

Assigning Faculty Activities

Stephen Stark

University of South Florida

September 2025

Your Right as Department Chair

- The University [Chair] has the right to assign the types of duties and responsibilities that comprise the professional obligation.
- If the employee disputes the assignment, the employee shall perform the assignment pending final resolution of the dispute.
- ***Review CBA, T&P guidelines, and unit governance documents.***



Why Assignments Matter

- **Advance Faculty Careers & Student Success:** Shape faculty workload for department, college, and university goals. (*Know and track key **metrics**.*)
- **Fair Evaluations:** Clear assignments are critical for annual evaluations, tenure, and promotion reviews. (*Use evaluations to **inform upcoming** assignments.*)
- **Quality Education:** Promote high-quality instruction and timely progress toward degree. (*Experiential learning can improve **career readiness** and job placements.*)
- **Engagement & Partnerships:** Promote professional, community, and industry engagement. (*Build awareness of capabilities, goals, & needs for partners/**donors**.*)
- **Continuity:** Multi-year planning facilitates operation when faculty take leave, retire, or resign, as well as **budget and hiring** discussions with the dean.
- **Clear Communication:** Prevent misunderstandings and build trust.

Considerations for Assignments



Transparency: All data should be available to all faculty (e.g., SharePoint, website).



Clarity: Policies should be written out, reviewed, and approved by the faculty (at least every 5 years).



Norms: What are the assignment norms for your discipline? For your college? (1-1, 2-2, GR /UG).



Accountability: There should be a mechanism to assess assignment completions (reports, briefings).

Assignment Priority

- A major bottleneck to graduation is **lack of needed courses or seats**, and graduating on time is the easiest way to reduce the cost of college.
- Your first priority should be to offer all courses, with enough seats, needed by students to stay on track to **graduate in four years**.



College is Expensive

- Median family income in 2023 FL is \$72,200 (US is \$80,610).
- Average COA (Cost of Attendance) at FL public universities is about \$24,000/yr or about a third of family income.
- \$147,000 is the estimated cost of staying in college for an extra year (Complete College America).



Assignment Options



Assignments may be based on historical or “*past practice*” activities.



Assignments may be made based on a *comparison of peers*.



Or more commonly, *whatever your colleagues request* so long as required courses are offered.

Some Assignment Areas

Courses

Academic advising

Research

Supervising graduate/undergraduate student thesis/dissertation

Administration

Committee appointments

Public service

Teaching Assignments:

Have a multi-year plan for continuity and transparency, and track enrollments.

Faculty Member	Fall 24	Spring 25	Fall 25	Spring 26	Fall 26
A. Adams	PSY 101 (U) PSY 501 (G)	PSY 101 (U) PSY 303 (U)	PSY 101 (U) PSY 502 (G)	PSY 101 (U) PSY 303 (U)	PSY 101 (U) PSY 501 (G)
B. Baker	PSY 110 (U) PSY 507 (G)	PSY 110 (U) PSY 320 (U)	Sabbatical 	PSY 110 (U) PSY 320 (U)	PSY 110 (U) PSY 507(G)
C. Carter	PSY 101 (U) PSY 212 (U) PSY 212 (U) PSY 304 (U)	PSY 101 (U) PSY 212 (U) PSY 212 (U) PSY 304 (U)	PSY 101 (U) PSY 212 (U) PSY 212 (U) PSY 304 (U)	PSY 101 (U) PSY 212 (U) PSY 212 (U) Release	PSY 101 (U) PSY 212 (U) PSY 212 (U) PSY 304 (U)

Service Assignment Considerations

New colleagues should be introduced to service *slowly*.

Be attentive to “hidden” service work, especially among women and underrepresented colleagues.

Most literature focuses on the individual which is necessary but not sufficient as **student** and/or **institutional** needs are important.

Service Assignments Considerations

Remember that a 10% assignment equates to four hours per week.

Very few committees require that much time over the course of a term.

Consider developing an accountability protocol for committee work, e.g. a questionnaire sent to the committee chair that asks if the person showed up on time and was prepared. How much did they contribute, etc.?

Research Assignment

Departmental research: Set clear goals and follow-up in annual evaluations – especially important for underperforming faculty.

Sponsored research: Pay close attention to any time commitments or cost sharing that must be documented.

Research Benchmarking for Departments/Programs

-  **Articles**

Peer-reviewed journal papers, frequently evaluated based on impact factor or disciplinary standards.

-  **Awards**

Distinguished honors, fellowships, and recognitions bestowed by academic societies or organizations.

-  **Books**

Academic monographs or edited collections published through university or scholarly presses.

-  **Citations**

Indicators of academic impact, usually adjusted for field and year of publication.

-  **Grants**

Externally funded research awards, commonly categorized by funding agency (e.g., NSF, NIH) and amount.



Benefits of Benchmarking



The data are comparative and national.



Most of the data are assembled by independent agencies.



Most of the data are not self-reported.



The evaluation and assignment involves all members of the unit.

The Faculty Workload and Rewards Project

- Funded by NSF ADVANCE-IHE program:
- Examined 51 Departments
- Twenty universities
- Primarily STEM and Social Sciences; with a few humanities
- Examined how assignments are generated: basically “haphazard”
- Conducted audits of assignments to evaluate fairness and equity in teaching, research and service

Recommendations

Principle	What Chairs Should Do
Transparency	Share assignment criteria and rationale openly.
Rank Sensitivity	Adjust expectations based on faculty rank and role.
Balance Across Roles	Ensure fair distribution of teaching, research, and service.
Auditability	Use templates or dashboards to track and explain assignments.
Benchmarking	Align with peer norms and institutional priorities.

An Interesting
Reference for
Assignments

Equity-Minded Faculty Workloads

What We Can and Should Do Now

- <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Equity-Minded-Faculty-Workloads.pdf>

Thank you!

Questions?

