

CLAS Instructional Track Faculty Policy Committee Report

April 5, 2024

The Instructional Track Faculty Policy Committee (ITFPC) was formed in late 2023 to revise the CLAS instructional track faculty (ITF) policy in response to the provost’s updated ITF policy, which went into effect January 1, 2024, and rendered the former CLAS policy invalid. This report stands as a record of the committee’s work: the problems wrestled with, the solutions proposed, and the next steps envisioned. For purposes of this report, “ITF” includes assistant, associate, and full professors of instruction and practice.

Committee Members

The committee was assembled by the Dean’s office and comprised of eight instructional track faculty, with two faculty members representing each CLAS portfolio. Also on the committee were the two CLAS associate deans and the director of faculty affairs.

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Timeline of Work and Process of Approval

The ITFPC had its first meeting on January 22, 2024, and was charged to complete a new policy by March 19. Once delivered, the policy was sent to the CLAS Executive Committee and the Faculty Assembly for feedback. CLAS Executive Committee voted in support of the policy on April 2, 2024. The Provost’s Office approved the policy on April 5, 2024. The policy will be sent to a full CLAS faculty vote beginning April 24, 2024. If adopted, the new policy will be implemented effective July 1, 2024.

Background

The University’s Policy Manual defines the Instructional Track Faculty (ITF) in III.10.11 here: <https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/human-resources/faculty/instructional-faculty-policy>. Currently, just over 166 FTE instructional track faculty are appointed in CLAS.

Before establishing the instructional faculty track in 2016, lecturers and senior lecturers were not defined as faculty other than in a fixed-term context. As required for newer faculty tracks, the ITF policy contained specific items to be examined by a Faculty Senate review 5 years after the track was established. A review committee completed its report that was approved and accepted by the Faculty Senate in spring 2022: <https://faculty-senate.uiowa.edu/sites/faculty-senate.uiowa.edu/files/2022-08/Final%20IFP%20report%207.1.22%20with%20Appendices%20A-G.pdf> During the 2022-2023 academic year, several faculty governance groups (Faculty Council, Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee – FPCC, Rules and Bylaws Committee) discussed the various proposed ITF policy changes highlighted in the review report.

In October 2023, the Provost’s Office announced revisions to the University’s ITF policy, which are effective January 2024. The Provost’s Office stated that this new ITF policy negates CLAS’s current collegiate policy, prompting the need to develop a new collegiate policy aligned with the university’s updated guidelines.

The Committee’s Charge

Per the university’s ITF policy, the committee was charged to write a policy that specifically addressed these areas:

- a) Justification for hiring instructional faculty. Each college shall provide a statement describing the justification for hiring instructional faculty, rather than tenure-track or tenured faculty, to fulfill the college's teaching mission.
- b) Participation of instructional faculty in faculty governance. Colleges are encouraged to integrate instructional faculty into relevant matters of collegiate and departmental governance, as appropriate. Specifically, colleges and departments are encouraged to allow instructional faculty to participate in the review of other instructional faculty. In addition, collegiate or departmental policy shall not permit instructional-track faculty to vote on the reappointment, tenure, or promotion of any tenured or tenure-track faculty member, but colleges and departments have discretion to decide whether instructional faculty may participate in the review of other faculty tracks.
- c) Evaluation of instructional faculty. Every instructional faculty member shall be evaluated annually, but not every annual evaluation must be equally extensive. Colleges shall define appropriate evaluations, including intervals for extensive and less extensive evaluations. Colleges shall specify the criteria used to evaluate instructional faculty, and those criteria shall be consistent with the instructional faculty member's workload allocation. See paragraph (g) below.
- d) Procedures for appointment, reappointment, and promotion of instructional faculty, including distinction between Instruction and Practice ranks, if appropriate.
- e) Criteria for appointment, reappointment, and promotion for instructional faculty, including which degree(s) or educational qualifications are required under (d) above.
- f) Service and/or professional productivity. The collegiate policy shall define what type of service and/or professional productivity, if any, is expected of instructional faculty, and this definition shall be applied to the evaluation criteria for appointment, reappointment, and promotion purposes. Research, scholarship, or artistic creation shall not be a requirement for appointment, reappointment, or promotion, but, if present, may be considered as evidence of professional productivity.
- g) Workload. Colleges shall specify the standard expectation for calculation of teaching and service load for its instructional faculty, including for part-time instructional faculty. Additionally, the colleges' individual employment contracts shall specify expectations for workload allocation (e.g., the percentage of time the faculty member shall devote to teaching, service, administration, or other functions) for each instructional faculty member.
- h) Eligibility to apply for tenure-track positions. Instructional faculty members may apply for open positions on the tenure-track, but they may be appointed to the tenure-track only one time during their career at The University of Iowa. Similarly, tenure-track faculty may apply for open instructional faculty positions, but an instructional faculty appointment shall not be used as an automatic default appointment for accomplished teachers who made an unsuccessful tenure bid. Colleges may further define their own policies related to switching of tracks.

