face courses. Faculty members responsible for 1) advising at least x undergraduate students, 2) mentoring at least x students doing independent work (readings classes, theses), or 3) a combination of the two receive workload credit for teaching a class.²⁰

²⁰ Alternatively, a department could decide that advising and mentoring are necessary to achieve the highest evaluation for teaching.

Over a traditional fall or spring semester, faculty shall schedule n office hour(s) per week for every three-credit class.

Scholarly Achievement and Professional Qualifications includes original scholarly investigation (including the scholarship of teaching and learning), external grant applications, leadership in professional associations, and other activities listed in the departmental Evaluation Criteria. Faculty with 20% workload are expected to spend at least 8 hours per week actively at work on scholarly activities. Faculty evaluated as “Unsatisfactory” for more than three consecutive years will typically have an increased teaching load moving forward until performance improves.

Service includes work performed on behalf of the department, college, and university as part of shared governance; work performed on behalf of the specific academic discipline or the academy, in general; outreach within the community on behalf of the department, college, or university; and other activities listed in the departmental Evaluation Criteria. This includes routine participation in department and college service. Faculty with 20% workload are expected to spend at least 8 hours per week actively at work on service.

Routine Workload Shifts

A workload shift is provided to faculty with especially demanding service assignments, such as Associate AUH or Program Director. Workload for these positions is negotiated with the AUH.

Workload Complaints

Faculty members may lodge complaints about their workload assignment by emailing their AUH (from their university account) and asking for reconsideration. The faculty member may ask the AU PAC to review the assignment if reconsideration by the AUH does not resolve the complaint. The AU PAC shall ask for information from the AUH and complainant, as needed, and then either 1) affirm the AUH-assigned workload assignment or 2) recommend a change. Disputes beyond this step should be considered as a grievance under the Faculty Handbook (section III.K).