

Elements of assigned work.

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES

January 7, 2013

1. Framework.

There are three basic areas of assigned work that cover almost all employees at OSU, faculty as well as classified staff. They relate directly to the fact that OSU is a land grant university. Not all employees are assigned tasks in all areas. Specific job classifications exist and position descriptions are used to define the job categories in more detail.

The general categories are given here. They are organized by the main role of interaction with others. After that there will be examples of assignments in these categories. That list is not intended to limit the job categories, and examples can be added at all times.

Instruction and advising. Employees interact with learners to help them gain knowledge or acquire skills. The learners can be traditional students in a classroom, students taking courses that are delivered electronically, private sector business people located anywhere across the state or around the world, children participating in 4H programs, adults in Master Gardener or other adult learner/volunteer programs, or anybody who wants to learn something by interacting with an OSU employee. Instruction can be paid for directly through tuition or indirectly via extension support. It can be free as part of outreach. Employees may directly advise students as part of their assigned duties and often are mentors for undergraduates, graduate students, or adult learners.

Scholarship and creative activities. Employees interact with people in their field of expertise with the goal of creating new knowledge or developing new skills. This job category includes traditional research in which peer reviewed dissemination is essential; however, the review can take different forms depending on the nature of the assignment. Scholarship incorporates this extended perspective on review, but for the purposes of this document in all cases some form of feedback from peers is required in this category. Results should also be presented in professional meetings, symposia, and conferences or equivalent venues, and in venues appropriate for other audiences/clientele.

Service and leadership. Employees keep OSU, their professional societies and in some cases their communities running. This category includes service both to OSU and to the field of expertise. Leadership is a form of service in which individuals have a higher level of decision power. In basic service roles employees perform assigned tasks, possibly with the freedom of choosing the methods to use in execution of the work. In leadership the individual creates tasks, often to be performed by others.

2. Activities that cross boundaries.

In most cases, the category of an assigned duty in the position description is clear. In some cases, one can argue for two categories, but in a position description one has to make a choice, in order to avoid “conflicts of interest.” The need for making this choice is a consequence of the fact that for personnel decisions, the position description is used as a basis for judgment. For example, one might pioneer new methods of managing people. This can be part of a leadership assignment, in which case a person is judged by how well the new methods are implemented and working. It can also be part of scholarship, in which case a critical analysis of the new methods is required. If the activity would count as both leadership and scholarship, the scholarship part could be compromised, because the leadership part requires a positive outcome. It is difficult to be a critical scholar if one’s livelihood is involved. The same is true for mixing teaching and scholarship. Even though topics for scholarship can be found in instruction or service, one should never be the subject of one’s own research unless strict third-party review mechanisms are in place.

There is also a question for activities that could be either instruction or service. One possible suggestion to differentiate in this case is by considering the motivation of the learners. If attending an activity in which learning can take place is part of a program for which the learner has volunteered, it could be called instruction. If the learners are required to participate in a program and the activity is part of that program, it could be called service. For example, teaching a required mathematics class is instruction, because students chose the program of their major. Participating in a Discovery Day activity is service, because the school children attending the activity have no choice but to go. The potential conflict of interest is much smaller in this case. There is possibly a difference in objectives. In instruction one wants to ensure that students learn maximally, in service one wants to ensure that students appreciate the material maximally. But these two aspects are strongly related, so a distinction is not clear.

3. Examples.

Instruction and advising.

- Lecture presentations to traditional students and other learner audiences
- TA and volunteer leader supervision and mentoring
- Timely grading of assignments
- Timely grading of exams
- Making class and/or other learning information available through the web
- Holding regular office hours
- Directing undergraduate and graduate research and theses
- Service on master and doctoral committees
- Mentoring of undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral associates
- Curricular development (course or youth/adult learning module improvement or creation)
- General advising of students
- Creating effective learning venues for non-campus based youth and adult learners
- Mentoring of youth and adult learners

Scholarship and creative activities.

- Research leading towards the increase of knowledge in the field of expertise
- Research leading towards the improvement of teaching techniques and methodologies, and towards curriculum reform
- Research leading towards the improvement of service work and leadership techniques
- Synthesis of existing information into formats useful to peers or clientele groups
- Obtain grant and contract funding in order to support a research program
- Effective management of research personnel and resources
- Publication of refereed papers
- Publication of non-refereed papers as appropriate
- Web publications
- Publication of books and book chapters
- Other forms of research communication as appropriate (newsletters, radio shows, TV shows, participation in juried or non-juried art or literature presentations, etc.)
- Patent and plant patent awards
- Inventions
- Licensing of products

Service and leadership.

- Service on departmental, college and university committees
- Service on professional association/society committees
- Holding offices in professional organizations
- Participation on research, Extension or instructional professional advisory or review panels
- Serve as editor for professional publications
- Review manuscripts for journals or other publications
- Organization of conferences
- Chairing conference sessions
- Serving as a technical advisor for city, county, state, regional or federal government organizations and agencies and non-profits
- As time allows, serve in other community service roles

Unresolved Issues.

- Where do REU, IGERTS fall – instruction, scholarship or service – may vary based on specific grant – will vary
- Student club advising – instruction or service – will vary as in some classes actual workshops or informal classes are held as part of the activity – could be both with a listings specific to what is done
- The business side of research – is this included under scholarship, as now shown, or a separate category – all other scholarship types are an output of some type including successful fund raising. These business activities are unique. Some faculty can be successful scholars but miserable managers