

Department of Biology
Career NTTF Professional Responsibilities Policy

I. Preamble

Career Instructional non-tenure track faculty (Career Instructional NTTF) are vital to the life of the University. Their (classroom) teaching role is most visible, but they also administer programs, oversee undergraduate curricula, and participate in departmental and university governance. Through advising and encouragement of students' intellectual activity both inside and outside of class, they enhance the quality of the education we provide, and provide a substantial quantity of departmental teaching. This document is meant to make apparent all contributions by Career Instructional NTTF and to describe how they comprise a standard workload.

The guiding principle for the following workload policies is to ensure that there is equity in the amount of intellectual and administrative effort required to teach the Department of Biology courses well.

II. Workload expectations for Career Instructional NTTF

A. Proportions of 1.0 FTE expected for teaching and other activities

Career Instructional NTTF whose primary responsibility is instruction are expected to devote 90% of their effort to teaching and 10% to service, scholarship, and professional development. In cases involving special work assignments, these percentages may be modified.

B. Teaching

1. Standard course load for NTTF whose primary responsibility is teaching

The standard course load for career instructional NTTF in the Department of Biology is six courses per year. Reductions in teaching are awarded to faculty with specific other assignments such as undergraduate advising, curriculum coordination, or other work related to the educational mission of the department (see section II E).

Career Instructional NTTF are hired to teach biology courses at all levels. They are assigned courses that align with their background and expertise. This may include development of new courses, in some cases with a compensatory course release.

Career Instructors usually teach courses that include supervising Graduate Teaching Fellows (GTF). GTFs are usually employed to help teach labs or discussion sections

If the need arises, Career Instructional NTTF may teach laboratory or discussion sections associated with classes taught by other faculty.

2. What is included in teaching activity

There are a wide range of “types of courses” offered by the Department of Biology: large lecture courses with laboratory or discussion sections, medium or small courses with substantial laboratory and/or field components, lectures with discussions and lecture-only courses. The amount of intellectual and administrative effort required to teach each type of course varies considerably. In particular large lecture courses and courses with substantial laboratory and/or field components require more hours of work to teach well than smaller lecture-only courses. There are a variety of reasons why this is the case (some are outlined below). Since most of the courses taught by Career Instructional NTTF are the types of courses that require more effort, the Department of Biology head, with consultation of the curriculum coordinator, considers the types of courses when determining a full load for an Instructional NTTF.

Career Instructional NTTF are expected to advise and mentor students who take their courses insofar as this is considered a normal part of teaching any course. They should hold a minimum of either (a) two hours of office hours per week, or (b) one hour plus “additional hours by appointment”. For some classes the second option is more useful for students. Instructors should also make themselves reasonably available to students via email and/or other appropriate online media.

Biology is a dynamic field, as is the field of science education. The Department of Biology strives to engage students with current information delivered through didactic approaches shown to be effective at maximizing content retention and utilization. To this end, all career instructional NTTF are expected to revise their courses, labs, and discussions to incorporate advances in academic content and pedagogy.

Development of labs is very labor intensive. Coordinating the use of living organisms for laboratory research while meeting the scheduling requirements for classroom education is exceptionally challenging and unique to Biology among the Natural Sciences with respect to laboratory course effort and workload. Furthermore, instructors must ensure that

labs reflect current research content and pedagogy, and need to conduct trials and troubleshooting of new labs before they are presented to students. The experiments or activities included in Biology lab sections typically require instructors to be present for real-time troubleshooting and oversight, even when GTFs are present. It is not possible or reasonable to just hand a lab manual to a GTF lab instructor and expect that the labs will be taught well. It is also necessary to meet regularly (usually multiple times per week) and communicate with the course lab preparator in order to make sure the materials are ready and that the labs are running smoothly.

Career Instructional NTTF are expected to administer high quality assessment of student performance: exams composed exclusively of multiple choice question are discouraged and instructors are expected to devote considerable time to writing new meaningful assessment questions for each course.

Because the Department of Biology does not employ graders, instructors are expected to participate in the grading of assigned work and to train and supervise the graduate teaching fellows that aid them in grading. It is usually not possible to just provide grading keys or rubrics to graduate teaching fellows. The instructor must take a guiding-role in the grading of exams, labs, papers and other assignments, and that often requires doing some of the grading.

