

COSS Workload Policy
Approved Fall 2017

The COSS Administrative Council Ad Hoc Task Force on Teaching Workload, which consists of Camilla Gant, Jeffrey Reber, and Amber Smallwood, was organized for the purpose of examining the university faculty workload policy and considering any relevant policy and procedure recommendations that might be taken under consideration by the Dean, the administrative council, faculty council, and the faculty of the college. This is a report of the task force's deliberation and recommendations.

We first examined the faculty handbook statement on faculty workload, the only approved policy on workload available, which reads:

Faculty are expected to teach four 3-hour courses or the equivalent per semester, unless a portion of that time is reassigned for administrative, research, or other purpose approved by the Dean or a lesser load is required to maintain specialized accreditation (e.g., AACSB).

Although course load and reassigned time are closely related matters, the task force focused solely on the first phrase of the handbook policy, specifically the tasks of: 1) determining course workload and 2) the teaching activities and circumstances that might warrant course load equivalency within a given semester.

WORKLOAD

Taking our cues from UWG's strategic plan and the LEAP initiative, the task force identified five factors that are regularly practiced in the college and that we recommend should be taken into account when determining faculty teaching workload:

1. The extent to which higher-order cognitive, social, and ethical learning are explicit objectives of courses (e.g., Bloom's taxonomy)¹
2. The extent to which high impact educational practices are integrated into courses (e.g., undergraduate research, capstone courses and projects, service learning)²
3. The extent to which innovative pedagogies are practiced in courses (e.g., crossover learning, context-based learning, embodied learning)³

¹ See AACU LEAP campaign "Essential Learning Outcomes" at <https://www.aacu.org/leap/essential-learning-outcomes>

² UWG Strategic Plan, Imperative #2, Area A, Action 3: "Expand efforts to engage students in high-impact, experiential learning activities such as internships, service learning, practicum placements, study abroad, research, or related professional and creative experiences". See also AACU LEAP campaign "High-Impact Practices" at <https://www.aacu.org/resources/high-impact-practices>

³ UWG Strategic Plan, Imperative #2, Area A, Action 2: "Practice and recognize innovative and effective instruction in all academic programs and develop collaborative new models for academic-program delivery".

4. The extent to which online teaching and learning are integrated into courses (e.g., fully online, hybrid classes) and comport with online teaching standards (e.g., those articulated by UWG Online and Quality Matters)⁴
5. The extent to which instructional support is made available to course instructors and utilized in relation to the other factors on this list (e.g., GAs and TAs)

We recommend that COSS courses that include one or more of these factors should fall within the following enrollment ranges to optimize rigorous, diverse, and engaging teaching and learning:

1000-2000 level courses	40-50 students
3000-4000 level courses	30-40 students
Masters level courses	10-20 students
PhD level courses	5-15 students

In cases in which specialized skills, performance, experiential learning and other activities are involved (e.g., field research, internships, practica, production, public speaking, writing courses, etc.), enrollments may be set at lower levels than recommended ranges.

EQUIVALENCY

Common practice in COSS has been to award course load equivalency on the basis of class size (e.g., a class of 90-149 students was equivalent to two 3-hour courses). Thus, if a faculty taught a section of 90 or more students, that section was considered the equivalent of two 3-hour courses toward the faculty member's teaching load during a given semester, regardless of the manner in which the course was conducted.

Given that this practice has been determined to be out of compliance with the aforementioned teaching workload policy, perhaps because of the absence of articulated justification, the task force recommends that faculty are responsible for justifying any requests for course load equivalency according to two criteria.

First, the course for which equivalence is requested must achieve an enrollment that is at least double the midpoint of the relevant range (e.g., a 1000 or 2000 level course must have an enrollment of at least 90 students, calculated as the midpoint of 45 x 2). Second, the instructor must provide evidence that the course incorporates one or more of the 5 factors listed above. If both of these criteria are not met, then the section of the course offered will be considered the equivalent of one course even if its enrollment cap exceeds recommended enrollment ranges.

The task force discourages offering fractions of course equivalencies (e.g., 1.5) or course equivalencies that total more than two courses. Additionally, the task force accepts that course

⁴ UWG Strategic Plan, Imperative #2, Paragraph 2: "It is essential to build on UWG's leadership in the region through increased recognition of exemplary online and hybrid educational experiences and scholarship. These commitments require purposeful strategic planning and investment in innovative instructional modes of delivery, high-quality faculty trained in these instructional models, and scholarship and research activities that move academic and research programs to greater levels of quality, relevance, and distinction".

enrollment ranges prescribed by accreditation organizations take precedence over the aforementioned ranges.