



Academic Workload Guidance

Revised July 2023

1 Aims

This document aims to provide guidance for the University approach to planning and managing academic workloads and should be read in conjunction with the Post 92 - national academic contract, local contract of employment, job description and appraisal objectives.

The model applies to all academic staff employed under the academic contract and Professors who are employed under the management contract. The model specifically does not apply to SPH/ Ad Hoc staff.

It is expected that this document will govern, moderate, and inform a university-wide approach.

2 Principles

2.1 The Hour Base of the Model

The workload model takes into consideration a notional total of 1581 hours per year for a full-time academic as a guide. The 1581 hours derive from the calculation in the table below:

	Number of weeks	Based on 37 hours/ week
Calendar Year	52. 143 weeks	1929
Annual Leave	7 weeks	-259
Bank holidays and discretionary days	2.4 weeks	-89
Total		1581

The hours in this model are notional as the academic contract does not specify set total hours per week and hence 37 hours per week is merely a guide, recognising that hours will vary. 1581 should be pro rata for part time staff.

In the event of an extraordinary public or university holiday the annual total should be reduced by 7.4 hours (pro rata).

Workloads will all include time for Self -Managed Research and Scholarly Activity (SMRSA) in line with the national contract, which equates to 175 hours (pro rata). Whilst this is predominantly a self-managed allocation, all staff should be accountable for it, allocate in a professional way and be prepared within the appraisal process to discuss how it is being used.

2.2 Workload allocation

Workload plans are formally agreed through the appraisal process and this can be modified and updated throughout the course of the academic year.

Academic workloads should normally be set ahead of each academic year and a written record of the workload plan maintained.

School management supported by their nominees should lead workload planning. This would typically include planning teaching, administration, research, and knowledge exchange work, with this initiated as early as possible each year in advance of confirming teaching timetables.

School management or their nominees would normally work collaboratively with subject teams in setting workload plans and discuss these with individuals as part of the appraisal process.

It is recognised as good practice to have open and transparent conversations within academic teams about best deployment of resource to spread workload allocation fairly.

Academic staff should be encouraged to bring proposals for their workload to discuss with their line manager/appraiser as part of the allocation/appraisal process.

School Leadership should review workload plans to ensure key duties are covered, business needs are met, and any issues identified, discussed and resolved.

The national contract stipulates that normally ‘formal scheduled teaching responsibilities should not exceed 18 hours in any week or a total of 550 hours in the teaching year’.

These hours are normally distributed over no more than 36 weeks, with an additional 2 weeks allocated to associated teaching -related administration.

The timing of these 38 weeks will be assigned by the appraiser following consultation with the individual member of lecturing staff.

Workloads should aim to ensure that the hours are appropriately distributed across the working year, striving to support staff wellbeing, and ensure colleagues have an appropriate work-life balance. However, due to the nature of the work, you are expected to work such hours as are reasonably necessary. You are expected to work flexibly, accepting that there may invariably be spikes in workload throughout the year due to deadlines, marking etc and there are times in the academic cycle where the inverse is true, for example in non-teaching weeks. It is incumbent on the line manager to ensure that any peaks above a normal working week of a notional 37 hours are not unacceptably or unreasonably high at any one time. You should raise any concerns with your line manager at any time during the year. If you have personal circumstances that require you to adopt a more fixed work pattern over the week (i.e. never expected to spike over a notional 37 hours a week) you should discuss this further with your line manager/appraiser and consider submitting a flexible working request. This would be adjusted for part time staff depending on FTE/contracted days worked.

The workload plan is normally divided into 3 main components - teaching, learning and related duties, research and innovation, and administrative/management duties. These components should be used as a starting point for discussion and workload allocation. Where duties don't fit into one of these 3 components then a 4th component of “other” should be used. All duties should be included and accounted for under those 4 headings.

Time allocated should be an accurate reflection of the expected time to be dedicated to the activity - there should be a match between the workload plan and the actual workload.

- All duties should be included in the plan. Smaller tasks may be grouped;
- Appraisal should aim to produce plans with a reasonable level of detail;
- The time allocated to a task should be as required to complete the work to an agreed standard;
- Work should be appropriately distributed across the year to ensure annual and weekly workloads are manageable.