Changes to the Original Policy

In writing the new policy, the committee aimed to create a document that protected ITF rights; clarified ITF responsibilities; supported and complemented the tenure system; and addressed some systemic inequities. We also strove to incorporate many of the recommendations made by the [Faculty Senate Review Committee in 2022](#).

Below is a summary of the major changes.

Aimed to balance flexibility with accountability through transparency.

This policy was written with two principles in mind: flexibility and transparency. The aim was to create language that set a standard for departments to follow while allowing different departments to craft departmental procedures that were more tailored to their specific needs. For example, the new policy continues the practice of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) for faculty with unique job requirements not covered by this policy.

In the spirit of transparency, the new policy also requires departments to define what specifically constitutes a standard teaching load and what activities comprise a standard service load. These definitions must be clear, measurable, and approved by CLAS before they can be adopted.

Rationale:

The first challenge the committee faced was one of scope: how to craft a policy specific enough to be useful but broad enough to be applied across the college? CLAS is the biggest and most diverse college at the university; any policy needs to account for widely different departmental and discipline-specific needs. Our approach to this policy was to provide a baseline that felt applicable to all ITF positions within CLAS while also giving enough flexibility for departments to shape the parameters of the ITF responsibilities to fit their needs and context.

The committee recognizes that in trying to set up more flexibility for departments, there may be some ambiguity in regard to faculty effort expectations. One area of concern was in defining what activities constitute service. By requiring departments to spell out in clear terms what a standard teaching and service load comprises, the committee hopes the clarification of responsibilities by the department will empower ITF to navigate service expectations.

Removed “professional productivity” as a criterion for promotion; defined the term “professional activity.”

Consistent with ITF focus on teaching and the need for service, the committee clarified that professional productivity is not required by CLAS for the appointment, reappointment, and promotion of ITF. While ITF are not required to produce research, scholarship, or artistic creation, as expected by tenure-track colleagues, such activities may count toward reappointment and promotion.

Professional activity may contribute toward effective teaching or service, depending on the department, the faculty member’s role, and the type of activity. MOUs or individual contracts may

include professional productivity as necessary for specific professional and departmental requirements.

Rationale:

Professional productivity has felt like an impossible promotion requirement for many ITF. CLAS and departments do not provide consistent funding for ITF conference travel or research expenses. ITF are not eligible for Professional Development Awards, nor do they receive other kinds of support or resources reserved for faculty on the tenure track. Many ITF express concerns and confusion regarding the lack of resources for professional productivity, effort allocation overload, and “what counts” as professional productivity for non-tenure track faculty.

Therefore, the committee defined “professional activity” as separate from the tenure-track expectation of “professional productivity,” and freed ITF from an expectation of producing scholarship without properly funding or supporting it. The committee also recognizes that many departments currently do support ITF activities, and they should continue to do so. The committee encouraged the college to continue to expand funding sources for ITF to pursue professional development and activities.

Making this decision required the policy to rebalance ITF’s standard effort allocation (see the following section).

Adjusted the standard effort allocation to 80/20.

The committee altered the standard effort allocation from 80% teaching/10% service/10% professional productivity to 80% teaching/20% service.

Rationale:

ITF serve important service roles in their respective departments. Actual service expectations for ITF are frequently not in alignment with current standard 10% allocations. Most ITF do considerably more service. In the absence of ITF, integral service work would be significantly delayed or remain incomplete. The 20% service revision brings the policy in line with the present reality. It is not, however, an open invitation for DEOs to burden ITF with even more service requirements. To prevent that, departments will define a standard service load subject to approval by CLAS (see the above section about flexibility and transparency).

ITF are professional, competent, and valued contributors to the college. By establishing a service load that is comparable to the tenure-track, the policy signals that ITF should be taken seriously as effective colleagues and educators. An ITF member’s emphasis should be on teaching.

Delineated the roles of Professors of Practice vs. Instruction.

Most ITF in CLAS fall under the professors of instruction category and are hired with teaching as their primary focus. However, some are hired in the professor of practice category with expectations for significant professional experience and continued engagement in their field as part

of their role at the university. The committee's policy endeavors to set different hiring, evaluation, and promotional processes for these faculty to recognize the differences in their roles.

