



Approved by SPH Policy Council April 21, 2026

University of Minnesota School of Public Health (SPH) Faculty Workload Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and equitable framework for assigning faculty effort across teaching, research, and other workload components. This policy ensures a transparent and fair distribution of responsibilities that advances both the academic mission of the institution and the professional growth of our faculty.

This policy represents a social compact among faculty that defines what it means to be a good colleague and meet the expectations of a publicly funded land grant institution. The individual faculty member's right to pursue the scholarly activities of their choice must be balanced against the need to meet the educational mission of the School of Public Health and keep the school's income stream, which is essentially generated by externally funded research and tuition receipts, sufficient to sustain and grow programs.

This policy applies to all full-time faculty who are either tenured or on the tenure track. Workload expectations for part-time faculty will be determined in consultation with their division head. All faculty are expected to cover 100% of their paid university effort through teaching, research, and service activities.

This policy does not currently apply to contract faculty, lecturers/teaching specialists, or postgraduate positions. The teaching effort guidelines below may be applied to contract faculty when consistent with existing contractual obligations.

2. General Guidelines

SPH faculty workloads are based on a 100% total effort model. An allocation of 15% effort is dedicated to "Other Workload Components," which includes activities such as academic advising, service, and grant writing. The remaining 85% is distributed between teaching and externally funded research. The specific balance of these components will vary by faculty member and should be determined in consultation with the division head, taking into account teaching interests, current funding, and the needs of the division and school. Newly hired faculty are expected to discuss plans and timelines for meeting expectations with their respective division head. For example, newly hired faculty at the Assistant Professor level are expected to achieve research coverage expectations within three years of hire.

3. Key Definitions

- **Workload Effort:** The percentage of a full-time faculty member's total professional responsibilities, typically summing to 100% across all assigned duties.
- **Standard Course:** A course that has been previously taught by the faculty member, is part of the established curriculum, and does not require substantial new development or preparation.
- **New/First-Time Course:** A course that is newly developed or being taught for the first time by a faculty member. This includes existing courses that are new to the instructor and require additional preparation.
- **Excluded Courses:** Certain courses do not meet the traditional definition of a topic-based course and are excluded from the teaching effort portion of the faculty workload formula. Integrative Learning Experience, Applied Practice, Directed Research, Dissertation/Thesis, Plan B Project, Experiential Learning, Practicum, and Independent Study are all course types that are excluded from the teaching calculation. Division Heads will work with individual faculty members to determine workload assignments for these courses under either the Research or Service components. Examples of School of Public Health Courses excluded are included in Appendix A.

4. Teaching Expectations and Effort

All faculty are expected to contribute to the core mission areas of teaching, research, and service. Each faculty member should allocate a minimum of 10% effort to teaching annually.

Teaching effort is annualized and assigned based on the portion of a faculty member's workload dedicated to teaching, using the following guidelines:

- **Standard Courses:** 5% effort per credit hour
- **Core or Large Classes (MPH core or >50 students):** 6% effort per credit hour
- **New/First-Time Courses:** 7% effort per credit hour
- **Very Large Classes (>100 students):** 7% effort per credit hour
- **Team-taught Courses:** In general, workload effort will be equally distributed between listed course instructors.

Examples:

Scenario A: A faculty member teaching a 3-credit course that is new to them would have the following teaching effort assigned:

3 credit hours×7% effort/credit hour=**21% workload effort**

Scenario B: A faculty member teaching a 3-credit course they have taught previously would have the following teaching effort assigned:

3 credit hours×5% effort/credit hour=**15% workload effort**

5. Research/Scholarly Activity

Research and scholarly activity include effort devoted to research and scholarly publications. This effort is generally aligned with the percentage of a faculty member's salary supported by sponsored funding sources, including cost share.

Minimum Research Coverage Expectation

Faculty are expected to maintain a minimum of 30% salary recovery from non-general fund sources (i.e., operations and maintenance otherwise known as O&M). This requirement may be met through a combination of external and internal sponsored awards. Eligible sources include:

- External Sponsored Awards: Grants or contracts from federal, state, or private entities.
- Internal Competitive Awards: University or school grants specifically designated for research salary support.

While all grant activity is valued for its contribution to the university's research mission, faculty are strongly encouraged to prioritize external funding that includes Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs. The indirect cost recovery from external sources is essential for:

- Infrastructure: Maintaining the laboratories, libraries, and utilities required for research.
- Compliance & Support: Funding the administrative staff who manage grant reporting, ethics approvals, and legal compliance.
- Sustainability: Providing the reinvestment capital necessary to seed future internal pilot grants and faculty start-up packages.

