

## UCU workload advice

Document created in 2019 and amended in 2020. **This version applies to 2021-22**

Please send to [ucu@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@uclan.ac.uk) any comments or queries about this advice and any requests for support.

### Key advice

- UCU and management have jointly produced a *Workload Model Expectations* document. You should read this document carefully. This is available from <https://uclan.web.ucu.org.uk/files/2020/05/WLM-Expectations-agreed-UCU.docx>.
- The workload plan should match workload actuality, and neither should exceed 1581 hours (for 1.0 FTE).
- Workload must be agreed with you at appraisal. Do not agree your workload if you do not think it is fair and appropriate. If you can't agree it, contact UCU for support.
- You and your line manager share responsibility for making sure your workload is not excessive and conforms to the university's principles.
- Read the sections of this UCU Workload Advice document that are relevant to you.
- UCU recommend that you take responsibility for compiling your own draft workload plan, listing all the tasks you undertake and the hours you think should be allocated to each. This can be used in creating the workload plan agreed with your line manager through appraisal.

Further advice in this document:

- **Developments since 2018**
- **Ongoing negotiations (2019–2020)**
- **Appraisal and workload planning**
- **Progression between grades**
- **Teaching hours**
- **Marking and Preparation**
- **Research and scholarly activity**
- **Duties that involve travel away from the normal place of work**
- **List of common duties and estimated time allocation norms**

### Developments since 2018

- UCU and Management are working together towards having just two, agreed, workload documents: one a document setting out enduring principles, and the other an annually updated document giving guidance on practicalities of implementation. We don't yet have these two documents, but hope they might be ready for 2020.
- There are NO official school or faculty workload documents. Current university workload documents are the following.
  - A new ***Workload Model Expectations* document**, which articulates a set of principles agreed by UCLan Management and UCU to guide academic staff through the process and our shared understanding. **The line manager should ensure that as part of the appraisal and workload management process, both appraiser and appraisee should consult this document.** The document contains just what it had been possible to agree by May 2018, and should be revised and augmented next year. **UCU strongly support the use of this document in planning workload.**

- The *Academic Workload Considerations* document. Although UCU never agreed this as a document, UCU did agree the first two sections of it; and the document has this year been updated to note that the third section has not been agreed with UCU. **UCU support the use of the first two sections of this document in planning workload.** Remember that its final section is to be understood not as a list of binding tariffs but rather as a set of suggestions to be used only if helpful.
- The *Academic Workload Model* document. This need not be consulted: it was never agreed with UCU (though UCU were consulted on it); it is superseded by the other documents and will eventually be replaced by a version agreed with UCU.

### **Ongoing negotiations (2019–2020)**

In the ongoing negotiations in the coming academic year, UCU are seeking to:

- (i) Agree, develop, organize a programme that
  - a. comes up with realistic and representative measures of the time common tasks normally take
  - b. creates a list of tasks that recur with some frequency across the university
 (a–b) when completed to a sufficient extent would be included in the workload guidelines.
- (ii) Revise the *Workload Model Expectations* document and other documents used at appraisal to include the items covered in subsequent sections of this document: progression between grades; teaching hours; marking and preparation; research and scholarly activity; duties that involve travel away from the normal place of work.

### **Appraisal and workload planning**

Workload planning takes place during appraisal. Appraisal is a year-round process, and through appraisal, workload may be varied during the course of the year. Though some elements of the future academic year's workload may be planned long in advance, it is expected that the workload for the coming academic year is largely finalized in appraisal in May and June. Appraisals for planning workloads for 2019–2020 may have been delayed by Management's wish to be working from the *Workload Model Expectations* document newly agreed with UCU.

### **Progression between grades**

Progression between grades is facilitated by a development plan that comprises duties that form part of the workload plan and are agreed at appraisal.

- Under certain circumstances there is a right to the opportunity to progress; under other circumstances there is no such right, but there is nevertheless a right to have a development plan and workload that accommodates the aspiration to progress.
- A duty that forms part of a development plan may be graded at the target grade if and only if it can be successfully completed within one academic year and has not yet been successfully completed.
- Progress in the development plan should be reviewed and recorded at appraisal.
- L–SL progression: In the appraisal before you increment to Point 36, your appraisal should involve agreeing a three-year development plan such that if this plan is successfully completed, you will progress to SL at the end of it. UCU aim to have fuller advice on this available by next year.
- Progression from research-only roles: contact UCU for individualized advice.
- Progression from Grade G teaching roles to Grade H: contact UCU for individualized advice.

