

# AAUP Works

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## What the Contract Does (and Does Not) Say about Overload Teaching

Over the course of the 2007-2008 academic year, we received several inquiries about overload teaching that highlighted for us the need to review which aspects of overload teaching the contract governs and, crucially, those areas in which the contract is silent. Overloads are addressed in Article 13, which states that “overload teaching shall be permitted only in emergency situations,” and which provides a schedule of pay per credit hour per quarter, according to the faculty member’s rank. There is nothing in Article 13 – or in the rest of the

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contract, for that matter – which indicates what is a “standard teaching load” or when, how and to whom overload teaching is to be assigned. These important matters are left to the individual colleges and, if applicable, the departments to decide, in line with the workload documents that were created in 1994.

In 1994 the University’s colleges and its library system adopted their own workload guidelines, which were approved by the Board of Trustees. The workload guidelines vary widely from college to college. For example, the College of Arts and Sciences’ Workload Guidelines for full-time faculty do not specify how many teaching credit hours constitute a standard workload, but rather leaves such decisions to the individual departments (while

vesting final authority with the Dean). The College of Applied Science, however, provides for a standard teaching load of 10 credit hours per quarter.

Some workload documents specify the amount of “credit” given for active research programs or heavy department or university service; others are

completely silent on the teaching-research-service balance. So, as you can see, it is important to be familiar with *your* college’s and department’s workload policies so that you will know what is regarded

as a standard workload. With that information, you will be more likely to know whether a proposed teaching assignment is potentially an overload assignment.

If you decide to take on overload credits, it is best to have an explicit understanding with your department or college administrators as to how many of these credits will be considered overload, and to get this understanding **in writing, before the quarter begins**. Without a written agreement, if a dispute arises it can become very difficult to support a case for pay for overload assignments after the fact, especially after the quarter has ended.

— Stephanie Spanja, JD  
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