Protected Time

Division heads may provide protected time to faculty which should be short-term in duration and used for:

- Building research and collaborations or developing funding proposals likely to lead to substantial external funding (e.g., center, training, or multi-site grant).
- New or junior faculty transitioning to the University of Minnesota or faculty undertaking a new research direction.

6. Other Workload Components

All faculty receive a baseline allocation of 15% effort to cover the essential professional activities that support the division, the school, and the broader academic community. These activities include, but are not limited to:

- **Service:** Participation in division, college, and institutional committees; engagement with regional and national professional organizations.
- **Advising:** Academic advising of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students.
- **Grant Writing:** Effort dedicated to the development of new research proposals and the pursuit of external funding.
- **General Administration:** Routine administrative tasks associated with faculty governance and program maintenance.

Additional Responsibilities

It is recognized that some faculty may take on significant responsibilities that exceed this 15% baseline (e.g., serving as a Program Director, Associate Dean, or chairing major institutional committees). In such cases, additional effort allocations may offset effort otherwise allocated in other areas, as determined in consultation with the Division Head and/or Dean. These adjustments will be documented and reviewed annually to ensure transparency and equity across the faculty, while also accounting for the financial and operational requirements of the school.

7. Accountability

This workload policy provides a consistent yet flexible framework that division heads and faculty can use to monitor workload and address division and school needs. Faculty are expected to meet minimum expectations and sustain a total of 100% effort. Thus, faculty should not be at the minimum for both research and teaching simultaneously; for example, a faculty member who is at the minimum for research effort is expected to assume a higher teaching and/or administrative load. At the same time, faculty with high levels of research coverage are still expected to teach.

Meeting minimum workload expectations is a component of the annual performance review process and informs merit-based salary determinations. Faculty are encouraged to proactively discuss any concerns or challenges in meeting expectations with their division head. Contributions that exceed workload expectations (as laid out in this document) and/or tenure policy expectations (as laid out in Section X.B of our 7.12 Statement) will be recognized and may be reflected in merit evaluations, workload adjustments, or other forms of acknowledgment (e.g., award nominations).

Failure to meet expectations over the course of one year should prompt a conversation. To account for year-to-year fluctuations in research funding or teaching demands (e.g., courses that are only offered in alternative years), performance is evaluated based on a three-year rolling average. This approach also allows faculty to balance periods of higher productivity or contribution in different areas over time. Sustained failure to meet agreed-upon effort distribution may result in additional actions, including initiation of the post-tenure review process.

8. Exceptions and Modifications

Workload assignments may be adjusted to accommodate specific circumstances. Requests for modifications or exceptions to this policy must be submitted in writing to the relevant supervisor (division head or dean) for review and approval. Such requests should provide clear justification and documentation. All adjustments should be made with attention to equity, transparency, and alignment with institutional priorities.

Appendix A - Example List of Courses Excluded from Teaching Calculation

PUBH 7494	Integrative Exp: Biostats	PUBH 7391	Independent Study: EPI
PUBH 7496	Appld Prac Exp Biostatistics	PUBH 7394	Integrative Learning Exp: EPI
PUBH 8494	Directed Research: Biostat	PUBH 7396	Applied Experience EPI
PUBH 8444	FTE: Doctoral	PUBH 7691	Independent Study: MCH
PUBH 8666	Doct Pre-Thesis Cr	PUBH 7694	Integrative Exp: MCH
PUBH 8777	Thesis Credit:Mast*	PUBH 7696	Applied Experience MCH
PUBH 8888	Thesis Credit:Doct*	PUBH 7991	Independent Study: PubH Nutr
PUBH 7175	OccHygiene Plan B Project	PUBH 7994	Intgrtd Lrnng Pblc Hlth Ntrtn
PUBH 7176	Experiential Learning: OccHyg	PUBH 7996	Field Experience: PubH Nutr
PUBH 7193	Directed Study: Envrn Health	PUBH 8394	Capstone Project: Clinical Res
PUBH 7194	Integrative Learning Exp: EH	PUBH 7591	Independent Study: HCA
PUBH 7195	MS Env Health Plan B Project	PUBH 7791	Independent Study: PHAP
PUBH 7196	Applied Prac Exp Enviro Health	PUBH 7794	Integrative Learning Exp: PHAP
PUBH 6995	Cmnty Nutrition Practicum	PUBH 7796	Applied Experience PHAP
PUBH 6996	Clinical Nutrition Practicum	PUBH 7894	MS in HSRP&A Plan B Project
PUBH 7094	Integrative Learning Exp: CHP	PUBH 8893	Directed Study: HSRP&A
PUBH 7096	Applied Experience CHP		