Duties related to teaching element are based upon formal scheduled teaching responsibilities and incorporates the assumption that one hour of teaching normally generates at least one hour of preparation. It is acknowledged that this is a notional multiplier that will need to be considered as a starting point i.e. it is understood that not every hour of teaching requires an hour of preparation (e.g.

repeated sessions to different groups) and, conversely, that some teaching may require additional hours for preparation. But the total number of hours allocated to preparation should normally be no less than the total scheduled number of contact hours.

Additional allocation should be given for marking and normally this would be 1 hour per student per 20 credit module.

For fractional staff, the distribution of hours across the working year is agreed either at the beginning of the contract or as part of the annual workload planning, it should include agreeing a specification of which days of the year the fractional staff member may or may not be working.

Academic staff are encouraged to ensure that their leave entitlement is agreed and built into workload/appraisal discussions to ensure staff health and wellbeing is supported. Subject to the organisational requirements of the institution, appraisees may request that up to 6 weeks of their normal holiday entitlement be taken in one continuous period. Such a request will not be unreasonably refused. Note that the timing of annual leave, including the timing of any block of 6 weeks, is a negotiated balance of the needs of the university and of the employee. Workloads should be adjusted to incorporate agreed blocks of leave.

Responsibility for ensuring the workload conforms to the University guidelines is shared jointly by the individual academic and their line manager.

Academic staff have a personal responsibility to own their workload and if they have any concerns about their allocation they should raise this in the first instance with their line manager/appraiser.

Part time members of staff should agree their distribution of hours as part of the annual workload planning process/appraisal, which should also include agreeing a specification of which days of the year the fractional staff member may or may not be contracted to work.

The University has an agreed approach for recording and managing time allocation using an excel spreadsheet tool and all academic areas are expected to comply with this. The purpose of the spreadsheet is to provide a record of time and not to limit or dictate the content of the workload plans.

2.3 Managing exceeding allocations

Workload should not normally exceed 1581 hours in any academic year (pro rata for PT staff).

If unexpected additional workload elements are required to be added during the year - and it would take the person over 1581 hours - then normally some existing elements would be re-allocated elsewhere or removed to make time.

The workload may exceed 1581 only by mutual consent of appraisee and line manager. If 1581 hours is exceeded this should be addressed by reducing the following year's allocation accordingly.

For example, if the workload of one year is 1681 hours then the maximum workload of the following year is 1481 hours.

It is agreed to be good practice to build an element of 'head-room' into workload allocations to allow additional duties to be added during the year without any need for reallocation, the 'chain reaction' of which may be disruptive to several staff.

2.4 Managing Sickness Absence

It is important to remember that a FT academic workload total capacity is 1581 hours (pro rata). Duties and responsibilities are allocated and should not exceed the 1581 capacity. It is good practice to leave a certain amount of 'head-room' to help absorb and offset unforeseen changes to workloads across the year.

Every day of sickness can be recorded and added to the workload plan as a 7.4 hrs allocation of unforeseen 'sickness' activity. If the resultant change in workload pushes the overall workload over the 1581 total capacity, then action should be taken to redress the overall workload expectations. This may mean, for example, re-allocating some of the missing duties (for example teaching sessions) to others, which may already have taken place to ensure student experience is maintained during the period of absence. However, if, for example, the missed work needs to be delivered by the member of staff who was off sick (for example, due to specialist knowledge), then other elements of upcoming workload will need to be removed instead. The same principles should apply for part time staff taking into account the reduced workload capacity and pattern of work. These adjustments should be covered in the return to work meetings.

2.5 Managing concerns

If any allocation issue is not resolved to the academic's satisfaction they should raise this with their line manager.

If any allocation issue remains unresolved then they are encouraged to seek support (e.g. People Team / UCU).

3 Allocating Time to Activities

The following is a list of considerations to be taken into account when setting outputs and time for all activities. The list of considerations is not exhaustive, but is offered as guidance to ensure a level of parity of consideration across all Schools within the University.

First, consider the output required from the activity.

The appraiser should then discuss with the appraisee the extent to which the following considerations, where relevant, influence the time allocated to achieve the output(s):

- Consider the 'newness' of the activity – to either the individual concerned, or the University, or both.
- Consider the 'size' of it (e.g. whether it includes a large number of staff, or students, or is complex in some other way).
- Consider whether it involves liaising with others across different Colleges and Services, or externally, with stake-holders, or accreditation bodies.
- Consider if it relates to an appraisal objective that is particularly important or prioritised for the individual concerned.
- Consider the number of tasks being undertaken at the same time as this one.