

## Philosophy Department Workload Document

### Background

The official university workload policy, posted on the Academic Affairs website, states that: “No regular faculty member can be assigned either fewer than 12 section credits or fewer than 180 student credit hours per academic year without an instructional waiver.”

The present document outlines the workload policy of the UM-St. Louis Philosophy Department. The policy is keyed to the realities of publishing in our discipline, as well as to the teaching needs of our undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

The Department expects that most TT faculty will have a 2/2 teaching load. If the College of Arts and Sciences is the crown jewel of the campus, then Philosophy is a crucial gem in the collection. The Department has one of only two nationally ranked degree programs in the College. Our M.A. program is currently tied for 7<sup>th</sup> in the Leiter Report. This ranking is explicitly based on the research quality of our faculty. It is significant that all the M.A.-only departments that received a higher ranking than ours have 2/2 loads; they also have more TT faculty and considerably more money to fund graduate student stipends and fellowships. We excel by doing a lot with a little.

### Research and Publication in Philosophy

The expected research path for philosophers is the publication of papers in refereed journals. While philosophers do publish books, this is not as common, or as expected, as in English or history. There beginning scholars typically attempt to publish their dissertations as a first book; departments often require a second book for tenure. But in philosophy, the most typical publishing unit is the journal paper, and the best philosophy journals are highly selective.

High quality philosophy journals have rejection rates well over 90 percent. A few examples: Journal of Philosophy 95%, Philosophical Review 96%, Philosophical Quarterly 92%, Philosophical Studies 88%, Ethics 95%, Philosophy of Science 95%, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 92%, Nous 93%, Mind 95%, Synthese 90%, Phronesis 95%. (For more, see the table at: [http://el-prod.baylor.edu/certain\\_doubts/?page\\_id=823](http://el-prod.baylor.edu/certain_doubts/?page_id=823)) Moreover, few journals turn around submissions in a timely fashion. A 6 or more month wait is all too typical. The average response time at Philosophical Review and at Mind is 6-7 months, at Journal of Philosophy 12 months, at Phronesis 6 months. Decisions at the Journal of the History of Philosophy can take a year, and a post on Brian Leiter’s blog detailed one philosopher’s horror story where Mind took a year to referee one of his submissions and then took just as long to deal with a second paper he sent. Finally, there can be a considerable time-lag between acceptance and publication. Thus in assessing productivity, we take into account submissions as well as published or in-press work, and we look at productivity over a 3-year span.

In addition to published papers, the following are also marks of a successful research career in philosophy:

- Invited chapters in books and anthologies. (Some publishers have inaugurated very prestigious Handbook and Companion series)
- Authored books\*
- Edited books\*
- Invited book reviews
- Refereed conference presentations
- Invited conference presentations.
- Appointment as a journal editor

\*(University presses differ considerably in their selectivity and prestige; some specialize in specific sub-areas of philosophy. We can provide supporting data as needed.)

Note that the American Philosophical Association, in its posted Statements on the Profession, supports the understanding of research in philosophy that we are defending. The Statement on Research catalogs the wide range of topics philosophers investigate, notes the difficulties they face finding outside support for their endeavors, and observes that “At any stage of a philosopher's career, the development of a substantial essay of sufficient quality and interest to be published in a good philosophical journal requires considerable time and effort.”

<http://www.apaonline.org/governance/statements/research.aspx>

Furthermore, when Philosophy Departments at other universities with a research mission seek referees for tenure and promotion cases, they generally indicate that a candidate with 6-7 papers has met the expectations re: publication.

### **Calibrating Research Productivity**

In what follows, we propose to set up a measure of research productivity in terms of three categories: **research intensive**, **research active**, and **research oriented**. Given the difficulty of philosophical work and the paucity of outlets for its publication, we propose the following measure for research in philosophy. A philosopher who publishes at an average rate of one article a year in a high-quality journal is to be deemed **research intensive**. This and the following labels will be applied by assessing productivity over a 3-year horizon.

As noted above, acceptances are weighed on a par with works in press. If a faculty member has not had a paper accepted, we will look to see whether he or she is submitting and revising articles at a regular rate. Invited book chapters carry considerable weight, especially if they're in prestigious series. Refereed and/or invited conference presentations are significant as well. Even invited book reviews will be taken into account, as they clearly indicate that the faculty member is actively pursuing his or her research and is known within the profession. Of course, department members who publish books showcasing their research or scholarship should count as research intensive. It takes considerably longer to author a book than a journal article; we consider a 5-7 year time line reasonable to see a book from start to finish.

A department member will be deemed **research active** if he or she produces the same sorts of materials described above, but not at the same frequency. That is a research active faculty member attains the target goals over an interval of 5-6, rather than 3, years.