## **Teaching hours**

The national contract stipulates a weekly maximum of 18 hours and an annual maximum of 550 hours of ‘formal scheduled teaching responsibilities’. Locally there has been no history of debate over whether there are any student contact hours that should be considered to not be covered by these maximums. Contact hours are hours that consist of interaction with students that results in transfer of knowledge to the student; the level of the teaching (undergrad, postgrad) is immaterial. Contact hours include supervisions and tutorials, and both face-to-face and electronically-mediated communication, which may be synchronous (live) or asynchronous (e.g. email). Contact hours are not the same as timetabled hours. Because the onerousness of any teaching responsibility is no less onerous by virtue of not being timetabled, we argue that the contractual maximums should pertain to all student contact hours: otherwise the contractual maximums could be circumvented by operational sleight of hand that decreases the amount of timetabled teaching without decreasing the amount of teaching. This is not just a hypothetical scenario: when the default number of timetabled hours was increased a few years ago when the normal undergraduate teaching year was increased to 30 weeks, this was coupled with an explicit presumption that a greater proportion of contact hours would be timetabled and there would be a reduction in the number of untimetable contact hours; but with the normal teaching year now reduced to 24 weeks, the number of untimetable contact hours would be expected to increase again.

The contractual maximums are understood not to apply where modules involve an unusually large amount of contact time for the student. In UCU’s view an unusually large amount of contact time for the student would be more than 60 hours per 20 credits, which is the university’s default maximum. However, UCLan Management have never tried to argue that any specific piece of teaching is exempt from the contractual maximums.

## **Marking and Preparation**

Under UCU’s interpretation of the national contract, it should normally be the case that no more than 40% of teaching activity should consist of student contact hours, unless your own preference is to exceed that cap. The other 60% of teaching activity would normally consist of the marking and preparation associated with the contact hours. By long-standing practice, 90 minutes for marking (of both formative and summative assessment) and preparation is normally allocated for every 60 minutes of student contact. But across the university there are situations where a lecturer teaches on a module but contributes no marking to it, or where a lecturer contributes to a module a disproportionately large amount of marking relative to the amount of contact hours they contribute: in such cases it is agreed that for each contact hour contributed to the module, an hour of preparation is allocated, with a separate allocation for marking based on reckoning the actual time required for it. A principle of reasonableness needs to obtain when applying uplifts for marking and preparation: if there is no marking of formative or summative assessment to be done in association with a given bit of teaching, then there is no warrant for an uplift for marking; and if there is no preparation to be done for a given bit of teaching, as for instance with ad hoc tutorials, then there is no warrant for an uplift for preparation. Nevertheless, across teaching activity as a whole, the 40% cap on contact hours would still apply.

Teaching preparation is the preparation for a particular teaching event, the event of teaching a particular module to a particular group of students in a particular place at a particular time. This is distinct from writing new module content or teaching material where none previously exists: if it is necessary to write new module content or teaching materials, this should receive a separate workload allocation. An insufficiency of this

separate workload allocation has historically been known to be a significant cause of excessive workload stress, so this is something to keep a particular eye on if you are a new member of staff or are due to deliver teaching you have not delivered before on a module where you are expected to provide the content and materials.

### **Research and scholarly activity**

- **Contractual minimum RSA.** For all staff on the national academic contract, no less than 175/1581 of annual workload should be allocated to self-managed research and scholarly activity. UCU interpret 'self-managed' to mean that it is primarily you that has the discretion to decide how to use this time, provided that you can demonstrate you are using it in a professionally responsible and appropriate way. UCU would like this contractually assured element of research and scholarly activity to be explicitly itemized on every workload plan; this is a point not yet agreed with Management, and schools currently differ on whether they itemize it. But even if the element is not explicitly itemized, you should still make sure that the workload plan allows at least 175/1581 of your annual workload to be spent on self-managed research and scholarly activity. The typical use of the contractually assured element of research and scholarly activity is maintenance of our disciplinary expertise, keeping abreast of the scholarly literature.

