

# Monitor Faculty Course Loads

## Background

Faculty have many responsibilities in addition to teaching, including advising students, completing administrative tasks, and conducting scholarly activities. While the composition of faculty workload varies greatly depending on the area of study and institution's mission, monitoring course loads as one key way to understand how students are interacting with faculty.

Examining course loads includes understanding not only the number of sections taught, but also the student level and size of the class. Academic leaders should use this information to ensure that expectations are met for how faculty spend time, as well as to ensure that students are exposed to different teaching styles and curriculum.

## Key Metric Definition

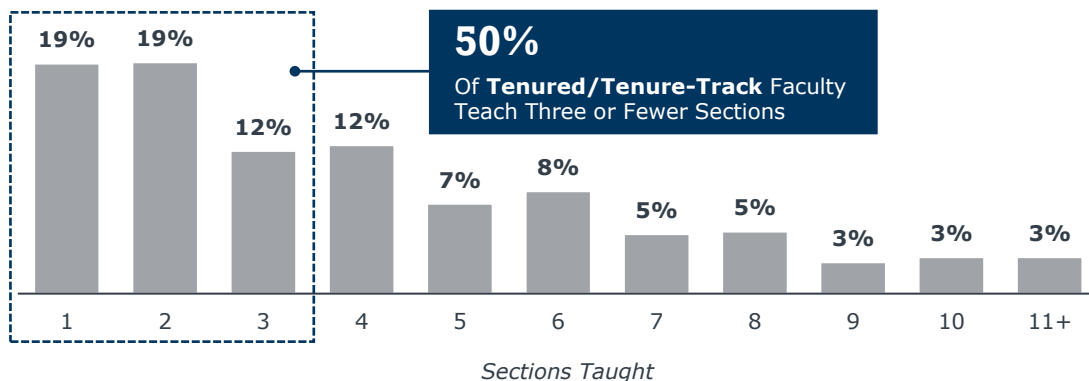
**Course Load:** The number of sections taught by individual faculty member per academic year

## Faculty Course Loads: What's Normal?

APS analysis of faculty course loads revealed that half of tenured and tenure-track faculty teach three or fewer sections per academic year. While faculty have many responsibilities outside of teaching, this strays from typical. Many institutions actually target six to eight courses for full-time faculty.

### Distribution of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty By Sections Taught<sup>2</sup>

n=41 institutions



Monitoring faculty course loads allows academic leaders to identify opportunities to reduce or add sections, as necessary. Academic leaders should also consider the other components of faculty workload, such as institutional mission and student demand, when determining the ideal course load.



### Inside this Resource

Learn how APS supports your goals to maximize faculty resources

- Page 2-4: How to: View and Analyze Faculty Course Loads
- Page 5: Best Practice Resources

1) Includes data from the 2015 academic year.

2) Includes data from Fall 2014 and Spring 2015; Individual Instruction course types were excluded.

# How to: Monitor Faculty Course Loads

Use the steps below to monitor faculty course loads in your department and find potential opportunities in the APS Platform.

## 1 Getting Started: Set Your Filters

In the **Department & College Analytics dashboard**, click on the **Instructional Staff tab** and use the filters at the top of the page to refine your analysis.

Time Period	Organizational Units	Course Attributes	Section Attributes	Staff Attributes
ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-19	CAMPUS NAME All	COURSE DIVISION All	INSTRUCTIONAL MODE All	INSTRUCTOR TYPE All
TERM All	ASSIGNED COLLEGE NAME* All	COURSE PREFIX All	COURSE TYPE All	INSTRUCTOR RANK All
	ASSIGNED DEPT. NAME* All	COURSE CODE All		
Apply				

