

# Staffing Criteria for Professional BUFA Positions at Brandon University

## PREAMBLE

The University is limited – not only by budget constraints – in its ability to respond to staffing needs. In making difficult decisions, which have historically included not being able to meet all requests, the University must compare requests from Departments whose needs, priorities, pedagogies, and measures of success and efficiency are often highly different. A primary consideration in developing these criteria is the importance of creating reasonable and equitable working conditions for BUFA Professional Members. The overall aim of this document is to contribute to real transparency in the Provost’s decision-making with regards to all BUFA staffing requests in the professional ranks.

With current and anticipated funding and enrolment patterns and projections (including flat or declining Provincial Grants, shifts in government approaches to funding, regional demographic trends, and enrolment patterns), the University is not expecting to be able to grow the BUFA ranks during the life of the current collective agreement, beyond the two positions agreed to in the current CA. Gain of positions in other areas will, therefore, most often be through a reallocation of positions that become available through attrition (retirement, relocation, etc.). These decisions, following the criteria articulated in this document, will respect requirements contained in the Collective Agreement (e.g., the ‘three-person Department rule’) as well as the University’s determination to put those positions where they can do the greatest good for students and other stakeholders, and in furtherance of the mission of the University.

What all of this means, in a time of fiscal restraint and negligible growth in tuition revenues, is that many worthy requests for additional professional positions will go unfilled. With this information in mind, and prior to exerting significant effort and energy in developing staffing requests, it is recommended that Departments first look to: ways in which current departmental work can be modified to realize acceptable efficiencies; ways in which their Department’s situation compares to that of other units across campus; and critically evaluate how an additional professional position would sustainably improve the experiences of students and faculty.

## PROFESSIONAL STAFFING CRITERIA

All eight of the following criteria are to apply in all annual staffing planning decisions. All criteria are to be weighted equally.

- A. Departmental requests for additional positions must include documentation demonstrating Departmental efforts to deliver academically or professionally sound programs in an efficient manner
- B. EDID considerations
- C. Proportion of professional workload staffed by Contract Academic Staff (CAS)
- D. Program integrity and student/stakeholder experience
- E. Balance of professional workload within a Department
- F. Direction from institutional Strategic Plan and Academic Plan, as well as any of the following which are relevant: Research Plan, Cyclical Program Reviews, and/or Faculty/Unit/Department strategic plans

- G. Disciplinary responsiveness, collaborations, and renewal and/or disciplinary trends in demand for student/stakeholder programming
- H. Fulsome participation in Departmental work and collegial governance

## APPENDIX

### A. Demonstration of Department efforts to deliver academically and/or professionally sound programs in an efficient manner

As part of its request, does the Department demonstrate:

- That effective ways to optimize workload assignments while enhancing program outcomes and/or quality of the student experience have been sought and/or achieved prior to this request?
- That the unit is working with an up-to-date conception of disciplinary best-practices as outlined in program reviews, literature or trends, and as they can practically be applied at Brandon University?
- That there is no academically or professionally feasible way to sustain or enhance student/stakeholder support other than by adding staff to the Department?
- That the addition of a Member or Members would in fact improve student/stakeholder experience, success, and/or access, or provide Members with a more equitable workload (shown by workload assignments of current Members over the past five years and a sample position description to illustrate how existing load(s) would be redistributed to improve student/stakeholder experience, success, and/or access to services)?

### B. EDID Considerations

Article 15 of the Collective Agreement requires that Faculties/Units establish reasonable goals for hiring Members from the five designated groups, in order to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Faculty/Unit; each Faculty/Unit is responsible for setting its own criteria for establishing EDID goals, and for preparing a plan for achieving its EDID employment goals. Every five years, each Faculty/Unit must assess its progress in achieving those goals, “and review and revise its plan/goals in consideration of evolving demographics with respect to the criteria used to establish the goals.”

In making staffing requests, Departments shall address specifically how those requests reflect/address the plan/goals developed by the Faculty/Unit/Department. Likewise, Departments shall address their readiness to welcome Members from the five designated groups, particularly the percentage of current Faculty/Unit/Department Members who have completed the equity training jointly developed by the Employer and BUFA.

### C. Proportion of professional workload staffed by contract academic staff or temporary arrangements

Both Parties acknowledge that prior to the 2023-2027 CA, there has not been a mechanism for professional Members’ roles to be fulfilled by CAS. This has sometimes resulted in irregular arrangements within Faculties/Units and/or Departments. There will be a learning curve with the implementation of provisions for CAS to be hired as temporary professional Members for selected roles or time periods.

Both Parties acknowledge that there are major substantive advantages to having professional workload performed by regular full- and part-time Members, though there is always room for CAS participation in most

programs for a variety of good reasons. Likewise, in professional areas, coverage of workload in peak-demand times may be supplied by job-sharing arrangements with related Departments. This criterion refers to the proportion of professional workload within a Department that is delivered by someone other than the regular Members of the Department (e.g., CAS, secondments). With the exception of administrative or leave replacements, term appointments and CAS contracts should not normally exceed a reasonable portion of the overall workload of a Department. Since many professional positions in Faculties/Units and Departments work closely with members of other bargaining units, concerns of scope creep must be kept front of mind and may be addressed under this criterion when making staffing requests, as may situations where the proper functioning of the Department relies upon continuing professional Members regularly taking on overload work.

