

University of Warwick

Academic Workload Allocation Framework

Principles

Considered by	Date	Outcome
WLMTF (v1)	19-05-21	Revised and sent to HoDs for consultation
WLTMF (v2)	06-08-21	Further revisions based on feedback
ARC (v3)	15-09-21	Discussion
Informal discussion with UCU	17-10-21	Comment and revision
Version for consultation with UCU/Depts (v4)	06-22	Comments and revisions
Revised version for ARC (v5)	11-22	
WLMTF (v5)	08-12-22	Revisions based on feedback

Overview

The University of Warwick recognises that its institutional performance and the delivery of Strategy 2030 and beyond is substantially dependent on the performance of its staff, both those who deliver its core charitable objects and those who support and enable them. This requires efficient and effective resource allocation, with appropriate consideration given to wellbeing and work-life balance so that staff are enabled to deliver to a high standard.

The largely autonomous nature of academic work, the diversity of practices and norms across disciplines and the variety of work types presents particular challenges for the management of academic workloads. An Academic Workload Allocation Framework (AWAF) provides the basic principles for the allocation of workload for all academic staff based on academic role and employment function, so that workload can be allocated in an open, fair, equitable and balanced way. This is so that individual and subject group workloads can be seen to be aligned with, and contributing fully to, the essential activities of schools, faculties, the wider University and beyond. It will also provide Heads of academic departments with a framework within which to plan and model academic workload, for all academic staff that operate within and outside their academic subject areas, including staff who may operate across more than one department.

A further benefit of a well-defined and institution-wide model will be to simplify the TRAC process, ideally including reducing the need for regular time allocation surveys, thus reducing the burden on both academic and professional services staff.

Principles

The Academic Workload Allocation Framework (AWAF) should be informed by a set of principles which outline an acceptable approach to the allocation of academic workloads.

The following basic principles underpin the specification and operation of the Academic Workload Allocation Framework. They draw on examples of good practice from inside and outside the institution and also draw on work undertaken by UCU:

- Academics are largely autonomous professionals and must have scope to organize and manage their own time and discharge their work activities in an appropriate way provided they do so within the parameters of reasonable organizational requirements.
- The AWAF will, therefore, be structured around the delivery of required activities. Individuals will not normally be expected to directly account for their time by activity¹ but all activities, including

¹ Although until a dedicated system is in place, staff will still need to periodically complete the TAS as is current practice. Timesheets are required in certain areas – most usually where there is external funding.

administration, will be given a realistic allocation of notional hours based on what is considered reasonable to deliver the activity.

- Decisions about the allocation of academic workloads need to reflect both a need to safeguard staff wellbeing and a need to ensure a fair and reasonable use of staff capacity across activities and departments.
- The allocation of academic workload should reflect wider institutional agendas and activities.
- Transparency is essential both for fairness and to ensure a reasonable use of staff capacity. This means that within departments, workload allocations should be visible to all members of a department. Department, faculty and University aggregates should be visible across the academic community.
- Staff should have the opportunity for progression and promotion in a reasonable timeframe without feeling the need to work excessive hours.
- Any approach to academic workload allocation must ensure fairness across roles, levels, and departments.
- Mechanisms for the allocation of teaching workload may reasonably vary across disciplines, types, and levels. However, it would be a reasonable expectation that a teaching workload should normally be allocated based on a multiplier of contact hours taking into consideration both student numbers and credit volumes. Additional allocations of time should be made for new teaching development, module co-ordination, and marking. Volume-based activity should also be linked to student numbers and credit allocations.
- Staff on R&T contracts should have a normal expectation of a baseline allocation of 40% of their time, pro rata, for research and research-related scholarship (to include research impact and engagement). Securing external funding may enable this allocation to be increased. Allocations for those on T-focused and R-focused roles will reflect the different nature of those contracts and the normal expectations of the role.
- The workload framework will seek to encompass all meaningful activities that require a significant time commitment but should do so at a sensible level of granularity.
- Academic workloads will be allocated on an annual basis and in relation to the academic year. The allocation will need to recognize that there are peaks and troughs in certain types of academic activity and that there may be individual preferences with respect to distribution of workload over the course of a year. Allocation decisions will make every attempt to ensure a sensible distribution over the course of the year, but the academic cycle and a range of deadlines will mean that some workload peaks are unavoidable.
- The normal academic workload is defined in relation to a full-time contract over a full academic year. Shorter duration contracts and fractional contracts will be accommodated as appropriate.
- Academic workloads should normally be balanced over a 3-year period (subject to considerations around contract duration) but may be balanced within a shorter timeframe according to the departmental context. Balancing decisions would normally be based around total workload. There may be short-term fluctuations above or below accepted norms. Significant deviations from load in one year should be balanced out by adjustments in subsequent years. Where individuals are appointed to contracts of less than 3 years, the balancing will need to take place over a time frame consistent with the contract duration.
- Study leave will need to be reflected in the workload framework in a way that acknowledges that this is time for individuals to focus on significant projects which may be broader than any one area of activity. Any averaging of workloads over a specified period may need to be adapted to accommodate the impacts

of study leave (i.e., balancing over a longer period may be necessary).