- **Additional unfunded research time.** The university funds its academic staff not only to teach and undertake academic administration but also to undertake research and its equivalents (– knowledge transfer, professional practice). The amount of unfunded research time available to members of a given academic team will depend partly on how much time the team as a whole has remaining once its teaching and administrative duties are taken care of. Because the volume of teaching required fluctuates with student numbers, so too the amount of unfunded research time may be expected to fluctuate inversely. UCU have asked Management to provide an up-to-date default norm for unfunded research time, but Management have not yet provided one. (Management have previously given a default figure of, in effect, 141/1581 (= 20% of total workload, less self-managed RSA), but are no longer endorsing that as a norm.) Of course, however many hours are allocated to unfunded research time in a given workload plan, the planned outputs should be proportional to the time allocated; if, say, it takes you 300 hours in total to produce an article, and you are allocated 100 hours of unfunded research time, then your workload plan should reflect the aim of producing one third of a paper per year.

### **Duties that involve travel away from the normal place of work**

It is uncontroversially accepted that time spent travelling to a place of work other than the usual place of work counts as working time. In addition, UCU maintain that when working away from the normal place of work, all time spent away from home is working time. In principle, all such working time should be included on the workload plan; and if you are not given the option to decline to travel away from the normal place of work then certainly all time spent away from home should be added to the workload plan. However, this would make many activities, such as attending distant conferences, prohibitively expensive, and provided you're given the option not to travel, the actual time allocated in the workload plan may reflect what is affordable for the university.

## List of common duties and estimated time allocation norms

*This is work-in-progress. Please send us any significant duties omitted from this list, as well as your views on the suggested hours.*

DUTY	SUGGESTED HOURS
'Headroom' – an amount of hours to allow for addition of additional duties, especially when arising from unforeseen need.	No currently suggested amount. Pro rata for fractional staff.
duties shared by all academic staff to a roughly equal degree, e.g. senior management presentations; school meetings; subject meetings; email engaged with not as part of any specific role; appraisals	100 hours (not normally pro rata) [= average 28 mins per day]
Teaching preparation	1 hour per teaching contact hour
UG & Masters supervision	3–6 contact hours per 20 credits per student (15–30 minutes per week)
MRes/MPhil/PhD supervision	50 contact hours (DoS); 25 contact hours (Second Supervisor) (PT pro rata)
marking of formative assessment	hours according to the particular module's needs
marking of summative assessment	a 4000-word assignment requiring detailed feedback might typically require 90–100 minutes to mark; a multiple-choice exam might take just 5
teaching and admin away from the normal place of work	count travel time between the place of work and either home or the normal place of work
teaching and admin requiring overnight stay away from home	[see earlier discussion]
office availability hours	3 hours per week in which office availability hours are offered – typically 72 (3 hours per week for 24 weeks)
Innovation / Research & Scholarly Activity, e.g. scholarly activity, phd study, masters study, conducting research, research proposal, attending conference, presenting papers, writing up research, papers, books, internally & externally funded, designing CPD programmes, external liaison, bid writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hours allocated to self-managed research and scholarly activity should never be less than 175 (pro rata)</li> <li>For staff engaged in research, hours allocated to research are not normally to be less than 316 (pro rata), with additional hours where bought out; but flexibility above and below these norms in research hours allocation is an important element of academic workforce flexibility</li> </ul>
Academic Advisor	include time for admin and meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 hours per first year student (min 6 meetings with students in their first year)</li> <li>2 hours per student in other years</li> </ul> additional 1 hour per student if using Starfish
Academic Leadership: PL Lead	650–750. The reason for suggesting this figure is that PLs typically want to leave space in their workload for teaching and research. Whatever the total hours allocated to Academic Lead duties, the individual duties that compose them should be reckoned when making the workload plan.
Academic Leadership: School Lead, e.g. Marketing, admissions, EC's, extensions safeguarding, disabilities, E&D, timetabling, H&S	
Academic Leadership: Subject Lead	
Academic Leadership: Course Lead	an allocation per course and additional allocation per student

For the following duties, we've been unable to suggest what a normal allocation of hours might be.

Academic Leadership: School Lead, e.g. Marketing, admissions, EC's, extensions safeguarding, disabilities, E&D, timetabling, H&S

Academic Leadership: Subject Lead

Academic Leadership: Course Lead

Academic Leadership: Year Tutor	an allocation per cohort and additional allocation per student
Academic Leadership: Module Lead	an allocation per module and additional allocation per student
Director of Studies admin	an amount per EU student; a greater amount per international student
Internal examiner	
Partnership liaison	
Invigilation	
university-level committees	
Admissions / Marketing	
staff development	
teaching toolkit	
staff mentoring	
clinical skills/registration (maintenance, renewal, updating)	
other substantial duties (itemized separately)	
MISCELLANEOUS – the mass of agreed duties not covered by the above and not individually substantial enough to warrant itemizing them separately	