

BOARD OF REGENTS  
BRIEFING PAPER  
*Handbook Revision, Faculty Workload*

**BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:**

Current Board policy prescribes expected teaching loads for faculty at all NSHE institutions. Expectations for teaching loads vary by institution type in accordance with national standards and expectations. For example, faculty at community colleges are expected to have higher teaching loads since their primary responsibility is teaching. University faculty have lower teaching loads since they are expected to be productive in graduate education and scholarship activities.

Staff recommends that the Board's faculty workload policy be revised to clearly provide flexibility for university faculty members who are engaged in doctoral-level instruction or grant-funded research. The current policy is unclear in allowing this needed flexibility. In addition, it is recommended that newly-hired faculty may be given a reduced teaching load for a limited period of time in order to establish a research program. This recommendation is supported by members of the Academic Affairs Council who initiated the examination of our current policy in light of the reality of university faculty expectations and the requirements to expand university research programs.

**SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:**

Amend *Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 3* to provide that for faculty heavily involved in doctoral-level education or research, the expected instructional workload may be reduced as required by an equivalent increase in doctoral-level instruction and/or research. In addition, newly-hired faculty may be given a reduced instructional workload for a limited period of time in order to establish a research program. (See the attached Policy Proposal.)

**IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):**

This recommendation for revision to the Board's faculty workload policy is coming forward at the request of the Academic Affairs Council.

**BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:**

If approved as proposed, the policy revision will provide:

- Additional flexibility to universities to grant faculty members who are involved in doctoral-level education or research at the universities a reduced teaching load; and
- Incentives for recruitment of research faculty.

**POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:**

This revision might be perceived to be a reduction in workload for university faculty members, when in fact, it spells out clear conditions for such reduction and is permissive so that the university has flexibility in encouraging faculty productivity and research activity.

**ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:**

Maintain the existing policy whereby university faculty heavily involved in doctoral-level education and research are expected to teach an average of 12 units per academic year.

**COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:**

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title #\_\_\_\_\_ Chapter #\_\_\_\_\_ Section #\_\_\_\_\_
- Amends Current Board Policy: Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 3
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter #\_\_\_\_\_ Section #\_\_\_\_\_
- Other:\_\_\_\_\_
- Fiscal Impact: Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
- Explain:\_\_\_\_\_

**POLICY PROPOSAL - HANDBOOK**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 3, SECTION 3**  
Faculty Workload Policy

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

**Section 3. Faculty Workload Policy**

1. The Board of Regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education recognizes the distinct and unique missions of its member institutions, each of which serves the needs of the citizens of the State of Nevada through a combination of quality teaching, scholarly research or creative activity, and service. The way in which these activities are combined to set the individual faculty member's workload depends primarily on the mission of the institution and the constituencies it serves.
2. The NSHE Code defines the primary areas of faculty responsibility for all higher education institutions in Nevada, and these areas are reinforced throughout the Code in standards for tenure and annual evaluation.
3. With the exception of faculty members at the Desert Research Institute, all NSHE instructional faculty members are expected to teach; develop curriculum; conduct other instructional activities including advising, grading, and preparing for classes; maintain currency in their academic discipline; and perform public and professional service, service to the institution, and similar academic activities. In addition, at the universities, state college and Desert Research Institute, academic faculty members are expected to conduct scholarly research or creative activity.
4. Consistent with the principles identified herein, and consistent with their mission, the NSHE institutions shall have substantial autonomy to select and determine the relative importance of faculty activities in the areas of teaching, scholarly research or creative activity, and service. The distribution of responsibilities should take maximum advantage of the talents of individual faculty members and may reflect differences among academic disciplines.
5. The Board of Regents affirms that the duties in each of these areas are essential elements of the work of the faculty and must be viewed as a whole whenever faculty workload and productivity are measured and reported. Faculty workload cannot and should not be measured solely by the time spent by the faculty member in the classroom.
6. In recognition of its commitment to accountability and productivity, the Board of Regents will regularly compile information regarding faculty workloads. To aid in this process, the following expected teaching workloads at NSHE institutions shall be established:
  - a. At the universities, an expectation of 18 instructional units per academic year, or 9 units each semester. For [~~individual~~] faculty heavily involved in doctoral-level education *or research*, the expected [~~load would be an average of 12 instructional units per academic year, or 6 units per semester~~] *instructional workload may be reduced as required by an*

*equivalent increase in doctoral-level instruction and/or research. Additionally, newly-hired faculty may be given a reduced instructional workload for a limited period of time in order to establish a research program.*

- b. At the state college, an expectation of 24 instructional units per academic year, or 12 units each semester.
  - c. At the community colleges, an expectation of 30 instructional units per academic year, or 15 units per semester.
  - d. As it applies to a, b, and c, reassignments from the expected [~~teaching~~] **instructional** load as well as course overloads must be approved in advance by the appropriate vice-president **or** president [~~, or at an alternative level to be determined by the institution~~].
  - e. The aforementioned expectations do not apply to the instructional faculty of the University of Nevada School of Medicine, the UNLV School of Dental Medicine, and the William S. Boyd School of Law.
7. It shall be the responsibility of the president of each NSHE institution to establish justifiable, equitable instructional workload standards through a process of shared governance with the faculty. It is expected that the institutional policies will provide detailed guidelines for equivalent teaching load credit as well as adjustments of workloads that reflect different kinds of instruction – including, but not limited to, distance education, rural education, internet instruction, vocational education, and clinical education. The policies should also take into account non-instructional activities that may be essential to the work of faculty in particular disciplines and provide equitable recognition for extra contact hours that faculty spend with students in courses that involve studios, laboratories, clinics, independent study, thesis and dissertation, internships, and similar activities related to instruction.
  8. In the fall of every even-numbered year, the Chancellor shall compile a System report on faculty workloads at NSHE institutions.
  9. The Board of Regents encourages NSHE institutions to participate in national, benchmarked studies, and their participation shall be facilitated by System staff.