In many cases the rigorous nature of Biology courses requires instructors to hold additional problem solving sessions, additional office hours, and/or review sessions, and to schedule individual meetings with students that cannot attend regular office hours. Instructors should maintain schedule flexibility to provide these additional aids, as necessary, to students. This is especially true for instructors teaching in the General Biology and Honors Biology sequences (these courses are discussed in detail below).

Career Instructional NTTF may be required to train and supervise graduate teaching fellows and undergraduates participating in the supervised college teaching courses, BI 402/502 Supervised College Teaching (Career Instructional NTTF are eligible to teach all such open-ended courses). This includes holding weekly preparatory sessions, developing assessments and activities to be used in discussions and labs, verifying that GTFs and undergraduates truly understand the content they are teaching, guiding them in appropriate instructional technique and behavior, and evaluating their efforts.

Career Instructional NTTF are expected to write letters of recommendation for students who are applying for scholarships, graduate school, and health professions programs, something that can be time-consuming given the high percentage of students continuing in healthcare graduate programs. They must also deal with student academic misconduct issues, which occur almost every term.

It is common practice in many universities for General Chemistry, General Physics and General Biology labs to be separate courses from the lecture component. At the University of Oregon, General Chemistry labs are separate courses taught by separate instructors. The Biology faculty decided in the 1990s to combine the lecture and lab components into a single course; prior to that the lab component was a separate course taught by separate instructors so students could take just the lab, or just the lecture. The faculty wanted to fully integrate the labs with the lectures so they decided to combine the lectures and labs into a single course. Since the general biology and honors biology courses are very labor intensive (and often taught as two separate courses), two faculty are assigned for each course: one whose primary responsibility is teaching the lecture and one whose responsibility is to manage and help teach the labs. The following are the professional expectations for these two positions:

General Biology or Honors Biology lecture instructor:

- Instructors will generate lecture materials and activities that expose students to both well established and cutting edge topics in the field, including examples of controversial hypotheses in the current literature.
- Instructors will run classes using methods informed by the contemporary science education literature.
- Instructors will generate and regularly update original teaching materials and assessments, related both to biology content and critical thinking, and the processes of research and general scientific literacy.
- Instructors provide at least two hours/week of scheduled office hours, one of which may be replaced with making available times “by appointment”.
- Instructors will supervise graduate teaching fellows in their role as providers of quality office hour instruction and as participants in in-class lecture activities.
- Instructors will help graduate students to master the specific biological systems taught in each class and provide mentorship in their development as teachers.

- Most instructors offer one or more voluntary problem solving sessions each week that constitute an opportunity for students to receive small class instruction.
- Instructors will provide letters of recommendation or any of the myriad equivalent forms of reference writing for students they have taught. The number of letters can be quite high given the size of the course and the fact that many of these students go on to health related professional schools.
- Instructors will participate in and oversee the grading of quizzes, homework and exams.
- Instructors will generate and participate in and/or oversee the grading of problem sets and ensure that materials explaining these problems are made available.
- Instructors will generate and manage course websites materials related to the lecture.

General Biology or Honors Biology lab instructor:

- Instructors will generate laboratory materials and activities that expose students to both well established and cutting edge topics in the field.
- Instructors will run labs using methods informed by the contemporary science education literature.
- Instructors will generate and regularly update original teaching materials and assessments, related both to biology content and critical thinking, and the processes of research and general scientific literacy.
- Instructors schedule at least two hours/week of scheduled office hours, one of which may be replaced with making available times “by appointment”.
- Instructors will supervise graduate teaching fellows in their role as providers of quality lab instruction. This includes running weekly lab preparatory sessions (2-3 hours each) attended by GTFs, BULAs and the lab preparator.
- Instructors will supervise undergraduate Biology tutors (BTUs) to ensure that they provide an excellent resource for students through their role working in the Biology Tutor Center, and in their participation in in-class activities.
- Instructors will generate the laboratory teaching materials and provide graduate students with instruction and guidance for the management of laboratory sections.
- Instructors will participate in lab instruction and particularly in the trouble-shooting necessary during laboratories. Note that it is not uncommon for General Biology courses to contain as many a 16

lab sections so this is a major time-commitment on the part of the lab instructor. The lecture-instructor helps in the labs as well.

