

Faculty Teaching Policies

Paul M. Rady Department of Mechanical Engineering
College of Engineering and Applied Science
University of Colorado, Boulder
Approved by Department vote on May 15, 2024

1. Purpose

This document outlines teaching load, course buyout, and teaching appointment policies for tenured (T), tenure-track (TT), and teaching faculty at the Boulder campus in the Paul M. Rady Department of Mechanical Engineering (ME). The expectation is that all faculty are involved in the educational mission of the Department, including a substantial focus on classroom instruction, particularly at the undergraduate level. All T/TT faculty are expected to be research active with a portion of their teaching duties dedicated to PhD student advising. If a T/TT faculty member is not research active and/or engaged in PhD student advising, then additional teaching and/or service roles will be assigned. The following policies are in alignment with the College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS) policies for [Evaluation, Salary Increase Determination & Salary Equity for Faculty](#).

2. Teaching Loads

The base teaching load for full-time T/TT faculty is 3 courses per academic year (AY). The base load for full-time teaching faculty (including Scholars in Residence) at the Boulder campus is 5 courses/AY. All faculty are expected to be engaged in the core undergraduate and/or graduate curricula. Such core classes include required undergraduate and graduate classes, as well as graduate classes that are the basis for PhD preliminary exams, among other courses that must be offered annually based on programmatic requirements (e.g., graduate certificates and teaching for interdisciplinary programs) and student demand.

The reduced base load for T/TT faculty, as compared to teaching faculty, is one of the ways in which the Department prioritizes research and these faculty are consequently expected to be research active. In ME, teaching faculty are responsible for delivering a significant portion of the core undergraduate curriculum and frequently teach large, required lecture and lab classes. As such, their base load is 5 courses/AY. All faculty are expected to contribute service to the Department. Adjustments to these loads can be made based on partial and administrative appointments.

Prior to submission of the reappointment package (which typically occurs at the end of the third full year), the standard base load for TT Assistant Professors is 2 courses/AY. The reduced load for TT Assistant Professors recognizes the additional effort required to teach courses for the first time, as well as to recruit and onboard new research advisees without the help of more senior students.

Reduced teaching loads for new T/TT Associate and Full Professors hired into the Department are dictated by the terms outlined in offer letters. Reduced loads for new teaching faculty are similarly dictated by the terms outlined in offer letters.

3. Teaching Buyouts

To further support the research mission of the Department, research active T/TT faculty can buy out of 1 course by paying 10% of their AY salary. Course buyouts are at the discretion of the Chair. These funds are used to pay for adjuncts and lecturers to cover course vacancies.

In some cases, T/TT faculty with high levels of research activity may seek to buy out of an additional course. These buyouts are permitted at the discretion of the Chair based on faculty research activity, the number of PhD students advised, and departmental teaching needs. If a second buyout is permitted, the

rate for the second course is 15% of the faculty member's AY salary. Thus, a T/TT faculty member would pay 25% of their AY salary in total to buy out of two courses.

A faculty member who has an administrative release from one or more courses is not required to pay an increased rate to buy out of an additional course; administrative releases are modifications to the base load rather than "buyouts".

Although uncommon, teaching faculty may buy out of a course at the discretion of the Chair by paying 16% of their AY salary.

Teaching assignments are overseen by the Chair and faculty members who buy out of classes are still expected to support the core undergraduate and graduate curricula. As such, course buyouts will be from teaching of undergraduate and graduate elective courses first and foremost, rather than reductions in the teaching of core undergraduate and graduate classes.

4. Workload Modifications

Standard workload percentages for T/TT faculty are 40% research, 40% teaching, and 20% service. For research active T/TT faculty with a 3 course/AY load who are involved in PhD student advising, the teaching portion of the appointment corresponds to 10% for each course and 10% for PhD student advising. For research active T/TT faculty, a one-course reduction (either due to a buyout or an administrative release) corresponds to a 10% reduction in the teaching appointment and a corresponding increase in either the research or service appointment. Examples of appointment modifications for T/TT faculty include:

- Administrative load reduction from 3 to 2 courses/AY: 40% research, 30% teaching, 30% service.
- Faculty buyout of 1 course: 50% research, 30% teaching, 20% service.

These modifications assume that T/TT faculty are research active and engaged in PhD student advising. If this is not the case, additional teaching and/or service duties may be assigned with corresponding changes to appointment percentages.

For TT Assistant Professors with a reduced 2 courses/AY load, the workload is maintained at 40% research, 40% teaching, and 20% service. New faculty members are typically new to teaching and developing new courses, requiring more than the standard 10% effort for each course. These faculty members are also typically recruiting and onboarding new PhD students without the assistance of more senior PhD students or postdoctoral researchers.

Research active T/TT faculty who buy out of two classes will have their workloads changed to 55% research, 25% teaching, and 20% service. High levels of research activity are typically associated with increased PhD student advising and the teaching effort corresponds to 10% for teaching one class and 15% for PhD advising. In limited cases, larger workload changes are possible (e.g., 60% research, 20% teaching, and 20% service), but these changes are at the discretion of the Chair and require approval by the Dean.

