

Equitable Teaching Load Policy

The State of Texas has determined that full-time faculty members in state institutions of higher education must demonstrate 9-contact hours per week. Tenure-track and tenured faculty members of our department are also expected to develop and maintain research programs, to participate in graduate research education, and to participate in service activities. The Texas A&M System has indicated that, in addition to earning contact-hour credit by teaching formal courses, contact-hour credit may also be conferred through (1) supervision of graduate students, (2) participation on graduate advisory committees, (3) research activity, and (4) a variety of other academic pursuits. Therefore, while all faculty members will be responsible for teaching formal courses, we expect that pre-tenure and research-active tenured faculty will earn most of their required 9 contact-hour equivalents through credit for research, graduate student mentoring, and other academic activities outside the classroom. When special circumstances arise that could require reduced formal-teaching loads, requests for formal-course teaching relief must be submitted to, and discussed with, the associate head for academics and approved in writing by the department head.

Academic careers evolve in different directions over time, and highly research-active faculty can become more focused on administration, teaching, mentoring, advising, or outreach. The Department of Biology recognizes and appreciates the roles of faculty members who take these paths through our academic ecosystem. However, if this change in focus is accompanied by decreased responsibilities in running a research program, as assessed by sustained changes in overall research funding, publications and/or in supervision of trainees/research personnel, the faculty member will assume an increased formal-course teaching load to meet the state requirement and to ensure that everyone contributes equitably to meeting the different missions of the Department of Biology.