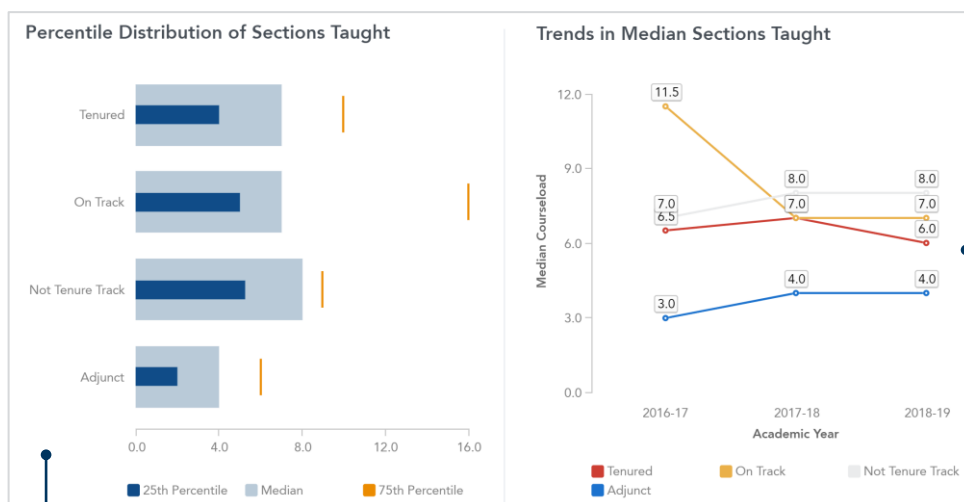
*Recommended filters: Assigned College Name, Assigned Department Name, Course Type, Instructor Rank.*

## Helpful Hints

- If you're a Dean, use the **Assigned College Name** filter to view departments and courses in your purview.
- If you're a Department Chair, use the **Assigned Department Name** filter to view courses in your purview.
- Remove course types that might skew course loads, such as *Independent Study*.
- Use the **Instructor Rank** filter to prioritize monitoring full-time faculty.

## 2 View the Percentile Distribution of Sections Taught and Trends in Median Sections Taught Charts

Scroll to the Instructional Workload by Instructor Type section of the page. Use the chart on the left to identify the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, median, and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile courseload of faculty by type. Use the chart to the right to see median faculty course loads over the past three years by instructor type.

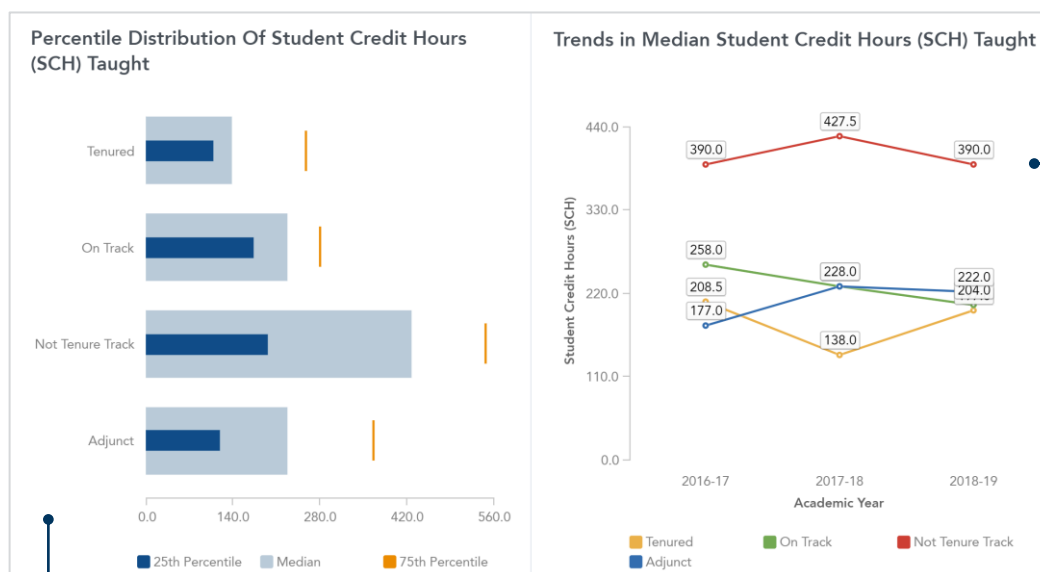


Many reports on the **Instructional Staff tab** are organized by instructor type. These labels are based on your institution's configurations and may differ from the example shown.

Look for changes over time, such as a reduction in overall course load, or a shift to greater reliance on part-time instructors.

### 3 View the *Percentile Distribution of Student Credit Hours Taught (SCH) and Trends in Median SCH Taught Charts*

After viewing the changes in course load, scroll down to the SCH Taught reports. Use the chart on the left to view the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, median, and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile SCH taught by instructor type. Use the chart on the right side to see median SCH taught over the past three years by instructor type.