Standard appointment percentages for teaching faculty are 80% teaching and 20% service. For teaching faculty with a 5 courses/AY load, a one-course reduction (typically for administrative appointments) corresponds to a 15% reduction in the teaching appointment and a corresponding increase in either the research or service appointment, to remain in compliance with CEAS policy that only changes of up to 15% are permitted without Dean approval. An example appointment modification for teaching faculty is:

- Administrative load reduction from 5 to 4 courses/AY: 65% teaching, 35% service.

Additional course reductions for teaching faculty are at the discretion of the Chair and require approval by the Dean. Unless accompanied by a significant research or service component, buyouts by teaching faculty do not modify the appointment workload. Changes to research or service workloads for teaching faculty should be discussed and negotiated with the Chair.

5. Reduced Appointments

Faculty may request a reduction in their overall appointment, but standard appointment percentages (40% research, 40% teaching, 20% service for T/TT faculty and 80% teaching, 20% service for teaching faculty) cannot be adjusted. That is, faculty cannot preferentially reduce a component of their overall duties through a reduced appointment alone.

For a research active T/TT faculty member with a 3 course/AY load, example appointment reductions include:

- 75% appointment: 2 courses/AY (equivalent to 30% research, 30% teaching, 15% service).
- 50% appointment: 1 course/AY (equivalent to 20% research, 20% teaching, 10% service).
- 25% appointment: 0 courses/AY (equivalent to 10% research, 10% teaching, 5% service).

The “equivalent” appointments noted parenthetically above all conform to a 40/40/20 ratio, corresponding to 40%/40%/20% appointment weightings for research, teaching, and service in the HR system (that is, the weightings must still add up to 100%, even for faculty on reduced appointments).

Research active T/TT faculty may request additional course buyouts according to the rates outlined in Section 3. For example, a faculty member on a 75% appointment who buys out of an additional course would have a 1 course/AY load and an appointment equivalent to 40% research, 20% teaching, and 15% service (corresponding to 53.3% research, 26.7% teaching, and 20% service in the HR system).

For each of the above reduced appointments, it is assumed that T/TT faculty are research active and engaged in PhD advising, comprising 10% of their teaching appointment. If this is not the case, additional teaching and/or service duties may be assigned with corresponding changes to appointment percentages.

For a teaching faculty member with a 5 courses/AY load, example appointment reductions include:

- 80% appointment: 4 courses/AY (equivalent to 64% teaching, 16% service).
- 60% appointment: 3 courses/AY (equivalent to 48% teaching, 12% service).
- 50% appointment: 2.5 courses/AY (equivalent to 40% teaching, 10% service).
- 40% appointment: 2 courses/AY (equivalent to 32% teaching, 8% service).

The “equivalent” appointments noted parenthetically above all conform to an 80/20 ratio, corresponding to 80%/20% appointment weightings for teaching, and service in the HR system.

6. Sabbaticals/Family Leave

According to [CEAS guidelines](#), a tenured faculty member on sabbatical primarily related to research for one semester is given a workload of 80% research, 10% teaching, and 10% service for that semester, or 60% research, 25% teaching, and 15% service for the entire year when combined with a standard 40%/40%/20% semester. A faculty member on a full year sabbatical will be assigned a workload of 80% research, 10% teaching, and 10% service for the entire year.

Faculty who take leave (e.g., family) will retain a standard workload during the time they are not on leave, but expectations will be reduced by half (for one semester of leave) during annual evaluations.

7. Evaluation Expectations

According to [CEAS guidelines](#), “proportionate adjustments in performance expectations will be made when a faculty member’s weightings for evaluation are different from the standard. Similarly, increased teaching loads may be provided for faculty members who have lower research activities or evaluations.” As such, a T/TT faculty member who buys out of one course and has a 50%/30%/20% workload would be expected to have greater research output and teach less than a T/TT faculty member with a standard workload. The ME Personnel Committee will adjust expectations during the annual evaluation process.

Temporary Amendments to Faculty Teaching Policies

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Approved by Department vote on May 15, 2024

The following temporary amendments will be enacted along with the Faculty Teaching Policies approved by Department vote.

Teaching Loads: For consistency with earlier teaching load policies, TT Assistant Professors hired prior to 2024 (with signed offer letters dated calendar year 2023 or earlier) will have a 2 courses/AY load through completion of reappointment, inclusive of the AY in which the reappointment application is submitted.

Teaching Buyouts: To mitigate any financial hardship imposed by the changing buyout rates, the following rate calculations will be used for the first course buyout by T/TT faculty during AY 2024-2025 and AY 2025-2026:

- AY 2024-2025: $(1/3)[10\% \text{ AY salary}] + (2/3)[\text{Current flat amount}]$,
- AY 2025-2026: $(2/3)[10\% \text{ AY salary}] + (1/3)[\text{Current flat amount}]$,

where the current flat amounts correspond to the AY 2023-2024 department rates, equal to:

\$7,500 per course for Assistant Professors,

\$10,000 per course for Associate Professors,

\$12,500 per course for Full Professors.

The 10% AY buyout rate for T/TT faculty will thus not go fully into effect until AY 2026-2027.

In the event that a teaching faculty member buys out of a course, the same formulas as above will be used with the 10% AY salary replaced by 16% AY salary. Flat amounts for Assistant, Associate, and Full Teaching Professors will correspond to the amounts for Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors, respectively.

For T/TT faculty, second course buyouts will still be 50% greater than the first course buyout in all years.