The Structure of Academic Workload Allocation Framework

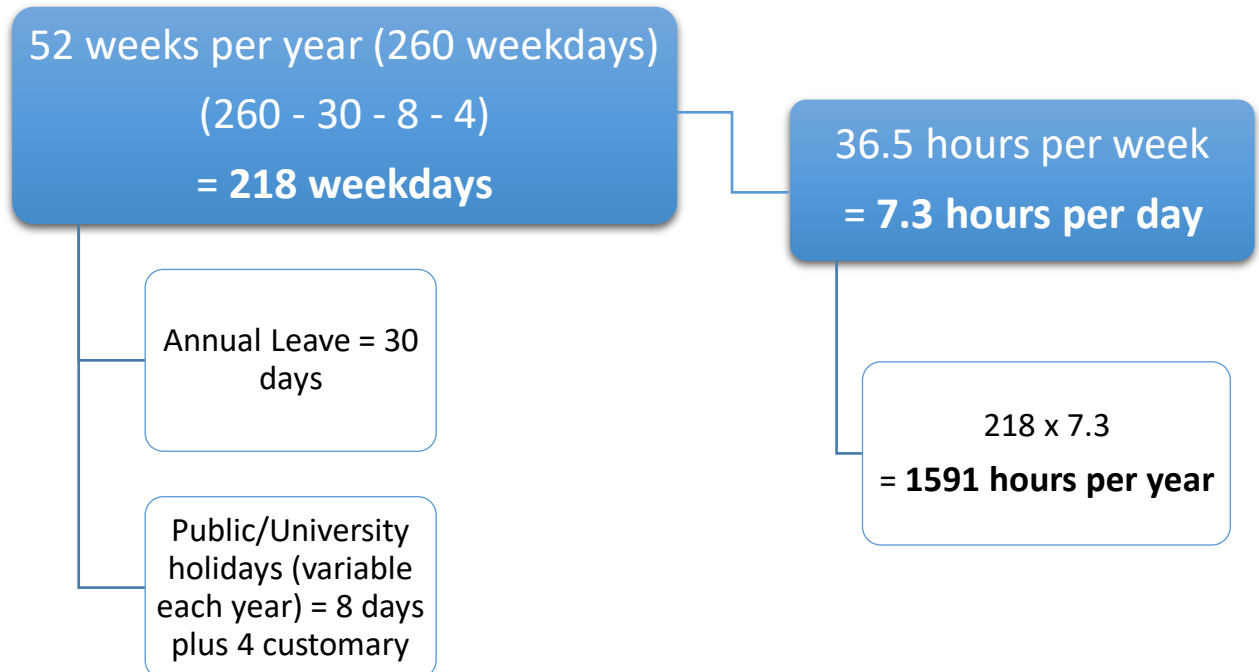
The key elements of an Academic Workload Allocation Framework are set out below and these are explained in more detail in subsequent sections.

Indicative Available Time	Annual Available Work Capacity						
	Work Type A				Work Type B		
Generic Work Types							
Expected Distribution by Type	A%				B%		
Activity	one	two	three	four	five	six	seven
Quantity	w	x	y	z	d	e	f
Tariff (hours)	4	5	4	6	5	4	5
Total per activity	4w	5x	4y	6z	5d	4e	5f

The Academic Working Year (Annual Available Work Capacity)

Principle: This figure would be fixed and agreed at institutional level; it would be treated as an annual average rather than an upper bound and subject to smoothing as appropriate.

The common currency for the Academic Workload Allocation Framework will be notional hours. All workloads must be standardised against the University's standard of one full-time equivalent (1 FTE) member of staff at 100% workload. The basis for this (using typical statutory/customary days) is as follows.



Generic Work Types and Expected Distribution

Principle: The categories and the indicative distributions would be agreed at institutional level as an integral part of the AWAf.

Currently, the University of Warwick has identified three principal academic career pathways; generic work types and their distribution should be broadly aligned to these career pathways.

