Mathematics Department Operating Procedures and Policies
Last Revised AY 2024-2025

Approvals—Department (4/14/2025), PPBC (4/17/2025), Dean (9/25/2025), Provost (9/25/2025)

Vision Statement: The Mathematics Department offers a broad and challenging academic program that supports the mission of Western Washington University and the College of Science and Engineering. We aim to provide high-quality education in undergraduate and graduate mathematics, meeting the needs of a diverse student body and diverse state population.

1. Department Voting Rights and Procedures

   (a) Changes to the departmental operating procedures and policies document (DOPP): Changes require a vote open to all tenured and tenure-track faculty, including faculty with joint appointments with other units, non-tenure-track faculty with at least a 0.5 FTE appointment for the academic year, and all classified and professional departmental staff. The vote must be announced by email to all faculty and staff at least one week in advance of the closing date, which must not fall during an intersession period. Changes will be approved if votes have been received by at least 50% of all eligible voters and more than 50% of the votes cast indicate approval of the change.

   (b) Changes to the Department's COPEP addendum: Changes to the department's COPEP addendum must be approved in accordance with the WWU Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Currently, the CBA specifies that changes in evaluation standards must be approved by a majority (50% + 1) of tenured and tenure-track faculty.

   (c) Voting on Hiring Recommendations for Tenure-Track Positions: The department's Executive Committee or a Hiring Committee formed by the Executive Committee will vote on recommendations for tenure-track positions. All department faculty will be invited to provide feedback on candidates and this will be considered by the Executive Committee or Hiring Committee.

   (d) Voting for membership in departmental standing committees, except for the First Year Math Steering Committee, is open to all tenured and tenure-track faculty. Voting for membership in the First Year Math Steering Committee is open to all tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty.

   (e) Voting on matters not covered above: When votes are needed in situations not listed above, all tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to vote. Other groups within the department may be declared eligible to vote on these matters by the Executive Committee prior to the organization of such a vote.

2. Workload: A 1.0 FTE tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the Math department typically teaches six 4- or 5-credit classes per academic year. Variations from this are at the discretion of the department chair, subject to the approval of the CSE dean, and provost if required by the CBA. A departmental policy that gives guidelines for how faculty members who supervise student project work can earn "credits" that apply toward course release is included in the section 7c of this document.

3. Department Meetings.

   (a) A full department meeting will be held each year early in fall quarter.

   (b) The chair will schedule additional meetings as necessary.

   (c) Faculty may request additional meetings by consultation with the chair.

4. Chair Responsibilities

(a) Consultation with department members on matters affecting the department, especially regarding new appointments, curriculum, budget, space, teaching assignments, workloads, and course scheduling.

(b) Service as a voting member of the Executive and Undergraduate committees.

(c) Appointing departmental members to represent the math department on college-level or university-level committees.

(d) Delegation of responsibilities to other faculty members, including the associate chair.

(e) Other duties as specified in the CBA and CSE COPEP documents.

5. Associate Chair Responsibilities.

   The associate chair assists the chair with the execution of the chair's responsibilities. The exact split of duties between the chair and associate chair is determined by the chair but examples of some of the duties that the associate chair may assist with include the following:

   (a) Making transfer course equivalency determinations.

   (b) Drafing and implementing policies regarding things like AP calc, AP precalc, etc.

   (c) Working on matters related to freshman advising and registration, such as working with Admissions and Academic Advising.

   (d) Making decisions about the Summer quarter teaching program—including determining which courses will be offered, who will teach the courses, and when the courses will be offered.

   (e) Trouble shooting the academic year teaching program—monitoring registration and modifying the teaching schedule in response to emerging contingencies.

   (f) Drawing up the annual peer teaching observation assignments.

6. Mathematics Department Standing Committees.

   The Math department has the following standing committees: Executive, Graduate, Undergraduate, Curriculum, Elections, and First-Year Math Steering. The following sections outline specific details regarding the leadership, composition, and charges of departmental standing committees.

