Faculty Workload Policy for the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences

The College of Earth and Mineral Sciences is a vibrant, inclusive community of faculty, staff and students driven by curiosity to unlock how Earth's systems, energy and materials interact with one another and society. Our vision for the future is that EMS is where convergence happens; where students learn to plumb the depth of their chosen field while integrating their understanding across disciplinary boundaries to discover and innovate; where our faculty increasingly translate their scientific discoveries into practice, improving people's lives; where our staff, with a strong sense of belonging, support those efforts and find new solutions as challenges arise.

That vision can only be realized with a faculty that is strongly committed to inspirational teaching, cutting edge research, and engagement with colleagues, leading scientific institutions, government, and the public. Excellence in all three of those areas is expected from each tenure-line faculty member; non-tenure-line faculty typically have a mission-area of focus in which they are expected to excel.

The EMS faculty workload policy stated below provides a framework within which each faculty member may productively perform their duties while meeting the broad expectations of the College and University.

Tenure-line EMS faculty members are expected to:
- provide resident and/or online instruction;
- mentor undergraduate and graduate students;
- maintain highly respected, (where applicable) externally funded research programs that involve students, create new knowledge, and apply that knowledge to the benefit of society;
- disseminate their research findings in top-tier peer-reviewed publications;
- contribute significantly to service activities both within and outside of Penn State.

Full-time, non-tenure-line faculty members are typically assigned duties predominantly in one of the three areas of teaching, research and service. As such, the balance of their workloads is expected to be heavier in the primary focal area than that for tenure-line faculty members.

For both tenure-line and non-tenure line faculty members, this policy provides the flexibility necessary to accommodate the broad range of personal strengths among faculty members.

The goals of the EMS faculty (tenure-line and non-tenure-line) workload policy are to:

1. Provide our students with the best instruction in the earth, energy, and material sciences that is available anywhere;
2. Facilitate the productivity of tenure-line faculty members with highly active research programs and/or exceptional service responsibilities by adjusting their teaching and/or service loads;
3. Rebalance the workload of tenure-line faculty members whose research productivity significantly falls short of normal expectations by increasing teaching and service duties with the goal of increasing overall productivity;
4. Personalize the workload of each tenure-line faculty member in accordance with items 1-3;
5. Reduce or eliminate unnecessary under-enrollment in EMS courses, as defined in the Academic Administrative Policies and Procedure Manual, C3: Minimum Course Enrollment Threshold Expectations: https://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/C-3-minimum-course-enrollment-threshold-expectations.html
The elements of the policy are:

1. All tenure-line and non-tenure-line teaching faculty members are expected to teach in the resident and/or online instruction program of the College. Additionally, tenure-line faculty involvement in first-year seminars is important to the development of a strong undergraduate cohort and is highly encouraged.

2. A normal teaching load for a 36-week appointment is four courses (12 credits) per calendar year for tenure-line faculty and six courses (18 credits) for non-tenure-line teaching faculty. The department head may increase the teaching load of a faculty member as indicated by departmental needs and/or need to increase that faculty member’s overall productivity.

3. Teaching expectations will be designed to meet departmental curricular needs according to degree requirements, departmental educational philosophy, professional expectations and values, and departmental priorities.

4. Teaching expectations may be met, according to departmental guidelines, by any combination of resident instruction or online teaching.

5. Research productivity, for purposes of assigning each tenure-line faculty member’s workload, will be determined by peer-reviewed publication rate and quality, quantity of sponsored research funding (where applicable), and training of researchers, including post doctoral scholars—all in accordance with normal standards of the University and broadly consistent with peer institutions in each of the College’s disciplines. Additionally, some departments may outline in their guidelines where supervision of graduate students registered for credit demonstrates research activity, which may result in a teaching load reduction (typically no more than one course).

6. Department heads are responsible for evaluating research productivity and allocating individual tenure-line faculty workload assignments each year, and teaching assignments will be made in a timely manner thereby allowing for adequate course preparation.

7. Teaching buyout policies for tenure-line and non-tenure-line faculty are subject to proper departmental compensation for time being released to perform research and/or service duties. Buyout policies will be set in each of the departments, consistent with departmental needs, and subject to approval by the the Dean. Normally, faculty are not allowed to buy out of all teaching responsibilities with research funding. The minimum teaching load is one course per year.

8. Department heads may grant teaching release time to individual faculty members in order to allow those faculty members to engage in high visibility instructional, service or research activities; deliver service courses with high enrollment; or prepare for new teaching assignments. Note: department heads cannot grant teaching release below the one course per year minimum for tenure-line faculty members without approval from the Dean.

9. Under-enrolled and/or independent individual study courses do not count toward the teaching load unless the faculty member is required by the department head to teach the course for some other reason.

10. While these guidelines apply generally, it is important for the policy to focus on individual faculty members and departmental outcomes in order to define individual roles in the departments that leverage faculty members’ strengths and maximize the department's productivity and impact.
Resources:

Best Practices and Expectations for Online Teaching https://facdev.e-education.psu.edu/teach/bestpractices
Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual https://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/

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