

Job of a Teaching Professor

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1 Teaching faculties versus research faculties

The general difference is that Research faculty have less teaching responsibility than teaching faculty and teaching faculty have less research responsibility than research faculty.

An example of research faculty allocation of responsibility is 40% teaching, 20% service and 40% research. An example of a teaching faculty allocation of responsibility can be 65% teaching and advising, 15% professional performance, 10% service, and 10% research or scholarly work.

Permanent research faculty are typically in tenure track or tenured. Teaching faculty jobs typically doesn't have a tenure track but it may have a promotion system in place. In any long term faculty career, typically one or two promotions happens.

2 A common role of teaching faculty

In many research universities, the role of teaching faculty is in the early stages of forming. A common role is coordinating large enrollment courses and teaching large or small lectures.

3 The role of a course coordinator

This can vary but most if not all of the following and may be more

- (1) Creating syllabus and course schedule. The course often has to adhere to some restrictions set by local, state-wide or national restrictions. That is the material covered and what percentage of the course grade is made of assessments is usually constrained by quality control and accreditation of the university.
- (2) Setting up course's LMS, e.g. Blackboard or Canvas.
- (3) Creating slides, lecture notes and maintaining and updating the existing ones.
- (4) Creating material for labs/recitations, often expectation is to create short review notes, create some inquiry-based group work questions to enhanced the conceptual understanding of the material, create group work questions to enhanced the procedural work, create or share appropriate apps and videos to use in conjunction with the group work, create in-class quizzes or collaborate with lab instructors to write quizzes and create written assignments to be turned in individually.
- (5) Creating online assignments.

- (6) Often creating large pools of online questions either for active learning in the classroom or for quick feedback on LMS.
- (7) Writing and or collaborating to write course assessments.
- (8) Creating exam review material, creating practice exams, holding review sessions and collaborating with other organizations who help with practice sessions.
- (9) Setting up video recording of the courses and creating instruction videos when it is needed. (For example, I collaborated to create about 250 videos in the first year of my appointment, before pandemic started; I have lost track afterward.)
- (10) Holding weekly meetings for all instructors in the course to review the material covered in the following week and discuss the issues with the course instructions.
- (11) Collecting data to update the instructions accordingly.
- (12) Collecting data for the course to serve in accreditation of institution. (Yes! The rigor of the core courses determines the value of your degree. That includes what is covered by the core courses and what percentage of the grades are made of assessments.)
- (13) Setting up the technology for the course and all users and ensuring that the technology works properly; often being the first contact person for debugging.
- (14) Collaborating with other research or teaching faculty teaching the course.
- (15) Scheduling a course help room and taking an active role in it to facilitate the job for everyone involved.
- (16) Writing rubrics for written assignments and exams.
- (17) Organizing proctoring for the midterm, final exam, makeup exams and multiple other evening exams.
- (18) Leading the midterm and final exams grading effort and grading with graduate students and the research faculty who volunteer to grade. (That is, when we close the help room and grade until late at nights for a few days.)
- (19) Collaborating with the graduate students in managing their undergraduate homework paper graders, resolving conflicts and issues for both paper graders and graduate instructor; in certain cases either the lab instructor or coordinator ends up grading homework papers. (For example, in Fall 2020, we had to adjust to the needs of many students and not put the weight on undergraduate graders' shoulders. I ended up grading my share of late worksheets, 400 in total, on the final exam week after I was done grading my share of final exams; I barely made it to grade submission due date that semester.)
- (20) In some cases, creating mastery-based grading on online platforms and scheduling exam times with the resources provided to us. (For example, Gateway exams in Calculus I.)
- (21) Implementing new pedagogical research in the course. (Some big names are mastery based learning implemented in gateway exams and inquiry based learning in our group work assignments but there is a lot more.)
- (22) Improving the course accessibility overall; collaborating with student accessibility office on their students' needs.

- (23) Writing teaching/ tutoring recommendation letters (many of them).
- (24) Recommending students for tutoring in different organizations on campus.
- (25) Answering emails and other means of communication. (I looked at this and I have, on average, about 4000 email threads per semester with some of the threads being as long as 50 emails per thread but many as long as 20 emails per thread. If I don't receive any emails for an hour, I usually check to make sure my server is working.)
- (26) Most important of all, making sure that the hard working graduate students teaching the course are not exceeding 20 hours in working in the course; the ratio of graduate student per undergraduate learners is getting smaller with all the budget cuts; as a result, for example, even number of emails they are receiving is increasing, the grading load is increasing and so on. (For example, this sometimes means that I am doing many of the makeup sessions.)
- (27) Collaborating with the entire teaching team and assigning grades and uploading the grades.
- (28) The responsibility does not end here. There are occasional work that goes into these jobs that is hard to articulate. For example, in Spring 2021, we were informed that our text book publisher is not supporting the online assignments we were using anymore so I started a process of change for the course. I asked the appropriate committee within the department to meet and I continued my discussion with the two publishing companies involved with the textbook and online assignments. By the time we negotiate the best price for students, I had spent more than 20 hours in meetings with the two companies and the committee.