While professors of instruction at all ranks are expected to stay current in their field, they are not required to participate in professional activities as part of their effort allocation. Professors of practice at ranks will maintain active engagement in their field in addition to their teaching and service, which means that their effort allocation shall be adjusted either within their contract at the time of appointment or through an MOU in collaboration with CLAS leadership.

Rationale:

Professors of practice bring a wealth of professional experience and high value connections in their field to the classroom. This experience may stand in for a traditional educational path to a faculty position. While teaching is always the primary focus for any instructional track faculty member, this policy aims to recognize that professors of practice may enter their teaching career from a professional angle and that their students, CLAS, and the university benefit from their continued engagement with the professional field.

Clarified the appointment, reappointment, and promotion criteria for each rank.

The committee updated the specific criteria for appointment, reappointment, and promotion for each rank for professors of instruction and professors of practice to ensure clarity and transparency. For example, instead of requiring "excellence" in teaching, a concept that is difficult to measure, we instead call for "effectiveness" in teaching, which can be measured in multiple ways.

Rationale:

The committee's goal was to ensure the criteria were consistent and equitable both across ranks and between lines of practice and instruction. Having transparent, clear criteria benefits faculty and DEOs alike and promotes a culture of fairness. Clarifying the expectations also strengthens the evaluation process.

The committee spent many hours considering the usefulness of the word, "excellence." This is a criterion that has been traditionally employed to stipulate expectations for faculty in all aspects of their work: faculty should aim for "excellence" in teaching, or "excellence" in service. However, the committee felt strongly that "excellence" is in the eye of the beholder, and if left in place as a criterion, could lead to inequity in evaluation. Our hope is that these criteria provide the flexibility for departments to articulate expectations for promotion as appropriate within their discipline and have the autonomy to decide if professional productivity should be included in those expectations.

Redesigned the Annual Evaluation criteria and procedures.

The committee reviewed the annual evaluation criteria and procedures. Faculty will be evaluated on effectiveness of teaching and service, commensurate with their appointment's effort allocation. Teaching evaluation criteria focus on reflective and iterative growth in learning-centered

instructional practices and remaining current in the faculty member's field of study. The service evaluation criteria focus on fulfilling service expectations.

The committee identified four types of evaluation: probationary, annual, reappointment, and promotion. Each serves a unique purpose. The type of evaluation is determined by the faculty member's length of service and probationary status.

The annual evaluation procedures were updated to include specific components of the evaluation: observations, teaching materials, meeting with the reviewer, and faculty response. The meeting with the reviewer occurs annually during the first six years from initial hiring.

Rationale:

The changes made to the evaluation criteria and procedures streamline the evaluation process and place more emphasis on teaching. The focus on reflective and iterative growth aligns the teaching evaluation criteria with the effective teaching criteria for promotion. In addition, including a meeting with the reviewer for the first six years fosters mentorship to new faculty to support instructor growth.

Clarified voting rights for instructional track faculty.

The committee condensed language related to voting and participation in CLAS governance since these issues are already addressed in the CLAS Manual of Policy and Procedure. The new policy clearly spells out the role of ITF in hiring, review, and promotion committees, requires departments to define the voting rights of ITF in departmental Manuals of Procedure, and sets the expectation that ITF will have some voting rights at the departmental level. The major points under faculty governance are:

- ITF may serve on committees considering promotion of instructional and clinical faculty of lower rank than their own.
- ITF may review and vote for reappointment of clinical and instructional faculty at the same rank or lower than their own.
- Departments may allow ITF to vote on new tenure-track appointments or serve on tenure-track search committees, but ITF faculty may not serve on committees that consider promotion, tenure, or reappointment of tenure-track faculty.
- ITF are eligible to vote in the recommendation process for DEOs.
- Departments should define the voting rights of ITF and those rights should be included in the departmental Manual of Procedures. ITF should have voting rights for matters related to their primary functions in the department, including matters of the curriculum.

Rationale:

This section puts into writing practices that are already in place in many CLAS departments (e.g. ITF serving on ITF promotion committees and ITF voting in the recommendation process for DEOs) and clarifies questions that have come up in some departments (e.g. ITF serving on promotion committees for faculty on the clinical track and ITF serving on search committees for tenure-track positions). Asking departments to define voting rights in departmental Manuals of Procedure is meant to address the uncertainty about voting rights that some ITF have encountered in their

departments. Setting the expectation that voting rights should be connected to ITF functions in the department is meant to address situations in which ITF have responsibilities connected to specific departmental matters (e.g., general education or other introductory course offerings) but have had no vote on those matters.

