



Middle Georgia
State University

Office of the Provost

100 University Parkway, Macon, GA 31206
478.471.2730 mga.edu

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MEMORANDUM

Date: June 18, 2019

TO: Dr. David Biek, Dean, School of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Mr. Adon Clark, Dean, School of Aviation
Dr. Alex Koohang, Dean, School of Computing
Dr. Tripp Shinn, Interim Dean, School of Business
Dr. Tara Underwood, Dean, School of Health and Natural Sciences
Dr. Mary Wearn, Dean, School of Arts and Letters

FROM: Dr. Jon Anderson, Provost

SUBJECT: Course Overload/Release Requests for AY 2019-2020

Thank you for your efforts to assure that students can enroll in the courses they need to progress toward graduation. Enthroning teaching is an essential element of our academic strategy. It is imperative that we keep teaching as the pinnacle service to the institution and in our profession. Over the last year, we have collectively brought greater consistency and transparency to course load and work assignments of faculty. This work has increased the impact of the state funds and tuition that are allocated to MGA and improved the effective utilization of our resources. Thank you for your efforts.

As we approach planning for the coming fiscal year, we need to continue this work to bring greater transparency and consistency to this effort. We also need to bring clarity to the expectations of service, scholarship, and research within each school. A significant amount of this work will happen as school-level strategies are built in the fall semester. However, we can address consistency of teaching loads beginning with the fall semester of 2019.

Faculty teaching loads are outlined in the faculty handbook pasted below. The definition of a terminal degree used for faculty workload is an earned doctorate, or currently, an MFA for those teaching in the arts. Although, using the MFA as a terminal degree is in transition (<https://tinyurl.com/yyzlcex7>). As such, faculty members with a terminal degree (doctoral degree or MFA) should teach 4 courses or 12 hours per semester. Faculty without a terminal degree (doctoral degree or MFA) should teach 5 classes or 15 hours per semester. Areas (including nursing and aviation) that use clock hours rather than credit hours to assign teaching load



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should document evidence that the hours worked when assigning clock hours are similar to the hours worked when using credit hours.

Administrators who hold faculty rank are required to teach each year. The Provost, Associate Provosts, Deans, and other administrators in the Office of the Provost who hold faculty rank carry a teaching load of one course per year (3 or 4 credit hours). Department Chairs and Associate Deans should teach one 3 or 4 credit hour course per semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer). Assistant Chairs and Program Directors should teach two courses per semester (Fall and Spring) and one course in the summer. These course assignments are part of the normal responsibilities and are not paid as overloads.

The title Program Coordinator is applied in different ways across Academic Affairs. From an accreditation (SACSCOC) perspective, each academic program must have someone assigned as the Program Coordinator who is credentialed to teach in and oversee the curriculum for that program. Most often the Program Coordinator is also the Department Chair or Program Director. When this is the case, no additional course release or compensation is given as this responsibility is part of the normal roles of Department Chair or Program Director. In rare cases, a Department Chair or Program Director may not have the credentials to teach in and oversee the curriculum for a program within their stewardship. In these rare cases, a Program Coordinator may be named who does not also serve as the Department Chair or Program Director and a course load reduction may be approved on a case by case basis using the process outlined below.

Adjustments to Teaching Load

In rare instances, there may need to be a course overload or course reduction awarded to a faculty member, in accordance with the policy in the MGA Faculty Handbook. Before considering a request for a course overload or reduction for a faculty member, please review a departments' course offerings and assure the department and program have adequate answers to the following questions:

- 1) Are all faculty assigned a full teaching load?
- 2) Are the courses offered at times and locations that are conducive to full course enrollment? (i.e. we should not have two or more low enrolled sections of the same course at close to the same time on the same campus)?



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3) Are we offering a minimal schedule (not all elective options, but enough for a student to take a full load of courses) such that students can progress through a degree on each campus that degree is offered?

4) Does each degree program have sufficient curricular space to allow students to complete a minor or have elective credits that can be taken from other areas outside their program of study? This should, in theory, drive down the average credits a student has earned at graduation.

