

Academic Department Chair

Roles & Responsibilities

Revised & Approved by Dean's Council: 06-16-2025

Academic Departments

An academic department is a unit within a college. A department consists of one or more academic programs and may include additional offices or units. Colleges will specify which programs, units, faculty, and staff are part of each department.

Responsibilities of Department Chairs

The department chair serves as the department's academic leader and a liaison between departmental faculty and the college. The department chair reports to the dean.

The department chair is responsible for all activities within the department. The following lists the typical responsibilities of a department chair. Given the size, complexity, and scope of different departments across the university, colleges may vary these responsibilities. Deviations from this list should be communicated by the dean to the department chair. With the dean's approval, responsibilities may also be assigned to or done in partnership with program directors or other individual faculty and staff.

1. Programs and Curriculum

- a. Responsible for the academic programs housed within the department, including all aspects of academic excellence and student success
- b. Coordinate program development, including planning, assessment, recruiting, and related activities
- c. Supervise program directors
- d. Support program accreditation efforts
- e. Coordinate overall curriculum within the department and across programs
- f. Monitor and approve all changes to the program curriculum

2. Course Coordination and Scheduling

- a. Maintain and approve course rotations for the department
- b. Manage and approve schedule for the department

Cont'd. on next page

- c. Monitor enrollment and make schedule adjustments
- d. Review, approve, and monitor textbook selections, course syllabi, office hours, and other course-related items to ensure compliance with university requirements

3. Faculty Development and Evaluation

- a. Serve as the direct supervisor of all faculty within the department
- b. Conduct annual reviews of department faculty
- c. Serve in the promotion and tenure process as specified in university policy
- d. Oversee departmental faculty hiring process and make hiring recommendations to the dean
- e. Hire adjuncts and other instructors of record for the department consistent with college and university procedures
- f. Coordinate and participate in mentoring new faculty hires
- g. Monitor the quality of teaching in the department
- h. Monitor the development of departmental faculty
- i. Manage department responses to faculty and program issues
- j. Provide recommendations for faculty applying for teaching relief

4. Student Issues

- a. Manage department responses to student issues
- b. Monitor and approve requests for independent study, internships, course substitutions, incompletes, and related registration issues
- c. Approve and manage student assistantships

5. Communication

- a. Coordinate departmental communication
- b. Ensure accuracy and currency of departmental information in university catalog
- c. Serve as department contact for college advising office
- d. Schedule and lead department meetings
- e. Convey faculty and program concerns to the dean
- f. Serve as liaison between department faculty and college
- g. Support recruitment communication efforts

6. Advocacy for the needs of the department

- a. Prioritize and submit department funding requests
- b. Manage assigned budgets

Cont'd. on next page

- c. Maintain an environment of collegiality and shared governance
- d. Represent the department at college administrative meetings
- e. Approve travel requests
- f. Report to the dean when problem cannot be solved at department level
- g. Recommend financial and personnel needs for the department

7. Other

- a. Manage assigned staff, including time reporting and annual evaluations
- b. Supervise other units that report to the department chair
- c. Perform additional duties as assigned by the dean
- d. Attend Council of Chairs meetings

Workload Compensation

Department Chair Compensation Criteria

Regular Department

Full-time faculty count of 20 or fewer

- Two course releases distributed as follows: Fall (1), Spring (1)
- An administrative stipend of \$11,000
- An administrative stipend equivalent to one summer course as compensation for summer work

Large Department

Full-time faculty count greater than 20

- Three course releases are typically distributed as follows: Fall (1), Spring (2)
- An administrative stipend of \$11,000
- An administrative stipend equivalent to one summer course as compensation for summer work

For each course release during Fall and Spring, 10% of workload effort will be changed from teaching effort to service effort for the purposes of evaluation. For example, a chair with 2 course releases over an academic year (Fall and Spring) would have a workload distribution of 40% teaching, 20% research, and 40% service. All university and college service requirements may be met from work as a department chair.

Cont'd. on next page

Department chairs are eligible for additional compensation and/or course release at the discretion of the dean and with the approval of the Provost. The rationale for additional compensation and/or course release must be documented in writing.

Department Chair Appointment

The dean may appoint an interim department chair at any time, as needed.

All full-time tenured faculty are eligible to serve. The dean's office will provide administrative support during this process and coordinate the selection process.

Nominations can come from within the department through faculty nomination or self-nomination. Nominated candidates will submit a letter of application and a curriculum vita according to a deadline established by the dean. Candidates will make presentations and answer questions from the departmental faculty.

The dean will distribute a survey to faculty in which they will be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. The dean will meet with the candidates. The dean will then announce their decision in writing to the faculty.

If no internal candidate is identified to serve as chair, then a request for an external search may be initiated by the dean. If approved by the Provost, the external search for a chair would be conducted following normal university procedures.

Terms of Office

The standard term of service for department chairs is 4 years. Department chairs may be re-appointed by going through the same process as the original appointment. The department chair serves at the pleasure of the dean.