4 Course coordinator does NOT do

- (1) Course description; what is covered in a course is decided by committees and has to be set so the credit would be transferable to other universities.
- (2) Hiring the graduate students teaching the lab sections; we may give very occasional recommendations but we are not the people who are hiring or scheduling graduate students in the courses.
- (3) Choosing who is teaching with us in the course; there are many many factors involved in the department's choices.

5 Myths about the teaching faculty

- (1) *The more students you teach, you are paid more:* The truth is teaching large number of students is part of the teaching faculty jobs. In fact, other than summer teaching, neither the teaching nor research faculty get paid more than their contract.
- (2) *Faculty don't like to teach over the summer:* The truth is that summer teaching is not part of the job contract. Faculty without administrative positions typically don't get paid over the summer. Faculty are paid extra income if they teach over the summer but there are number of restrictions for classes offered over the summer. Some faculty use the summer time to do research or prepare for the courses they teach during the academic year and very few of them get paid for doing so. (For example, I had three weeks of pay the semester before I started my current position and I spent two weeks of it in advising incoming students. I have not had any other funding for the summer since then.)

- (3) *Teaching one large course counts as the same teaching load for teaching faculty and research faculty:* Depending on the departments this may not be true. For example in our math department, the teaching load is two regular size (up to 60 people) classes one semester and one regular size class another semester in a year. Teaching a large enrollment class counts as teaching two regular size classes for teaching faculty. On the other hand, until recently, the teaching faculty load was two large enrollment a semester. The current load for teaching faculty, currently, is two large enrollment courses one semester and one large enrollment course in another per year. Please note that a research faculty can not teach more than one large enrollment course per year without exceeding their contract.
- (4) *Teaching faculty and research faculty get paid the same:* This may be occasionally true depending on departments and in certain cases that teaching faculty are paid close to average or above the average salary of research faculty but in general, they are paid significantly lower than the least paid research faculty. The information for Kansas employees is a public knowledge and you can look up any professor's salary.
- (5) *Teaching faculty can just decide what they cover in their courses:* Teaching faculty are usually assigned to core courses, a committee is assigned to make major decisions. Also, core courses get evaluated by outside organization for degree evaluation and they have to adhere to certain qualities. For example, weight of exams in the final grade has to exceed a certain percentages in these courses.
- (6) *The number of student per lecturer does not matter, they are learning in lecture:* I am not sure if I need to bust this myth as it seems no one believes it. The way anyone learns is by actively solving problems. The speed in which students are learning is different and many students are too shy to ask questions in big lecture hall. I do have a personal example again. In Spring 2021, I only coordinated one course of 280 students. The ratio of lab instructors to students was also very reasonable. We were entirely online but there was a huge difference in the level of instructions from Fall 2020. I was able to grade all 6 quizzes for the course myself. Give plenty feedback to those who showed their work and change instructions according to the needs according to the result of the quizzes. The graduate students were able to be responsive and answer lots of questions on discord and other means of social media. They connected with students and they enjoyed their job more as well. The wonderful research professor who was teaching with me also volunteered to help grade exams and was active in weekly instructor meetings; he was also able to act on the feedback. I was able to jump in different meetings and resolve the technology issues for any member of the team who needed it. I tried much of the same techniques in Fall 2020 when I was coordinating two large courses of 800 students and teaching two large lectures; I put up a much bigger efforts in fall but I couldn't reach as large proportion of students and instructors as I did in the spring because of sheer numbers.

6 A few fun facts

I will cover this another time. I just needed to reflect on what I do in this job and see if I can find something I can cut down so I can have some rest, find some family time and I also needed to explain to my students what it means to coordinate courses. Looking at my coordinating list of responsibility, I understand better that I can not reduce them by any means. Today is Sunday and I realize that I spent too long on this and I need to prepare for my courses so I can take a few hours off next weekend too. This project may take a while to complete.

- (1) The first 6 items in the coordinating responsibility is often done by a team in publishing companies and counts as their entire responsibility.

7 How budget cuts affects us

Before the budget cuts had such a deep impact on us, we used be able to have graduate students in lecture to answer some of the questions we could not answer. We also used to have smaller lectures that would run five days a week with extra instruction time. Specially those few small lectures would help ensure the equity and strengthen the background knowledge of our students. Some students need to be in those lectures for one semester to get caught up and they would succeed to take the next course in large lecture. The lack of instructors is extremely affecting Math 125 where we have not been able to keep the small lectures for two semesters in a row.

Thank you for reading!

Come back for a complete document in a few months when I have more time!