   Standing Committees:

   (a) Elections Committee.

      i. The Elections Committee will conduct elections to the Executive and Elections Committees during the first two weeks of May of each year. Other elections (e.g. membership of the Graduate Committee) are administered by the Elections Committee as needed.

      ii. Membership: The Elections Committee consists of three faculty members elected by the faculty. Members serve one-year terms.

   (b) Executive Committee

      i. The Executive Committee oversees any searches for tenure-track faculty and advises the chair on a variety of topics including personnel matters.

      ii. Membership: Four tenured members of the faculty are elected by the faculty and serve one-year terms. Members may serve at most two consecutive terms, but the total number of nonconsecutive terms is unlimited. The department chair is a voting member of the Executive Committee and serves as its chair.

   (c) The Graduate Committee.

      i. The Graduate Committee oversees the graduate program including the graduate curriculum (subject to the approval of the Curriculum Committee), recruitment of graduate students, graduate admissions, selection of teaching assistants, and the graduate qualifying exam.

ii. Membership
   A. The Graduate Committee consists of five faculty members including the Graduate Committee chair.
   B. Non-chair members are elected to three-year terms, which are not repeatable without at least a one year gap.
   C. The Graduate Committee Chair position is a four-year position, repeatable up to twice without a gap. The Graduate Committee Chair is appointed by the department chair.

iii. On most issues before the Graduate Committee, only members of the graduate committee will vote. See the Graduate Committee's Operating Procedures document for further details.

(d) Curriculum Committee

i. The Curriculum Committee oversees the curriculum within the department. In addition to general oversight, duties include acceptance or rejection of new course proposals, revision of existing courses, selection of course materials, and curriculum development. The Curriculum Committee works with the Graduate Committee on matters pertaining to the graduate curriculum.

ii. Membership:
   A. Any Mathematics Department member may serve on the curriculum committee at any time. The chair of the department will be a voting member of the curriculum committee.
   B. The curriculum committee chair is appointed by the department chair.

iii. Voting: All faculty will be informed of the agenda of the curriculum committee, including items likely to be voted upon. The agenda will be presented to the department at least a week before the meeting. Voting will be generally be restricted to members present at the meeting. On some matters, this committee may vote to extend voting privileges to the entire department (including those not present).

(e) Undergraduate Committee.

i. The Undergraduate Committee oversees senior and honors projects, the Comprehensive Exam (offered twice annually), and undergraduate scholarships and awards. The committee also assists the Math Center director in the Math Fellow selection process and advises, supports, and coordinates with the Undergraduate Engagement Coordinator.

ii. Membership:
   A. The Undergraduate Committee consists of six members (not including the Committee Chair). These six consist of three standing members (department chair, math center director, and the undergraduate engagement coordinator) and three elected tenured or tenure-track faculty members.
   B. Term-length for the elected members is two academic years (starting in summer), and renewable for one more year. A gap of at least one year is required before the member is eligible for another term.
   C. The Undergraduate Committee Chair is appointed by the chair of the department.

iii. Meetings of the Undergraduate Committee are open to all faculty members; any faculty members attending meetings can vote on issues discussed unless decided otherwise by the Undergraduate Committee.

(f) First-Year Math Steering Committee (FYMSC)

i. The FYMSC will discuss research-based recommendations regarding curriculum, assessment, and instruction for first-year mathematics (FYM). The FYMSC will recommend curriculum and assessment changes to the Mathematics Department Curriculum Committee, inform the Curriculum and Executive Committees of FYMSC activities, determine necessary FYM working groups and relevant professional development for FYM faculty.

ii. Membership: The FYMSC will be chaired by the Director of First-Year Math Instruction (DFYMI), who will be a voting member of the committee. There will be four other voting members of the committee. Three of the voting members will be elected by the department: two of these will be NTT faculty in the department and the third will be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member. An additional voting member will be a member of the department's Executive Committee and will be appointed to the FYMSC by the department chair. Tenured or tenure-track faculty who serve on this committee will be strongly encouraged to teach a first-year math course during their year of service or an adjacent year. In addition, there will be three non-voting committee members: a) the Tutoring Center Director, b) an Academic Advising liaison to the Math Department, and c) a Student Senate representative. The Student Senate representative will be invited to attend meetings as needed and when appropriate.