- Instructors will supervise Biology Undergraduate Lab Assistants (BULAs) to ensure that they provide an excellent resource for students through their lab assistant role. In addition instructors shall mentor and assess BULAs, and provide assignments and evaluations that contribute to the grade they receive in Biology 402. Teaching a Bi402 section is considered part of the responsibility of the lab instructor.
- Instructors will provide letters of recommendation or any of the myriad equivalent forms of reference writing for students they have taught.
- Instructors will generate clear guidelines for and oversee the assessment of student work.
- Lab instructors will work with the lab preparator assigned to the course. This requires frequent communication by both email and meetings.
- The lab instructor will work with the lab preparator during registration to arrange the scheduling of the instructors, GTFs, BULAs and BTUs to make sure all labs, tutor sessions, office hours and labs are scheduled adequately.
- Lab instructors will generate and manage course websites materials related to the lab.
- There are terms where the student demand requires that there are two lecture sections for a particular general biology course. In this case, the lab instructor may be asked to oversee the lab sections for both lecture sections and this will still count as a single course.

The course Bi330 Microbiology includes a required laboratory course, Bi331, which is taught by an NTTF with three GTFs. This is one of our most demanding laboratory courses. The expectations for oversight of Bi331 are summarized as follows:

- Contact: Teach 4 laboratory sections; each meets twice weekly for 2½ hours in each session. In addition, a 1 hour lab lecture is given at the beginning of the week, and at least 1 hour of office hour time is provided weekly. The total weekly contact time is thus 22 hours
- Supervision: Supervise 3 GTFs. This entails teaching them techniques and principles, and includes a weekly prep session lasting 1 to 2 hours.
- Grading: Considerable grading is necessitated by the fact that the GTFs are shared with Bi330 (the lecture component of

Microbiology) and cannot be overloaded; also, some assignments can be evaluated efficiently only by the instructor, who has the required expertise.

- Laboratory preparation: Even with regularly run exercises, conducting trials of experiments each year is necessary due to variation in organisms and reagents. Several experiments require this attention. In addition, much of the prep work cannot be done by laboratory preparatory staff, as they do not have the intimate knowledge of the organisms or techniques that the instructor has. The instructor is responsible for introducing new laboratory exercises, and for updating and revising the laboratory manual.

C. Service, scholarship, and professional development

Full-time Career Instructional NTTF are expected to devote 10% of their effort to service, scholarship, and professional development. While some service may be assigned by the Department Head, part of the expectation is that each Career Instructional NTTF may find additional areas of service (discretionary service) in order to fulfill the 10% effort. This could include service to the university, community, and to professional organizations.

The department's career NTTF faculty will vote to assign one senior instructor (level I or II) or senior lecturer (level I or II) to serve on the Personnel Committee. The Department Head makes all other career NTTF committee assignments annually based on availability and departmental need.

Career Instructional NTTF may serve on masters students committees and, with the permission of the Department Head, may chair Masters committees or be a member of a Ph.D. committee when their academic background is appropriate. NTTF are not eligible to serve as Ph.D. major advisors or chairs of Ph.D. committees.

Some of the professional development activities have included attending seminars, pedagogical programs and workshops, service on teaching award committees at both the university and department level, obtaining and working on grants, development of new courses and programs (often with William's fund awards), and hosting national teaching conferences for Biology faculty.

D. Advising and student contact

Routine advising of, and contact with, students taking their courses is considered a normal part of faculty members' teaching activities as described above in section B. Small, voluntary, and/or irregular advising assignments (such as occasional

supervision of undergraduate theses or a small caseload of undergraduate major advisees) count toward service expectations in section C.

E. Major administrative or service work

The Department of Biology may include major administrative or service work in career NTTF positions. This work includes activities such as oversight of academic programs, assignment as professional academic or career advisors, coordination of curriculum development, supervision of formal internship or research programs, and other major administrative responsibilities, either on a semi-permanent or a rotating basis. *Approval of more than one course release for an individual requires prior consultation with the Dean or her/his designee.*

The Department of Biology Internal Governance Policy describes the department's current major administrative tasks assigned to NTTF faculty and their associated course release and/or stipend.

