

Workload Policies in Arts/Economics

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There are two main rules governing the teaching load of full-time faculty members in the Department of Economics, Faculty of Arts. These rules have been in place for over a decade, and were approved by the department members, and by the Dean of Arts, in the late 1980's.

The first main rule is that the normal teaching load is 2.5 courses per year. The second main rule is that the normal teaching load is reduced to 2 courses per year for faculty members on "research release".

Research release is granted to faculty members who are actively involved in research. Individual faculty members must apply to the chair to get this release, demonstrating the nature of their ongoing research agenda. Moreover, research release requires more than just a record of research achievement. It requires participation in the research activities of the department. Faculty members on research release are expected to attend, and help organize, the various seminar series in the department. They also are expected to present their own work in departmental seminars, at least once every two years. Faculty members on research release are not allowed to teach extra courses on overload; the release is meant to provide more time for professional contribution, not extra cash.

In 1999-2000, of the 24 faculty members who were on campus (that is, not on sabbatical or on unpaid leave for the year), 15 were on research release.

Enrolments in courses vary greatly, from fewer than 10 in some graduate courses, to over 500 in some sections of first-year undergraduate principles. However, all courses count equally. Prior to 1995, instructors in the largest first-year sections received a "large-course" credit. However, the department voted to abolish this credit. The rationales for treating all courses the same are that smaller, more advanced courses, do take more preparation, and more attention per student, and that the assignment of marker/graders adjusts for many of the differences in class size. The general principles for assignment of marker/grader hours within the department are that sections of 50 or more get marker/grader support, and that courses get (approximately) 130 hours per term of marker/grader support per 100 students.

No courses in AS/ECON or in GS/ECON have tutorials. The only teaching assistants we hire are markers/graders, whose duties are usually restricted to marking and holding office hours. All courses in AS/ECON and GS/ECON have 3 (50-minutes) lecture hours per week, all conducted by the course director.

Faculty on research release are also expected to take an active role in the graduate programme in economics. In 1999-2000, 25 of 33 faculty members of Arts/Economics were also members of the graduate faculty. (There are also GS/ECON faculty members from Atkinson's School of Applied Economics, from Schulich, and from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.) Setting and grading comprehensive examinations is considered part of the normal workload of graduate faculty members. These comprehensive examinations comprise "core" exams in microeconomics and macroeconomics, given twice each year, and "field" examinations, in areas of specialization such as money and banking, or resource and environmental economics, given up to twice each year.

Thesis supervision, membership on thesis committees, and participation in thesis examinations are also considered to be part of the normal workload of graduate faculty members. In 1992, the graduate

department voted that some credit be given against teaching for thesis supervision. However, no-one has claimed any credit yet under this provision.

Advising students during the March course selection period is also considered part of the normal workload of department members. Typically, faculty members are assigned one 3-hour period in March to meet with students during this period. Further advising of students on their programmes of study is considered the duty of the Undergraduate Director, and of the Undergraduate Assistant (who is a YUSA member).

There are some deviations from the two main rules mentioned at the start of this memorandum. The chair, the Undergraduate Director, and the Graduate Director (if she or he happens to be from Arts/Economics) are given course releases for their administrative duties. So, as everywhere in the university, are faculty members who hold outside administrative appointments, such as college masters or members of the YUFA executive. Finally, in some cases, incoming faculty members have negotiated temporary reductions in their initial teaching load. The practice seems fairly commonplace in the discipline of reducing the teaching load of newly-hired faculty to 1 or 1.5 courses in the first year of the appointment. In several cases the Dean and the Academic Vice-President have agreed to such an adhoc reduction for new faculty, in order to match a credible competing offer from another university, which involves such a reduction.

The accompanying table lists the teaching load of all (YUFA) faculty members in Arts/Economics in the academic year 1999-2000, along with the enrolment figures for those courses, a brief explanation of any deviations from the normal teaching load, and a listing of any particularly time-consuming departmental duties. A little more detail on this table is provided by some notes.