The academic career pathways are:

- Teaching and Research
- Teaching Focused
- Research Focused

The University of Warwick recognises the individual nature of academics' career pathways and that focus on particular activities may vary over time, based on individuals' aspirations and/or University requirements. These career pathways contain a spectrum of academic activities that enable academic staff to actively participate in a wide range of projects and tasks that allow them to align their strengths with institutional imperatives through a balanced and appropriate workload.

Many academic staff have workload for both teaching and teaching-related administration, and will also have workload that includes research, scholarship and/or enterprise, and may have elements of academic service, leadership, or management. Those on specialist research contracts may have a narrow range of activities – especially where their work is tied to externally-funded research contracts. The distribution and allocation of workload associated with these tasks and activities will vary from staff member to staff member, however, workload distributions should be broadly similar for academic staff with the same employment function and career pathway. In the same way as the University's progression and promotion framework recognises that some activities may 'count' in more than one category (e.g., PhD supervision could be teaching or it could be research, according to disciplinary cultures), the AWAf recognises that there may be departmental variations in the way certain activities are counted. Whilst local variation in the categorisation of activities may be beneficial, departments should nonetheless be able to provide data on workload distribution that is aligned with the TRAC definitions, in order to enable aggregation of this data at institutional level.

The list of proposed generic work types and expected distributions are listed below. The distributions are intended to be indicative rather than absolute figures, however it is expected that departmental workload allocations will align as closely as possible to these norms:

Indicative workload distributions

Academic Career Pathway	Teaching and teaching-related	Research, & Scholarship	Leadership, Collegiality and Management	Impact, Outreach and Engagement	Institutional Roles
Teaching Focused (Band 6 and above)	Normally 70% workload	Normally 10% workload	Normally 20% workload		Via adjustment elsewhere in departmental workload or buy-out
Research Focused (Band 6 and above)	Normally 10% (typically linked to research)	Normally 70% workload	Normally 20% workload (to include the individual's Concordat-related development work)		Via adjustment elsewhere in departmental workload or buy-out
Research and Teaching (Band 6 and above)	Normally 40% workload	Normally 40% workload	Normally 20% workload		Via adjustment elsewhere in departmental workload or buy-out

Notes

1. Whether institutional roles attract central buy-out or are accounted for in departmental workloads is governed by the policy on buyouts for central roles. Normally, such buyouts are restricted to PVC,

- VP/CoF, Dean of Students, D-PVC and Academic Director roles.
2. R&T staff undertaking the usual University probation should have their teaching and other workloads moderated downwards and tapered during their probationary period.

Activity, Quantity and Tariff

Principle: Academic departments will have reasonable flexibility with respect to the allocation of activities to workload types and the determination of tariff (hours) associated with activities.

The University will operate a hybrid approach to the categorisation of workload activities and their associated tariffs. For reasons of fairness and transparency, there is value in having some institutional norms about the activities included in academic workloads. However, this should not be enforced at the expense of legitimate flexibility at departmental level. The aim would be to ensure that all relevant workload activities are included and assigned to workload types in a way that reflects departmental norms and retains consistency/fit with TRAC principles.

- Teaching – this will need to reflect a diversity of approaches to teaching. Some consistency is needed at a high level which may be best secured by working with multipliers of contact hours moderated according to whether delivery is new or repeat and therefore the requirements for curriculum development/preparation. The teaching component will need to be flexible enough to accommodate credit weighting, student numbers and different types of delivery and different types of assessment. Consideration will need to be given to the impact of the growing interest in development of broader online provision and to the growth in interdisciplinary provision. Where staff are delivering teaching outside of their home department, their work should be given appropriate recognition.
- Leadership, Collegiality, Management (LCM) and Impact, Outreach, Engagement. These activities which play a significant role in career progression are, by their nature, very difficult to quantify. The challenge will be to create a framework that promotes a sensible balance between fairness/consistency across the institution with department autonomy. Guidance will be provided for key roles centrally and insights will be available from TRAC data. Consideration should be given to a minimum threshold for inclusion of an activity in the model. Where staff are undertaking major leadership and management roles within their department, it will be appropriate for this to be recognized by larger than normal allocations in this category.
- Research – accounting for externally-funded research time. Normally, a 10% threshold will apply when calculating buyout for externally-funded research. Therefore, if an individual secures funding to cover 5% of their salary, they will not receive any reduction in other workload elements. However, if the funding secured covers 15% of salary, they will receive a pro rata reduction in other workload elements, in this case 5%. The buyout of x% will normally be a top slice with impacts on all workload elements (30% funded research normally means 20% reduction in all workload components – so 32%T, 32%R 16% admin). This is a compromise position – the individual does benefit from external income by securing additional research time but there is some cost recovery reducing the extent of cross subsidy.