#### D. Program integrity and student/stakeholder experience

All Faculties/Units and Departments have unique needs for staff as a result of their unique disciplines and professions, and these needs may differ even across otherwise similar Faculties/Units and Departments. The Members of each Faculty/Unit/Department are best placed to advise on the parameters of their own requirements given the context of delivery at Brandon University; at the same time, Departments are encouraged to make arguments based on national disciplinary norms in cognate institutions. The integrity of any Faculty/Unit/Department can be threatened by inadequate staffing, and can be enhanced by optimal staffing. This includes considerations of student/stakeholder engagement, success, and access broadly conceived, but also applies to the diversity and range of offerings or services required to satisfy student/stakeholder needs and interests. Assessment of student/stakeholder needs should include data to support the need for the program or service offered or being considered, when such data is available. Are our students/stakeholders missing out on options we cannot now provide, or being driven away by programming/service that does not meet their needs? Is potential growth being hampered by a lack of faculty? Are there minimum staffing requirements as per an accreditation body? These considerations are relevant to staff planning. In any case, the requirements of accreditation bodies shall take precedence over the rankings produced by these staffing criteria.

#### E. Balance of professional workload within a Department

Member responsibilities, as defined in their job descriptions, may include teaching, professional duties, research, and/or service, though the proportions vary with the kind of appointment. Members may seek to balance these commitments in proportions that differ from others, and the option to seek certain types of amended teaching or research appointments exists to facilitate this. Both de facto and aspirational commitments to workload distribution may factor into staffing decisions. Inadequate staffing levels can compel Members to sacrifice one or more areas of their professional workload to meet demand in other areas. Where this is currently happening, equity requires a reconsideration of the workload balance.

Many factors may impact professional growth within a Faculty/Unit or Department:

- Ability to conduct collaborative work in the Department or across Departments.
- Number of new early-career professional Members in Department receiving reduced workload.
- Access to technical support within the Department (e.g., Instructional Associate).
- History of research support in the Department. Those who do research are able to do so (i.e., fair and equitable workload).

#### F. Direction from institutional Strategic Plan and Academic Plan, and any of the following which are relevant: Research Plan, Cyclical Program Reviews, and/or Faculty/Unit/Department Strategic Plans

BU's Strategic Plan and the other plans named above collectively identify high-priority areas for further development, and/or low-priority areas to be reduced or phased out. Staffing is a key means by which the University can shift its strategic direction. Since staffing decisions can have very long-term consequences, these initiatives should come out of carefully considered strategic planning exercises involving the whole Brandon University community, as is the case with the Academic Plan, or discrete units, such as Faculty/Unit or Department strategic plans. Survey data collected from recognized and reliable sources, as well as data provided by BU's Institutional Data and Analysis Office, may be included under this criterion.

#### G. Disciplinary responsiveness, collaborations, renewal, and/or demonstrable trends in demand for student/stakeholder programming

New trends emerge in post-secondary education, but Faculties/Units/Departments and their programming do not always respond in a timely way. Technology, the structure of disciplines, cultural innovations, evolving understandings of best practices, and world events can all impact programming and the ways professionals deliver it. Professional Members are responsible for anticipating the ways in which their programming can be adjusted and made new to help the program to thrive. Of course, not all environmental changes are helpful and some can be detrimental; Departments and Faculties/Units therefore also need inventiveness to counteract or compensate for negative changes. Faculties/Units/Departments that are responsive and reflect current best practices are more attractive to, and can better serve, their students/stakeholders.

In particular, has the Department considered how a new hire might contribute to the collaborative planning, delivery, and success of professional service needs beyond their own unit? For instance, an additional full-time professional position in one Department might allow another Department to add technical expertise otherwise lacking, to secure the cycling of required or important programming, or to enter into joint programming with peer or partner institutions. Is there a demonstrable upward trend in demand, or demonstrable lack in current capacity to address current levels of demand, from students/stakeholders?

Such considerations could benefit Faculty/Units/Departments in a variety of ways, including the following:

- Enhanced content delivery that improves student/stakeholder experience;
- Greater flexibility and choice for students/stakeholders, leading to improved outcomes such as higher retention and quicker graduation rates, and greater faculty and staff engagement;
- A wider range of new students/stakeholders engaging with BU in the pursuit of previously unavailable opportunities;
- Workloads more aligned with research interests;
- Access to technical expertise that addresses current and future student/stakeholder needs.

#### H. Fulsome Participation in Departmental Work and Collegial Governance

The Collective Agreement, in Article 12, lays out the responsibilities of Members in undertaking their work including, among others, the responsibility: to act ethically and honestly; to “undertake work related to all aspects of their workload”; to “maintain scholarly and/or professional competence in their discipline”; to participate in the governance of the University through active participation in Department meetings and Faculty Councils”; and to “actively participate in the required equity, diversity, and inclusion training mandated by this Collective Agreement.”

Fulfilling these responsibilities ensures that work across Faculties/Units/Departments can be shared in an equitable way among all Members of those Faculties/Units/Departments. If someone does not participate in the mandated EDID training, for example, they are unable to undertake certain service responsibilities, which may then fall disproportionately on other Members of the Faculty/Units/Department. In addressing staffing needs, the Department must consider and address the fulsome participation of its Members as a whole in the work of the University. Can the perceived need be filled by better overall participation by all of its Members, or does the need exist despite such fulsome participation?

*(March 11, 2025)*