These questions are not only answered once, but they should be reviewed on a regular basis to make sure resources are used wisely and students have pathways toward graduation. Once these questions are reviewed with the leadership team within a school, and only when it is justified, a dean can submit a request for approval to grant one of two adjustments to a faculty member's workload.

Course Overload

The first teaching load adjustment comes in the form of a course overload. In order to be considered, the dean must be able to adequately answer the questions noted above and the faculty member's courses should be full, or close to full. Overloads are granted only after a faculty member is teaching at least 200 credit hours across all assigned sections for a four course load or 250 credit hours across all sections for a five course load. Also, it will be a rare exception that a faculty member is given a second overload, consistent with the Faculty Handbook. In almost every area, we have enough faculty to provide instruction to students if we address the scheduling and curriculum issues that are prevalent.

As there is significant work to accomplish as a leader in academic affairs, course overloads should be a rare occurrence for administrators with faculty rank. Any overload, if approved, should not be taught during regular work hours.

Course Reduction

The second teaching load adjustment comes in the form of course reduction. It is expected that a faculty member who is tenured or on the tenure track will be involved in research and scholarship. It is also expected that faculty members who hold doctoral degrees will be involved in significantly more service, research, and scholarship than those with a master's degree. Otherwise, why would there be a difference in course load?



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While building the school-level strategy this fall, we will further define these expectations. However, for this fall and spring, there may be rare instances when a course reduction may be beneficial. For example, some course reductions are written into policy (i.e. the senate chair). A one-time course load reduction may be justified for someone who has received a scholarly book contract allowing them to heavily invest in the research project. These course reductions should meet the criteria of an abnormally significant scholarly achievement that will bring significant honor or prestige to the institution. If the primary benefit is to the faculty member, a request for a course reduction will be declined.

Managing Workload

In your role as the dean of a school within the university, it is a unique opportunity to shape the course offerings and in turn the student and faculty experience within your area. I encourage you to embrace this challenge and get into the details of course and program scheduling, assuring that we are using resources effectively. We must not burn faculty out by requiring too much, nor can we shortchange the student experience by requiring too little from faculty in the classroom. This balance is largely yours to shape as you work with your teams within your schools.

If you feel that a course overload or course reduction is justified, please submit that request in this online form linked here: <https://forms.gle/17YHD9sgYYm28wqv6>.

These requests must be submitted no later than 45 days prior to the first day of class.

Once approved you can submit the overload/ reduction paperwork to Jennifer Jones in the Office of the Provost.

Should you have any questions or need clarification, I look forward to meeting with you. Included below is the faculty teaching load policy from the MGA Faculty Handbook.



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Policy from MGA Faculty Handbook

5.03.01 TEACHING LOAD

College or School Deans and Department Chairs shall make an effort to assure fair and equitable assignment of teaching loads among their faculty, taking into account such factors as student load, number of preparations, contact hours, and travel time. Day and evening classes shall be part of the standard teaching load of faculty members at Middle Georgia State University.

MGA's teaching load policy is 4 classes (12 semester hours) per semester for faculty with a terminal degree and 5 classes (15 semester hours) per semester for faculty without the terminal degree.

Overloads

The Academic and Student Affairs Handbook of the USG section 4.10 discourages the payment of extra compensation for teaching overloads. Every effort must be made to adjust faculty schedules to accommodate courses as part of their normal load. The BOR strongly recommends minimizing any necessary overloads.

To accommodate large enrollments or special situations, faculty members may teach an overload under the following guidelines:

- a. The work is carried in addition to the normal full load.
- b. No qualified person is available to carry the work as part of his or her normal load.
- c. There is a written understanding that as soon as possible, and preferably within the academic year, they shall be given compensatory reassigned time or pay at the overload faculty rate of pay for the overload hours. Monetary compensation for overloads is possible only upon the recommendation of the appropriate Academic Dean or Department Chair and the approval of the Provost and the President.

No faculty member shall be required to teach an overload. Faculty overloads at Middle Georgia State University must be approved by the Department Chair, College or School Dean and Provost. Faculty can only receive overload pay for maximum of 4 credit hours per faculty member per semester. Overload pay is not permitted for part-time employees.

Overloads are granted only if they do not affect faculty productivity in Scholarship and Service.