

DEPARTMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING WORKLOAD

Guiding Principles

The basic mission of the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology at Western Michigan University is to prepare professionals from diverse backgrounds who will be maximally effective in providing clinical services to individuals with speech, language, and hearing impairments and their families. The enhancement of knowledge and the development of a variety of skills and competencies -- including those related to evaluation, diagnosis, rehabilitation and prevention, as well as those related to research, education and administration -- are subsumed by the basic mission. As a corollary to this mission, the department is committed to furthering understanding of human communication processes and disorders through its educational programs, through laboratory and clinical research, through information dissemination and through professional and community service activities. To accomplish this broad mission, a wide range of educational, research, administrative and service-oriented responsibilities must be distributed across the faculty members of the academic unit. The following are some guiding principles for assigning workload to faculty members.

First, faculty workload assignments must be consistent with Articles 42 (Traditional Faculty) and 20 (Faculty Specialists) of the Western/WMU-AAUP contract. These articles stipulate the maximum full-time faculty workload is the equivalent of twenty four credit hours per year for traditional faculty and the equivalent of thirty credit hours per year for faculty specialists. All faculty specialists currently in the department fall in the category of clinical specialists (Article 20.§4.2). A primary role of this position is to provide clinical education to undergraduate and graduate students preparing for professional careers. The department has long recognized the time intensive nature of clinical education. As a result, it has been standard practice to assign workload to clinical faculty specialists using a twenty-four credit hour limit with the recognition that it is considered equivalent to the higher credit hour limit assigned to faculty specialists in other instructional areas.

Second, work must be assigned to faculty so that the departmental curricular and extracurricular policies, goals and objectives are met¹. It is assumed that the

¹ It should be recognized that the department has had a long history of success in securing external grant funding. From 1996 to 2007, SPPA faculty members have secured approximately eight million dollars (indirect and direct costs) in external funding for research and training. This has allowed increased flexibility in workload assignment. However, it is expected that fair and equitable workload assignments can be made in the absence of such funds.

Department will have adequate faculty resources to meet its collective needs and maintain fair and equitable workload assignments.

Third, each faculty member's workload assignment should be consonant with the performance expectations outlined by the current Western/WMU-AAUP contract as well as their individual appointment letter. This assures that individual faculty members have the opportunity as well as the mandate to demonstrate their performance in areas upon which their promotion and tenure review will be based. For traditional faculty, performance areas include professional competence (instruction), professional recognition (research and creative activities) and professional service. For faculty specialists, performance areas include professional competence and professional service. Although research and creative activities are not a requirement for the tenure and promotion of faculty specialists, Article 20 of the Western/WMU-AAUP contract recognizes that these activities may be used to demonstrate professional competence. Many faculty specialists contribute to the departmental mission in this manner. It is recognized that the workload assignment cannot be all-inclusive since it is not practical to tally every activity within the workload credit system. However, non-instructional activity that is critical to making tenure/promotion decisions (i.e., research productivity) needs to be clearly defined within the faculty member's workload assignment.

Finally, there should be a substantial degree of flexibility in the assignment of faculty workload. This flexibility is necessary to meet the wide range of activities that are integral to the departmental mission and address the particular areas of interest/expertise of individual faculty members. In addition, demands on the department as a whole and on individual faculty can fluctuate on a semester-by-semester or year-by-year basis. Therefore, faculty workload assignment should be evaluated on a regular basis so that institutional needs (e.g. securing program accreditation or implementing curricular changes) and individual faculty goals (e.g. initiating a new research project or performing substantive professional service) may be considered.

Process

To accommodate the principles outlined above, faculty workload assignment will be the product of a discussion, which could be initiated by either the department chair or the faculty member. Depending on the nature of the workload assignment, the process may involve other parties such as the Clinic Coordinator or a representative from the academic clinical and education committee (ACEC). The goal of this meeting will be to establish a workload assignment that considers the overall needs of the department and the individual goals of the faculty member. Because of the changing needs of the department and the evolving interests and responsibilities of individual faculty, workload assignment meetings will occur on an annual basis. To ensure fairness and equity, the department chair will finalize workload assignments only after meeting with each

faculty member. A summary of the final workload assignments will be available for faculty review.

Workload Variables

Below are a set of guidelines that will be used to assist in assigning faculty workload.

Classroom Teaching

The standard metric for classroom instruction is that 1 credit hour of workload will be assigned for each credit hour of instruction. It is recognized that the credit hour assignment of a course does not always match the demands the course places on the instructor. Therefore, adjustments to the credit hour assignment for a specific course will be made based on a variety of factors. These factors include, but are not limited to, **large class size** (i.e., greater than 60 students), **graduate level instruction**, **course content** (e.g., writing intensive), **the presence of laboratory sections**, **new class preparation** and **major course revision**. When courses are considered exceptional with regard to one of these factors, the equivalent of 1 additional credit hour of workload will be assigned for every 3 credit hours of instruction. If more than one of these factors applies to a given course, the faculty member may receive additional credit allowances for the course.

Some courses in the department are taught by multiple instructors (i.e., team taught). By prior agreement, the overall number of credit hours associated with the course will be divided among the faculty members involved. In some circumstances, the collective number of credits hours for a team taught course may be greater than if it were taught by an individual instructor. Such a decision would come about through discussion between the department chair and the team of faculty members teaching the course.