A department member will be deemed **research oriented** if he or she no longer aspires to be research intensive or research active, yet continues to participate in the profession by, say, attending conferences, writing occasional book reviews, refereeing for journals, and the like.

### **Assigning Teaching Loads**

We believe that any department members who are **research intensive** and also meet or beat the minimum section credit/SCH requirements specified in the Academic Affairs website workload document merit a 2/2 teaching load.

**Remediation:** Faculty who miss this target have one semester to get back on track. Should they fail to meet the research criteria by the end of a given Fall semester, they will be assigned a 3-course load for the Spring. (This gives them a summer plus that Fall semester to make the needed corrections.) Those assigned a 3-course load in a given Spring semester have one more opportunity for correction; should their work that Spring into the following summer meet the departmental research criteria, they will not be assigned 3 courses for the subsequent Fall semester.

Department members who are **research active** merit a 2/3 teaching load.

Department members who are **research oriented** merit a 3/3 teaching load.

For each of these last two cases, the remediation practices will be similar to those in place for research intensive teaching loads.

## **Qualifications to this Policy**

### Exceptions

There are various circumstances that excuse faculty from increased (2/3, 3/3) teaching loads. These include:

- Junior TT faculty status. We are committed to protecting our junior faculty and providing them as much support as possible as they establish themselves as researchers and create a basis for promotion and tenure.
- Faculty who agree to teach needed but low-enrolling courses – whether for our degree programs or for others that we support – should not be penalized for what is in effect departmental service. So low SCH numbers will not always indicate an insufficiency that merits an increased teaching load.
- In addition, faculty who devote considerable time to advising graduate students and directing their theses will have these activities credited in their teaching load whether or not the students sign up for thesis hours.

### **Virtual SCHs**

Directing an M.A. thesis is a major undertaking, especially if the thesis explores an area new to the advisor (i.e., an area or subarea which her or she doesn't teach or about which he or she hasn't written.) We propose to count such activity as part of the teaching load using the following device, VSCHs (virtual student credit hours). We resort to these because such advising is extremely labor-intensive. Students who don't devote an official course to the production of their thesis are getting help that is never credited, while students who actually sign up for thesis hours are getting much more help than the 3 SCHs that automatically accrues to their advisor. Often the advisor must master a new area of inquiry, then read and critique repeated drafts and chunks as the student attempts to frame his/her project. Since we have recently increased the rigor of our M.A. program by requiring all of our students to write theses, many of us end up advising several theses at once. And this is very much like teaching several additional courses in one and the same semester.

Here's a sketch of our reasoning. The official university workload policy requires faculty to teach a minimum of 180 SCH annually. Directing a Master's thesis at 3 SCH involves much more work than that number would suggest. In the spirit of the official policy, the Department counts the direction of a thesis as the same amount of work as teaching 1/3 of a regular course. The average course is 60 SCH. So, a thesis director is credited as if she were teaching 20 SCH. This way, faculty will not be penalized for directing many student theses.

Reading courses and independent studies will be assessed similarly.

### **Service Considerations:**

While this document pertains primarily to teaching assignments as they relate to research productivity, there are important dimensions of service we take into account as well: departmental service, service to the profession, and community service.

Within the Department, administrative tasks have proliferated with the advent of our M.A. program together with the ongoing need to recruit, advise, and retain undergraduate majors. In addition to the Chair, we rely on our Director of Graduate Studies, Director of Undergraduate Studies, and Director of Non-regular Faculty to ensure that the department functions smoothly and serves all constituents. The Advisor to the Philosophers' Forum plays a centrally important role as well. We believe that the extensive service each of these faculty members performs should be reflected in their

teaching loads; in particular, we believe that Director of Graduate Studies and the Director of Undergraduate Studies are strong candidates for a course reduction.

In addition, we would like departmental workload decisions to acknowledge the sort of activity deemed “service to the profession.” Refereeing for journals is one such task; serving as an Editor is another. Such activities clearly reflect one’s research reputation. The business of research in philosophy could not be maintained without volunteers who fill these roles. But they are very time- and labor-intensive. Thus we believe that they, too, should be assigned VSCHs. At present, three Department members are serving as journal editors; it would be safe to say that all the TT faculty serve as referees, some occasionally, others with great frequency. While there is no simple formula that can mechanically assign VSCHs in these cases, we will work to develop some equivalencies that preserve our starting intuitions about these tasks. We hope to apply these in good faith, in cooperation with the College, to our workload calculations.

Finally, community service is an option for some, but not all, philosophers, depending on their areas of research. In many specialties, philosophers can find creative applications for their knowledge and skill. We encourage faculty members to explore such opportunities, and take these into account in our workload calculations.