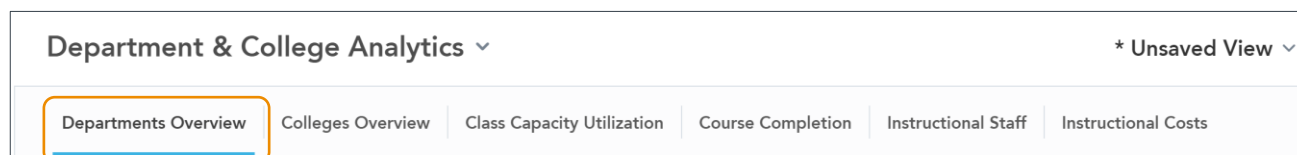


Use the chart to understand which instructor types have the most contact with students. Remember to update your filters if you are interested in focusing on a specific student level, such as undergraduate, or course type, such as lecture.

Use the analysis of change in median SCH taught over time in conjunction with the analysis of course load over time to fully understand how loads are changing. Instructors may be teaching fewer courses but reaching more students through larger classes.

### 4 Click on the **Departments Overview Tab**

Scroll to the top of the page to select the **Departments Overview tab**. Use analyses on this page to view trends in student demand for courses. Your filters will not be carried over from the Instructional Staff tab, so be sure to set your department or college name again.

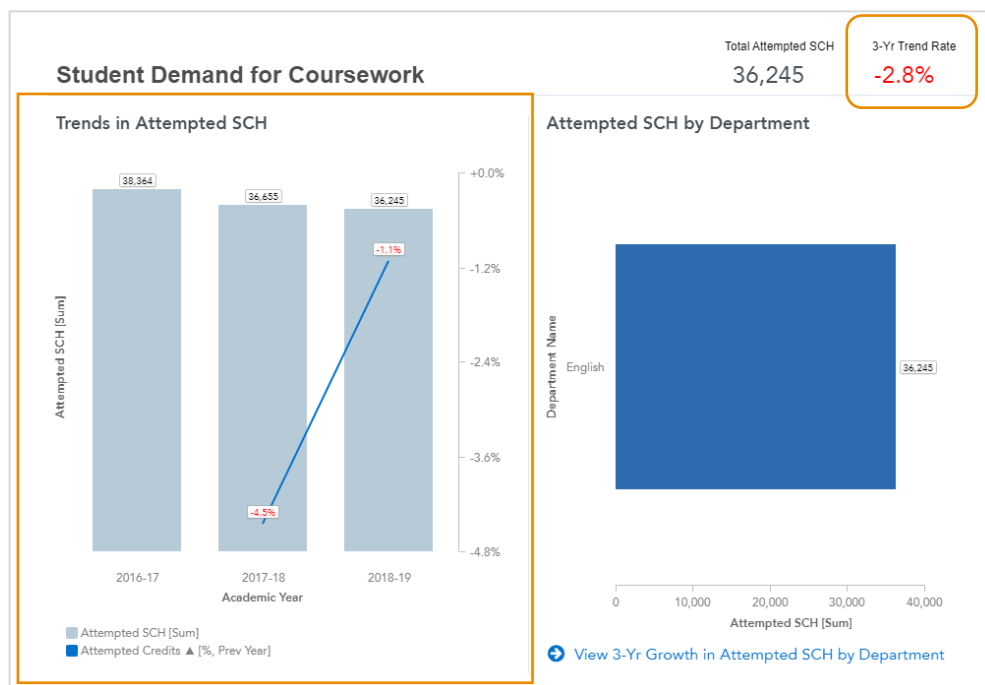


#### Helpful Hints

- Filters on Departments Overview tab differ from the Instructional Staff tab due to the underlying data sources.
- On the Instructional Staff tab, the Assigned College Name and Assigned Department Name filters correspond to the college and department where the instructor taught the largest share of sections.
- On the Departments Overview tab, the College Name and Department Name filters correspond to where a student took a course.