F. Equity and inclusion

Faculty are expected to contribute to the University's goals regarding equity and inclusion. These contributions may consist of research, teaching, and service activities as appropriate, as well as involvement with academic and professional associations, non-profit, governmental, and/or private sector organizations.

III. Teaching and Service Assignment Process for Instructional NTTF

Assignment of professional responsibilities shall reflect a realistic balance of duties consistent with the criteria for review.

A. Teaching and service within the department

Except as otherwise determined by the Provost, Dean, or other designee, the department head shall be responsible for the scheduling and assignment of all faculty members' professional responsibilities. A faculty member shall be afforded the opportunity to meet with his or her Department Head or curriculum coordinator at least annually, before responsibilities are assigned, to discuss his or her preferences regarding assignments for teaching, research, service and other professional responsibilities, and anticipated resource needs. The Provost or designee may modify scheduled assignments, provided that the department head discusses changes with the faculty member before they are made and that changes are not made for arbitrary or capricious reasons. Faculty members may request to adjust schedules or assignments.

Career Instructional NTTF may serve on masters students committees and, with the permission of the department head, may chair Masters committees or be a member of a Ph.D. committee when their academic background is appropriate.

B. Special teaching or service within the department

Separately from any course releases that may be associated with major administrative positions, a course release may be offered to a career NTTF to perform a specific teaching- or service-related assignment for the department or program, so long as the unit can still meet its instructional needs with existing resources. Approval is at the discretion of the unit head in consultation, as applicable, with other officers or committees charged with course planning. Occasions for course release at the discretion of the unit head include the following:

- An unusually heavy workload relative to the departmental norm
- An exceptional professional development opportunity related to the faculty member's instructional duties or position description
- An exceptional teaching or service opportunity that benefits the department, college, or university

Discretionary course releases may not be used to reduce the course load for all career NTTF in the Department of Biology without the approval of the Dean or Dean's designee. Likewise, discretionary course releases may not be used to reduce the course load for an individual on a multi-year basis without the approval of the Dean or Dean's designee. Approval of more than one such release for an individual requires prior consultation with the Dean or the Dean's designee.

C. Teaching and service outside the department

A Career NTTF may be offered a course release or releases from the department/program to perform a specific teaching- or service-related assignment for another unit. Approval of such assignments is at the discretion of the Dean, or her/his designee, acting in consultation with the heads or directors of both the home and the host units.

D. Course release for grants and fellowships

A Career Instructional NTTF who has received, or is supported by, an internal or external grant or fellowship may be released from teaching one or more courses,

so long as (a) sufficient course buyout funds are available from the grant or fellowship and/or other approved sources to fund the replacement of the instruction that would be lost as a result of such release(s), and (b) such release(s) from teaching would not, in the judgment of the Department Head, unduly compromise the Department's ability to meet the curricular and enrollment needs served by the faculty member's course(s) in either its own or other academic programs. The applicable course buyout rates and guidelines on replacement instruction are those set forth in the College and/or University policies in effect on the date the teaching release(s) is first approved.

E. Overload assignments

An overload assignment is (1) an assignment that is in addition to the faculty member's regular assignment and FTE status; (2) a one time or limited assignment, made or approved by the Provost or designee, that is in addition to or different from regular or usual assignments for the member's classification and rank; or (3) assignments unrelated to the bargaining unit member's primary job responsibilities.

Except as otherwise indicated in the June 10, 2014 Memorandum of Understanding regarding overload assignments, or in successor agreements, overload appointments will be assigned an FTE percentage commensurate with normal workload duties and compensated accordingly. Faculty may request that overload compensation take the form of class release. No bargaining unit faculty member may be disciplined or terminated for refusing an overload assignment. Appointments for which compensation is paid, in whole or in part, with federal funds may be ineligible for overload compensation.

Appointments for which compensation is paid, in whole or in part, with federal funds may be ineligible for overload compensation.

The allotment of stipends will be consistent with university policy.

F. Course cancellation policy

If a teaching assignment is cancelled for any reason, the department or unit head will consult with the faculty member and assign alternative duties at the same FTE in the same term, or reassign the affected faculty member to an appropriate course, or alternative assignment, in the same academic year.