Example 1: A faculty member is assigned to teach a 3 credit undergraduate course of modest enrollment (e.g. 30 students). Student evaluation is based solely on essay length writing assignments. This high grading burden is discussed in the faculty member's workload meeting. As a result, the faculty member is assigned an additional credit hour of workload and receives 4 credit hours of workload assignment for that course.

Example 2: Due to recent faculty retirements, a current faculty member is assigned to begin teaching a new 3 credit undergraduate course. Because of the additional work involved in course development, they receive one additional credit hour of workload for this course. The total work assignment for this course is 4 credit hours.

Clinical Education

Clinical education differs from classroom teaching along a number of dimensions. Supervising student clinical education is an individualized process which requires direct and regular observation and evaluation of student-conducted assessment and therapy as well as the review and critique of written reports.

Faculty members are assigned to supervise student clinicians. One credit hour of clinical education typically involves the supervision of 1-4 students for approximately 2 hours of client contact and 1 hour of student meetings each week. In addition, faculty members also spend a number of hours of indirect time reviewing written plans and reports. The total effort required for a given credit hour of clinical education can be quite variable and can depend on a number of factors including the **type of clinical intervention** (i.e., specialized and/or time intensive procedures), **supervisee characteristics** (e.g., prior clinic experience), **the number of supervisees for each clinical hour, client characteristics** (e.g., disorder type, client “neediness”), and **intervention philosophy** (e.g., group vs. individual treatment). These factors will be considered when assigning a clinical workload. If a credit hour adjustment is deemed necessary, the faculty member will receive a minimum of 1 additional credit hour of workload for every 3 credit hours of assignment.

Example 1: A faculty member is scheduled to supervise two AuD students on an infant auditory brainstem response (ABR) diagnostic team. The length of the ABR test procedure far exceeds the time typically assigned for a diagnostic clinic. Due to the time intensive nature of the diagnostic procedure, the faculty member receives an additional credit hour of workload for this clinical assignment.

Example 2: A faculty member is assigned to supervise the clinical education of a group of 4 undergraduate students with no prior clinical experience. Furthermore, two students are known to have academic difficulties. Due to the group size and academic needs of some of the group members, the faculty member receives an additional credit hour of workload for the clinical assignment.

Research Teaching

Consistent with the university, college and departmental missions, the department encourages student involvement in research. Faculty members routinely serve as primary advisors or committee members on undergraduate theses, master’s theses, AuD research projects and doctoral dissertations as well as serve as instructors/mentors for independent studies. Workload may be assigned to faculty who are involved in significant amounts of research teaching. This can only occur with prior approval from the department chair. Primary advisors on such graduate research projects (i.e., master’s theses and AuD

research projects) may receive 1 credit hour of workload for every 3 credit hours of student registration in a research course.

Example: Due to an unusually high class enrollment, a faculty member must concurrently direct the completion of 3 AuD research projects. This was endorsed by the department chair at an earlier workload meeting. Two projects are slotted for completion during the same semester. The faculty member serving as the primary advisor is assigned 2 credit hours of workload for research teaching.

Supportive Assignments

There are a number of activities that support the educational mission of the department. These activities include advising undergraduate and graduate students, coordinating undergraduate and graduate programs, and coordinating on-campus and off-campus clinical assignments. Given the diverse nature of these assignments, the actual credit hour assignment for these activities will be based on discussions between the faculty member and the department chair.

Research & Creative Activities

The successful tenure and promotion of traditionally-ranked faculty require significant engagement in research and/or creative activities (i.e., scholarly activity). Therefore, it is important that unfunded² time for scholarly activity be included in the workload assignment of traditionally-ranked faculty. Traditionally-ranked faculty will be assigned a minimum of 3 credit hours per semester for scholarly activity. For faculty specialists, tenure and promotion does not require research and/or creative activity. However, such activities are recognized as an indicator of professional competence and many faculty specialists contribute to the departmental mission in this manner. Therefore, faculty specialists may request assigned time to engage in research and/or creative activities. All faculty members (both traditionally-ranked and faculty specialists) who receive assigned time for such activity may be asked to outline how the time will be used and report on the progress of the activities. Finally, recognizing that the total available time for research and/or scholarly activity may be constrained by instructional needs, it is incumbent upon the department chair to prioritize assignments in a fair and equitable manner.

Example: A traditionally-ranked faculty member anticipates submitting a large federal grant application in an upcoming semester. Given the intensive nature of the application, the faculty member receives 4 credit hours of workload for assigned research time so the member may prepare the application.

² Unfunded research time refers to research that is not directly funded by external grants. Therefore, these stipulations do not apply to faculty members who have “bought out” of certain workload obligations. It is necessary that individual faculty discuss externally funded research projects with the department chair since the workload of the unit may be affected by such activity.

Professional Service (i.e. Departmental, College, University and Professional Service)

Faculty are expected to support the department, college and university through service activity. Additionally, faculty are obliged to serve professionally by holding positions in professional organizations, committees etc. These activities raise the profile of the department and should be encouraged as much as possible. Professional service activities that require significant time and effort and are consistent with the mission of the department, college, and/or university may be counted as part of the workload assignment. This may not exceed 3 credit hours.

Example: A faculty member is elected to a one-year term to lead a task force for the national professional organization. The department chair allows the faculty 1 credit hour of workload for this activity.

Approved by department faculty, August 2008