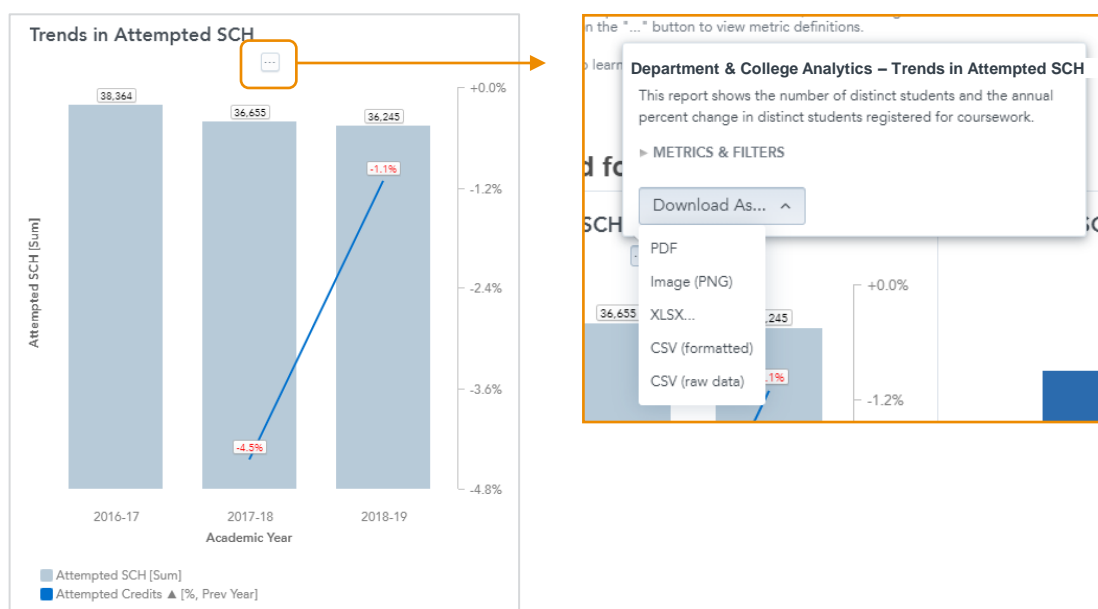
## 5 View Trends in Attempted Credit Hours

Scroll to the Student Demand for Coursework section of the page to view the growth rate of attempted credit hours over the past few academic years. Use the **3-Yr Trend Rate Key Performance Indicator (KPI)** and **Trends in Attempted Student Credit Hours report** to understand how student demand has changed over time and provide context for the previous instructional staff analyses.



## 6 Optional: Download and Share the Data

Hover over the center of the report until an ellipsis "..." appears. Click the "..." to open a drop-down menu to download and save the data in PDF, Excel, or CSV format.

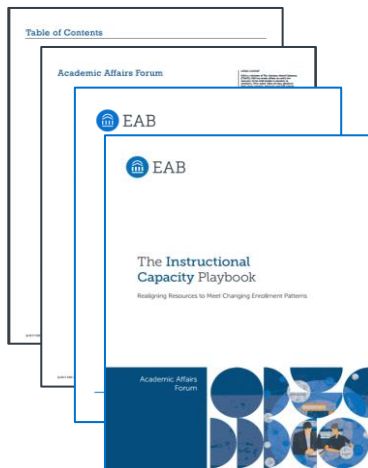


Source: Academic Performance Solutions.

# Best Practice Resources

## Resource Available on EAB.com

### The Instructional Capacity Playbook



As academic leaders work towards optimal resource allocation, balancing faculty workloads with student demand is a critical step. Research from the Academic Affairs Forum identifies two promising practices to support developing better balanced faculty workloads, which include:

- *Faculty Activity Dashboard*: Tracking all faculty activity within a dashboard to allow for comparisons and to reveal disparities in workload.
- *Differentiated Instructional Roles*: Creating new instructional roles dedicated to specific tasks within a department.

In addition to these two practices, *The Instructional Capacity Playbook* details other best practice strategies for efficiently using faculty and other instructional resources to meet changing enrollment patterns across colleges and universities.

Download [here](#).

### Case in Brief: Faculty Activity Dashboard at Binghamton University

From *The Instructional Capacity Playbook*

Binghamton University created a dashboard to provide comprehensive view of faculty activity. The dashboard includes several key indicators for teaching, scholarship, and services. Metrics include course load, count of journal articles and conference/poster presentations, release time (in \$), and independent lectures.

#### Defining Key Indicators...



Teaching



Scholarship



Service

#### ...For Holistic Assessment



#### Annual Review of Total Productivity

Dashboard serves as single form of truth for departmental "contribution to mission" meetings



#### Avoids Measuring "Hours" or "% Time"

Dashboard focuses conversation on value-driven factors, such as output and input, instead of irrelevant factors, such as time inputs, when assessing productivity



#### Department-Driven

Dashboard informs departmental decisions on appropriate workload adjustments

Source: EAB research and analysis.