Looking more specifically at the assignment of workload activities to generic workload types, the University of Warwick Career Progression and Promotion framework considers four main categories/types, and the following seeks to outline the activities most likely to be associated with each type.

- **Teaching and teaching related.** These activities include face-to-face or online lectures, tutorials, and seminars; teaching in laboratories, studios, workshops and other specialist rooms; the supervision of undergraduate and postgraduate taught project work and dissertations. The category includes teaching related to interdisciplinary programmes, whereby academic staff may teach modules across multiple departments. Departments will have flexibility (within broad parameters) to determine allocations based on their approaches to the delivery of teaching and learning. Significant externally-focused and teaching-related engagement activity may also be accommodated under this heading and certain types of practice-based research may also be covered.

Academic staff contact time, where practicable, should be obtained for the most part from the University's course management systems.

Teaching-related activities include, but are not limited to, setting and marking assessments, providing formative and summative feedback, supporting students, module coordination and day-to-day academic administration. Tasks related to scheduled teaching are measured in nominal hours.

In some departments, PhD supervision is included as 'teaching' but for TRAC purposes, it is considered research. Departments are able to choose their preferred mapping provided the allocations are clear and identifiable.

- **Research and Scholarship.** This includes research, impact (including REF-related impact work), enterprise and may also include aspects of pedagogic scholarship; it will also need to incorporate the number of external grants with allocated research workload.

For TRAC purposes, PhD supervision is classified as research, but some departments may prefer to categorise as teaching and provided the mapping to teaching is clear, this is acceptable.

A representative, non-exhaustive list of research, scholarship and enterprise activities include:

- Undertaking scholarly research.
 - Producing research publications and other forms of output.
 - Preparing and submitting research grant applications and other research-related funding bids.
 - Exhibitions and performances.
 - Pedagogic scholarship to develop individual and institutional practice.
 - Reviewing research outputs for journals, conferences, grant awarding bodies etc.
 - Supervision of higher (research) degree students.
 - Managing (postdoctoral) research assistants and other research personnel.
 - Research-related impact (including REF activities) and public engagement/knowledge exchange activities
- **LCM/IOE.** This encompasses a range of activities to support the operation of the department that cannot realistically be undertaken by professional and support service staff. It also encompasses a diversity of activities that drive the way in which the institution is able to have broader impact on society and which are not accommodated elsewhere.

A representative, non-exhaustive list of the activities may include:

- Leadership roles in Dept (HoD, teaching and learning leads, research leads etc.)
 - Student recruitment and admissions responsibilities, course management.
 - Student support/student experience leads.
 - Personal tutoring.
 - Staff recruitment and staff development activities.
 - Academic Service – valued contribution to the Faculty or University Boards and Committees not covered above, University Task and Finish Groups etc.
 - Support for interdisciplinary programmes other than the delivery of teaching activities.
 - Public Engagement, business partnerships, international partnerships etc.
 - Professional Practice – activities may include support for the academic discipline itself, work undertaken for accrediting bodies, organising conferences etc.
 - University and College Union (UCU) duties.
- **Institutional Leadership Roles and Responsibilities.** Some academic staff will from time to time be expected to perform academic service, management or/and leadership roles in order for the University to function effectively. The University recognises the importance of these roles, their responsibilities, and the demand they place on academics' time and that an appropriate allocation of workload is essential for the role-holder to carry out their assigned duties both effectively and efficiently. To ensure consistency and parity between the numbers and types of institutional roles across all faculties, these roles should be agreed at the institutional level. Only those essential roles, tasks and activities agreed at the institutional level will receive either buyout (if the role is large enough) or a formal request for workload credit. For essential roles which do not receive buyout

(defined within the policy on buyout for central roles as being those below 0.4 FTE), it is expected that departments will be able to give some workload credit to individuals in order to carry out these duties.

Some academic colleagues will have the opportunity to undertake sector-level roles and many such roles are essential for the operation of the sector as well as bringing benefit to both individual and institution. Some substantial roles (e.g., REF/TEF) may be supported via dedicated academic leave; others may be addressed on an ad hoc basis if there is no formal external support provided.

Academic Department Consultation

Project Status: The development of a Workload Allocation Framework has 2 key elements – the framework itself (rules, principles, guidelines) and a system to capture and record its components. The progress to date has focused on the former, recognising that the system component will be a longer-term piece of work dependent on a number of projects related to the management and availability of data.

The driver behind implementing the AWAF is that, while academic staff are autonomous and trusted, so far as possible, to manage their teaching, research and other duties in the manner and timescales which best suit them as independent and highly skilled professionals, it is important to develop a framework to ensure that there is greater transparency, fairness, and consistency of approach to workload allocations.

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Provost
12 December 2022