7. Other Policies.

(a) Detailed policy documents for the Graduate, Curriculum, and Undergraduate committees can be obtained from the chairs of those committees.

(b) Summer Teaching Priority Establishment.

The following policies go into effect when there are more faculty requests to teach summer courses than there are courses available. The goal is to establish the priority order in which faculty are deemed eligible to be assigned such courses.

The assignment of courses in accordance with these policies shall be the responsibility of the department chair. Disputes regarding the application of these policies shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee, whose recommendation is forwarded to the chair of the department.

The department chair shall provide in Fall a list of courses the department plans to offer in the next summer. Faculty shall be asked to specify which eight of these courses they most wish to teach. Course assignments shall be based on these requests as follows.

i. General.

A. The over-riding priority is to meet the instructional needs of the summer program as a whole, using well-qualified faculty for each course. In this context, the Chair has the authority to assign particular courses to particular individuals, taking into account the preferences expressed by individual faculty and the instructional needs of the summer program as a whole. In particular, the individual with the highest priority does not necessarily get first pick of which courses to teach.

B. Courses shall only be assigned to faculty properly qualified to teach them. For example, only math education faculty shall be eligible to teach math education courses.

C. Any class that is requested by only one appropriately qualified faculty member shall be assigned to that individual without regard to the priorities established below.

D. At the discretion of the Executive Committee, courses may be assigned to visitors or other individuals in special circumstances without regard to the priorities established below.

ii. Overall Priority.

A. In the absence of other considerations, faculty with a higher priority have the opportunity to be assigned up to two courses before any faculty with a lower priority are assigned any courses.

B. Tenured and tenure-track faculty have higher priority than any other faculty or instructors.

C. The department chair has the highest priority amongst tenured and tenure-track faculty.

D. The math center director has the highest priority amongst instructors and senior instructors for one class; the assignment of a second class shall be dependent on the usual priority calculation.

E. Except in very unusual circumstances, no faculty shall be assigned more than two summer courses unless all appropriately qualified faculty (including instructors) requesting summer teaching have been assigned the number of requested courses up to a maximum of two courses.

F. Math 107, 112, 114, 115, 156 and 157 shall only be taught by NTT instructors or senior instructors in summer, unless there are insufficient requests for summer teaching from such instructors.

iii. Priority Calculation for Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty
Priority is determined by the eligibility score E: the lower the score E, the higher the priority.
We use a weighted sum of the number of credits taught over the past five summers, with the more recent summers counting more heavily. We also introduce a factor S which gives higher priority to faculty with lower salaries by penalizing faculty with higher salaries.
Let c_i be the number of credits taught i summers ago, with the most recent summer corresponding to $i = 0$. Then

$$E = \sum_{i=0}^{4} c_i(1 - 0.2i) + S,$$

where $S = 5((Y/50000) - 1)$ and Y is the academic year salary at the start of Fall of the current academic year.
Ties are broken by higher priority going to faculty with lower salary Y. If that does not break the tie then higher priority goes to faculty with fewer years of service at Western, failing which a coin toss shall settle the matter.

iv. Priority Calculation for Instructors and Senior Instructors
For the purposes of determining priority and assigning classes, no distinction is made between instructors and senior instructors. Priority across these two categories is determined by the eligibility score E: the lower the score E, the higher the priority.
We use a weighted sum of the number of sections taught over the past five summers, with more recent summers counting more heavily. We also introduce a penalty factor P which gives higher priority to faculty with more seniority and higher level of appointments by penalizing faculty with lower level appointments and less experience.
Let s_i be the number of sections taught i summers ago, with the most recent summer corresponding to $i = 0$. Then

$$E = \sum_{i=0}^{4} s_i(1 - 0.2i) + P,$$

where $P = max\{0, (8 - F - \frac{Q}{3})\}$, F is the total number of FTE taught in the standard academic years since first appointment including those scheduled for the year in which the current application for summer teaching occurs, and Q is the total number of quarters since first appointment during which at least one class has been taught including those scheduled to be taught during the present academic year.
Ties are broken by higher priority going to faculty with lower salary per course taught in the current academic year, failing which a coin toss shall settle the matter.