Created multiple pathways to recommend policy revisions.

The committee identified three ways that revisions to this policy may be recommended for consideration. At any time, revisions and/or amendments to the policy may be introduced by a review committee appointed by the Dean; by recommendation of a majority of the Faculty Assembly; or by a petition of at least 20% of eligible voting faculty. The proposal is then sent to the Executive Committee for approval and transmission to the eligible voting faculty for ratification via referendum.

Rationale:

Policies should change as needs change. Rather than relying solely on the Dean's office to recommend policy changes, the committee wanted to identify other ways revisions could be considered by the faculty at large. By specifying the options of either a Faculty Assembly recommendation or a recommendation via petition of eligible voting faculty, faculty voices are amplified.

Recommended Next Steps

Departments must define teaching and service loads in consultation with CLAS.

The departments that make up CLAS have very different teaching needs and service requirements. Therefore, making across-the-board declarations dictating exact teaching and service loads proved ineffective. How does the workload of a chemistry professor who teaches 680 students in one course but whose syllabus remains stable from year to year, compare to the music professor who teaches four seminar courses, each requiring a different preparation each semester? The committee decided departmental flexibility was necessary.

However, it is paramount that faculty have clear expectations for their teaching and service loads. The allocation of service assignments, especially, can be ambiguous. Instructional track faculty, because they are on time-delimited contracts, may feel pressure to accept an unfair service load or risk not being reappointed. The committee heard from several ITF who routinely surpass their current contracted 10% service requirement; setting the new workload allocation at 80% teaching/20% service is not an invitation to double faculty's service load, but to bring their contracts closer in line with reality.

New hires must understand precisely what their job entails: how many hours a week should they be prepared to spend on service activities, prorated across the semester? The category of "service" cannot serve as a black hole, whereupon countless committee assignments can be stuffed. By setting clear expectations and definitions, departments will ensure fairness via a culture of transparency.

To ensure equity across the departments, DEOs will seek CLAS approval for their newly defined teaching and service loads. CLAS will serve as a referee, keeping the college playing field level for all faculty.

Faculty with considerable service loads must have their effort allocation adjusted.

Many ITF already have substantial service loads, serving in leadership roles such as directors of undergraduate studies, program heads, or other substantive positions. These executive roles were originally designed to be filled by tenure-track faculty. However, the percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty positions has declined across the university, in keeping with national trends, according to the [2022 Faculty Senate report](#). As of 2024, only 72% of CLAS faculty are on the tenure track. In the wake of this reality, departments have turned to their instructional track faculty to lead instead.

For these ITF leaders, the new standard workload of 80% teaching/20% service may still be inadequate. Departments must balance these leaders' effort allocation to reflect their substantial leadership in their departments. Departments need to rectify these outdated contracts to reflect their strong contributions to departmental service.

Departments need to define ITF voting rights in the Departmental Manual of Procedures.

ITF are not second-class citizens; nor are they temporary visitors passing through the halls of this institution. ITF are professional, credentialed, and valued members of CLAS and deserve to play an active role in faculty governance.

Departmental Manuals of Procedures must therefore be updated to allow ITF to vote, especially on matters concerning the curriculum or other primary areas that affect instructional track faculty. Departments must clarify whether ITF can serve on committees, including search committees. Senior ITF should be included in the evaluation and promotion decisions of lower-rank instructional track faculty. Other voting rights should be clearly delineated.

Evaluation procedures must be updated.

The new ITF policy lays out robust evaluation criteria, designed to promote growth in faculty members' teaching. The committee worked closely with the UI Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce to define effective teaching across the ranks. This is an opportunity for CLAS to reinvigorate the evaluation process to incorporate these new standards.

To that end, the committee has created a mock-up of a new recommended evaluation form, designed to be integrated with Workflow. If adopted, this new evaluation form will streamline the evaluation process while strengthening its usefulness.

Promotion dossier requirements must be adjusted to reflect new criteria.

With the change in effort allocation and revised criteria for promotion, it will be necessary to update the promotion dossier requirements to match the new policy. An instructional track faculty member's promotion dossier is a demonstration of their effective teaching, service, and if applicable professional activity. The dossier should include specific materials that demonstrate effectiveness in teaching and where appropriate contributions to the teaching mission.

Conclusion

This new policy adheres to the provost's policy and meets the committee's charge. The committee believes these policy revisions will contribute to the transparency, collegiality, and advancement of the CLAS educational mission, toward which ITF play an integral role. While there is still work to be done, this new policy reflects a positive step forward for both ITF and CLAS.