

9/3/2020 [Allunit] Workload Adjustments for Online Courses

Dear colleagues,

The MSP office has been deluged with questions about workload adjustments for faculty who put in the effort to create a high-quality online course. Faculty who want a workload adjustment must enter their information and their choice into APWS, and your chair/head will approve your request. The choice of accommodations is up to the faculty member. The deadline has been extended until Monday, September 7, and your chair/head has until Monday, September 14, to approve.

Faculty are committed to creating engaging high-quality educational experiences for all UMass students; we want our retention rate to be 100% even through the pandemic. The MSP and the administration share the goal of making sure our students are actively engaged in our classes and happy with their synchronous and asynchronous learning this semester. Anyone who has questions about technology or best practices for online teaching should contact the Center for Teaching or IDEAS: <https://www.umass.edu/online/quality>.

Here are answers to some questions we have heard:

1. **NTT faculty:** In addition to the options of course release or credit toward continuing appointment, the MSP and administration agreed to another option: non-tenure-track faculty may request **a year of credit toward promotion** to Senior Lecturer or Senior Lecturer 2. This option is now available in the APWS system.
2. **Tenured faculty:** You are expected to take the sabbatical credit option in APWS “unless that option is not workable.” If you plan to leave the university before you would be able to use your new sabbatical credit, you can choose another option. The contract does not say that you have to put in retirement papers or state a resignation date; just explain why it’s not workable for you. Alternatively, you could negotiate an alternative arrangement (including the \$7,000 course-release arrangement explained below) if you and your chair agree.
3. **Part-time NTT faculty:** Whether you are benefitted (half-time or more) or non-benefitted (adjunct), you are eligible for a workload adjustment if you created a high-quality online course. Benefitted part-time faculty have the choice of a course release, a year credit toward promotion, or a year toward continuing appointment. Non-benefitted (less than half-time) faculty have the choice of a course release or a year credit toward promotion, or a different option if you and your chair agree. The MOA states: “Departments may offer a different arrangement, for example increasing the

person's percentage appointment at the time the course development work is done, with the MSP's agreement."

4. **"Made whole":** The contract states, "Faculty who leave UMass before using their course release will be made whole." That means that you can't lose your benefit. The MOA explains, "The lecturer per-course minimum (currently \$7,000) will be paid to a departing faculty member with an unused course release or in lieu of awarding a course release."
5. **Co-taught courses:** For courses taught by two or more people, the faculty will decide who is responsible for converting the course to fully online, and that person will be eligible for the workload adjustment.
6. **Small classes:** The MOA states that 3-credit or 4-credit courses with fewer than 12 students only warrant a workload adjustment if they require new curricula and additional effort to create as online courses.
7. **Honors seminars:** One-credit seminars (including Honors and First-Year Seminars) are not eligible for a workload adjustment – they are expected to meet over Zoom with no new online curricula. However, Honors classes that are 3- or 4-credit, that require alternative curricula and additional effort to teach online, are absolutely eligible for workload adjustments.
8. **"Quality Standards for Fully Online Courses":** As we've said, the MSP did not write this document and we did not negotiate its use in the workload adjustment process. We have also seen an 8-page questionnaire that some departments have shared. Please know that it is not necessary to fill out this form or to do any checklist in order to qualify for a workload adjustment. You can simply write a summary of your additional efforts and enter your request in the APWS system. The MOA says: "The document entitled "University Quality Standards for Fully Online Courses" will not be used to unreasonably deny any faculty member from the contractual workload adjustments in the one-year extension." If you did the work, you will not be denied the credit.
9. **Transcripts:** We have expressed to the administration that the transcript function in Zoom and Echo360 is not reliable and the results are discriminatory. In recognition of this problem, the MOA states: "Satisfactory transcripts are best practice in online courses, but if a specific course or method of teaching is not conducive, faculty can instead provide extensive notes or an annotated PowerPoint to assist students."
10. **LMS:** The administration expects every course to be set up in Blackboard or Moodle. We know that some faculty are teaching with other types of technology, including Microsoft Teams or Stream, Google Apps, and others, and that is fine. Because students will be looking for the course in Blackboard or Moodle, best practice is to set up the course there and post the syllabus and any instructions for students about how to access synchronous and asynchronous activities and materials.

All MSP bargaining unit members are eligible for these negotiated workload adjustments, and we encourage everyone to apply for the workload adjustment that you deserve. You are eligible

for a workload adjustment for each course that you create as a high-quality fully online course. The central administration has told us that they expect everyone who creates a high-quality online course to get an accommodation. To our knowledge, no one has been denied. If you have created new curricula and put in additional effort to create an online course, and your request is denied in APWS, please contact the MSP. If necessary, we will use the grievance procedure to defend the language that we negotiated in the [one-year agreement](#) and the more recent [MOA](#).

In solidarity,
Eve

Allunit mailing list
Allunit@external.umass.edu
<https://list.umass.edu/mailman/listinfo/allunit>