The Joint Administration/Faculty Association
Committee to consider University Financial Matters
and to discuss and negotiate matters related to
Terms and Conditions of Employment of Faculty

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Joint Administration/Faculty Association Working Groups
on Student/Faculty Ratio & Faculty Workload
Terms of Reference

1. Preamble

As part of the 2024-2025 remuneration negotiations, the Joint Administration/Faculty Association Committee agreed to form a Joint Working Group on Student/Faculty Ratio and Faculty Workload ("the Working Group") to examine and make recommendations regarding issues of Student/Faculty Ratio and Faculty Workload:

> Members of the Joint Committee agree to establish a Working Group to analyze and make recommendations on Student/Faculty Ratio and Faculty Workload to the Joint Committee. Reports from the Working Group will be provided to the Joint Committee on an annual basis. Appreciating that the issue of faculty workload is complex, it may be necessary to create sub-groups of the Working Group.
>
> Membership: The Working Group, and if necessary, its sub-groups, will consist of six members each, three to be nominated by the MUFA members on Joint Committee and three to be nominated by the Administration members of Joint Committee.

2. Background

The Administration and MUFA share a commitment to sustaining McMaster's mission as a student-centred, research-intensive university, grounded in collegial governance and collaborative decision-making.

The MUFA Faculty workload survey, 2024 MUFA Remuneration Survey, and MUFA IT Ad Hoc Committee Report highlighted significant challenges impacting faculty morale, efficiency of operations, and the student learning experience.

The 2025 Macleans report indicates that McMaster has the highest student-teacher ratio among Canadian universities. While this metric alone may not fully capture teaching realities, it is widely used by prospective students, external stakeholders, and ranking bodies.

3. Mandate

The Working Group will initially comprise 2 sub-groups, to separately examine (1) Student/Faculty Ratio, and (2) Faculty Workload.

a) The Student/Faculty Ratio Working Group shall:
   I. Collect and analyze data on Student/Faculty Ratios at McMaster University and comparator institutions of the G6 research-intensive Ontario universities over the last 10 years;
   II. Identify the root causes of our exceptional ratio and its trend;
   III. Evaluate implications for student experience, faculty well-being, and institutional reputation;
   IV. Make recommendations regarding Student/Faculty ratio, including feasible short-, medium-, and long-term actions.

b) The Faculty Workload Working Group shall:
   I. Gather quantitative and qualitative data related to workload of all permanent faculty stream appointments across teaching, research, and service;
   II. Review and recommend mechanisms for meaningful consultation with faculty and MUFA, when new processes and policies are introduced that directly affect faculty workload – and suggest revisions as needed;
   III. Recommend steps to improve transparency and equity regarding workload distributions within units;
   IV. Recommend additional supports (administrative, digital, financial, and personnel) to address the increased/increasing faculty workload;
   V. Develop a framework to assess workload holistically, incorporating different activities of faculty in teaching, research, and service;
   VI. Consider differential faculty workload by rank, appointment type, gender, and with an equity lens.

After receiving the first update(s) from the Working Groups (cf. “Reporting” section below), the Joint Committee may, at its discretion, provide additional guidance to the Working Groups to refine and/or expand their mandates.

4. Membership

Each Working Group shall consist of six members in total: three members appointed by MUFA, and three members appointed by the Administration.

Each Working Group shall elect one Chair from among its members at its first meeting. The two Chairs shall:

- lead the work of their respective Working Group;
- coordinate meeting agendas and work plans for their Group;
- liaise regularly with one another to ensure alignment between the Working Groups, avoid duplication of effort, and support complementary analyses;
- work collaboratively to ensure that final reports and recommendations are coherent, complementary, and internally consistent.

5. Research and Consultation

In fulfilling its mandate, the Working Groups may:

a) review comparable situations at the G6 universities;
b) review the results of the surveys conducted by MUFA (the MUFA Ad hoc Committee on Working Conditions ; relevant anonymized data collected from the 2024 MUFA Remuneration survey; the 2025 MUFA IT Ad Hoc Committee Report);
c) consult with relevant university offices, faculty members, and units to collect both data and perspectives (e.g. IRA, SAS);
d) review other documents that it deems relevant to aid in the fulfillment of its mandate;
e) identify gaps in data collection and recommend mechanisms for ongoing monitoring.

6. Consultants and Administrative Support

The Provost office and MUFA shall jointly provide administrative and logistical support to the Working Groups. The Groups may request additional resources (e.g., data analysis, benchmarking assistance, etc.) as required.

7. Reporting

The Working Groups will keep the Joint Committee and the MUFA Executive informed of its progress frequently, and at least once per term, throughout its mandate.

The Working Groups' Final Report(s) will be made publicly available to the University community.

The expected date for the Working Groups' final reports is April 2027.

Approved by Joint Committee on January 22, 2026