

AGENDA

Department of Sociology Sessional Teaching Committee Meeting Tuesday 4th June in E1.02 (Gillian Rose Room) 11:00 – 13:00 hrs

Additional pay for additional work

We are often asked by course convenors to attend additional meetings / do email work with students, beyond the remit of our contracts. Even where this is not the case, students continue to seek advice and guidance beyond Week 10. Some ST forward these requests to course convenors. However, this is not always appropriate or practical.

The Dept suggests our payment in Reading Week is designed to cover this. However, there are serious discrepancies across the ST pool as to what is approved for Reading Week payment (e.g. some able to claim for office hours, others not).

Main point for discussion:

Reading week pay cannot be used as a blanket solution to cover all additional work undertaken outside of contracted hours. It would be helpful to have the policy of paying for Reading Week (and, specifically, which parts of RW) clarified at this meeting.

Suggested solutions:

- 1) ST would like a Dept-wide policy that course convenors respond to queries outside of term time.
- 2) *However*, if we are required to do additional admin/email work beyond term-time, then we should be able to claim for this, separate from RW payment.

Exam and marking schedule

- 1) Apparently the Exams Office messed up the timing of many exams this year. The Dept has handled the communication of this to ST quite poorly.

We would like to raise this as an example of where, as exam markers, we should be properly informed if it is going to affect us.

As ST, we would all like to emphasize that we do *not* see this as any one individual's fault and we completely understand the Exams Office have caused problems for a range of people. Rather, we feel that this indicates a wider culture of treating ST with a lack of consideration and an attendant expectation to be constantly flexible. This expectation has material implications for many of us.

- 2) Related to this, marking allocations are not made clear. For example, one ST has had to mark 80 scripts, though they were contracted for 35. Again, these changes need to be more clearly and consistently identified and communicated to us. Most of us do not feel we can push back against the expectation to be flexible and accommodate such changes, either because we fear loss of income, or being seen as difficult.

- 3) Lastly, regarding marking, ST feel the paid time allocated to marking each script is inadequate to give the kinds of extensive feedback required by the Dept. We are conscious that considered and extensive feedback is crucial to students' development, as well as contributing to things like NSS and TEF scores. This means most ST take far longer than the 20 allocated minutes to provide thoughtful feedback, and then upload that feedback to Tabula. In particular, this is an issue for new ST and for those ST for whom English is their second language. The rotating pool of ST, who are primarily recruited from the PhD pool, is likely to always include a substantial amount of 'new' teachers, and teachers for whom English is their second language.

Suggested solutions

- A commitment from the Dept to undertake, as a priority, communication with ST when significant changes to their contracted hours (including marking) occur. Ideally, ST should be consulted with, rather than merely informed about, proposed changes,
- To accurately reflect the time it takes to mark essays and exams, ST suggest an increase to paid allocated marking time: 30 minutes to mark a script is a more accurate proposal.