Policy: Academic Workload Models – Mandatory Requirements

Effective from: 1 August 2017

It is recognized that workload models need to vary from school to school, as the way the disciplines operate can vary for quite legitimate reasons. There are, nevertheless, three principles that need to be embedded in every workload model. These are:

1. Transparency
2. Recognition of leadership and administrative service
3. Equity

The text that follows below explains what we mean by each of these. Schools are welcome to develop or maintain more detailed workload models and processes (indeed, we advise you to do this) that are consistent with these non-negotiable principles.

1. Transparency
As a minimum there must be:

- Clarity of time commitment to teaching, administration, impact/engagement and research. Members of staff should be clearly informed of how their normal working hours are broken down, on average, between these four areas of contribution (bearing in mind not all roles involve all of these elements). In some cases, schools may choose to specify teaching and administration commitments in detail, on the basis that the remaining time is expected to be applied to impact/engagement and/or research (in line with individuals’ targets and development discussions). For consistency, the school must use the same approach to calculation for all academic staff.

- Clarity about how teaching hours are calculated. The school must be clear about how the hours that each individual works to fulfil their teaching contribution are calculated. Where possible, this should reflect the scale of preparation and assessment work as well as in-class contact hours.

- Clarity about how adjustments to elements of workload are made. The school must be clear about how enhanced activity in one area — say, a key leadership role such as Director of Teaching — either fulfils all or part of the expectations in that area, or requires that an offset against other expectations is also applied.

- Clarity about how research funding affects workload. The school must be clear about how research funding for investigators’ salaries is used to adjust workload.

- Clarity about how workload assignments are allocated. The process of allocation should be clear in terms of who makes the decisions and the basis on which they are made. There should be an opportunity to discuss this process, at a staff council meeting, when changes are developed.

2. Recognition of leadership and administrative service
Schools must make specific allowance for certain leadership / administrative service roles. The allowance may be that certain roles are a partial or complete fulfilment of an individual’s service obligations, or in the case of larger roles some offset against teaching or research commitments would also be allowed. Schools should develop their own table of roles and the appropriate offsets (since these depend to some extent on the scale and scope of the school), which may cover more than the minimum requirements detailed here. Nevertheless, all schools must make a formal allowance for these roles (or those of similar responsibility but different title) where they exist:
- Head of School
- Deputy Head of School
- Head of Department (where relevant)
- Director of Teaching
- Director of Research
- Director of Impact (where relevant)
- Director of Postgraduate Research
- Director of Postgraduate Taught Programmes (where relevant)
- Director or Officer for Equality and Diversity / Athena SWAN convenor
- Programme Director (where relevant, for significant programmes)

For the avoidance of doubt, schools may make adjustments for other roles in addition to this list, and some schools may choose to operate sharing arrangements for some larger leadership roles. Heads of School are encouraged to discuss and develop their approaches with the other Heads of School and/or to seek guidance from the Master where this would be helpful.

3. Equity

It is essential that workload allocations are fair as well as transparent, and with that in mind the school’s workload model must:

- Have common baseline expectations. All staff in the same grade and career path must have the same baseline expectation in relation to how their workload is constructed, before any appropriate adjustments are made (for example, in relation to administrative roles).
- Indicate that academic grades have different expectations in relation to level, not volume, of contribution in all areas. Promotion should therefore not imply that particular strands of the academic role become more or less important. Instead, promoted staff are expected to contribute at a higher level of impact/influence.
- Allow for individual circumstances and flexibility, in a way that is fair for all staff. Workload should be managed within a team framework and with a collaborative mindset to support the different recognized needs of staff, being mindful of HR policy and guidance.
- Be discussed with the Master, to ensure comparability with other schools within the faculty.

Professor Garry Taylor

Master of the United College