(c) Teaching Reduction as Compensation for Student Project Work.

Subject to the dean's approval, a single course release will be provided for every 40 project credits accumulated by a faculty member.

Project credits will be awarded for serving as the faculty instructor of record for undergraduate or graduate student work on projects or independent study for which the student has registered. Project credits may also be awarded for projects for which the student has elected not to receive (or pay for) degree credit; in that case the Undergraduate Committee (or, in the case of a graduate project, the Graduate Committee) shall determine, in consultation with the

faculty member and in the context of the policy below, the relevant number of project credits to assign.

Project credits will only be awarded once the associated project work has been successfully completed. For graduate student projects, the instructor of record is the faculty member serving as the project advisor, as recorded by the Graduate Committee, and the work is deemed to have been successfully completed once the student has passed the oral exam. In the case of a graduate thesis, the work shall be deemed to have been successfully completed once it has been accepted by the Graduate School. In the case of Honors projects and comparable independent study projects, and Math 490 projects (senior projects), the work shall be deemed to have been successfully completed once the Undergraduate Committee (specifically, the project advisor and two senior project subcommittee members), or, in the case of a graduate project, the Graduate Committee, has formally approved the associated tangible outcome—typically a written report or public presentation.

A maximum of 25 project credits can be accumulated per faculty member per year. Project credits are accumulated over successive years, but a maximum total of 100 project credits can be held per faculty member at any one time. The accumulation is reduced by 40 project credits when a course release is granted, and no more than 80 project credits may be redeemed in any one academic year.

The associated records shall be maintained in the department office. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to ensure that such project credits are recorded and evidenced by the end of the academic quarter following the quarter in which eligibility for those project credits is established. Failure to record project credits within this time period shall result in forfeiture of the right to claim those project credits.

This policy shall come into force for all projects for which students enroll after June 15, 2015.

Project credits will be assigned as follows:

i. One project credit per student credit for a general approved (by the Undergraduate Committee or the Graduate Committee) independent study or guided study, and 2 for an outcome such as public/conference presentation, and 3 for an accepted peer-reviewed journal paper. No more than 3 project credits per student credit can be accumulated per project.

ii. Honors projects other than Math 490, and comparable guided independent study projects that satisfy the criteria below: 2 project credits per student credit.

iii. Math 490 projects: 3 project credits per student credit.

iv. Graduate student project: 6 project credits per student credit.

v. Graduate thesis: 2 project credits per student credit beyond the graduate student project credits.

vi. For CSE-sponsored summer student research project (Jarvis, Elwha, etc.): 4 project credits total.

Criteria for Honors and comparable guided independent study projects:

i. The student and faculty advisor submit a formal proposal to the Undergraduate Committee or the Graduate Committee. The proposal shall be typed, not exceed 2 pages, and include: (1) the names of the student and advisor, (2) the project title, (3) a description of the project, (4) a specific goal and tangible outcomes, and (5) a bibliography with information about how each reference is to be used. Proposals like "read the next chapter of the text for Math 300 and do the associated exercises" are not acceptable.

ii. The Undergraduate Committee or the Graduate Committee may approve a proposal, ask for revisions, or reject a proposal.

iii. At the conclusion of an approved project, the student and faculty advisor submit the associated report or other tangible materials to the Undergraduate Committee, and/or schedule a public presentation. If the Undergraduate Committee (or in the case of Math 490 the senior project subcommittee) deems the quality of the work to be satisfactory, the

relevant project credits shall be awarded to the advisor. If the quality of the work is deemed to be unacceptable, a rationale will be provided and a single opportunity for resubmission within the next 4 weeks shall be provided. If the revised materials are still deemed unacceptable or the deadline is not met, then only 1 project credit per student credit shall be awarded to the advisor.

iv. In the event that the student project is to be done by a graduate student, the Graduate Committee shall fulfill the responsibilities assigned to the Undergraduate Committee in the above criteria.