

## **UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING**

### **WORK AND WORKLOAD PLANNING**

The following statement of work and workload planning principles and points of guidance has been adopted by the Combined Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee.

#### **Principles**

1. The University of Stirling is committed to the equitable, reasonable, fair and transparent allocation of working duties and responsibilities to all its staff.
2. There are many different types of work carried out by staff across the University. A single institution-wide workload planning model would not be able fairly to assess and allocate this range of duties and responsibilities.
3. Consequently, the University does not recommend a single model for use across the institution but it does expect that processes consistent with this document will be in use in all areas, and that whatever scheme is used will be appropriate to that area.

### **ACADEMIC WORKLOAD PLANNING**

4. In academic areas, workload planning models and procedures should:
  - recognise that University staff are professionals who should be actively involved in discussions with their Dean of Faculty on the allocation of duties;
  - should be based on upon hours worked and duties allocated but should contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Faculty and the University;
  - embody reasonable expectations in relations to hours and range of duties; staff should not have to work excessive hours to achieve the agreed expectations of their role;
  - cover comprehensively all duties and tasks required in any role, including reasonable allocated time for scholarship, research, teaching and administration as appropriate;
  - be sufficiently flexible to accommodate unforeseen changes in circumstances or duties;
  - recognise that a balanced workload is a health and well-being issue;
  - be sufficiently flexible to balance fluctuations within a reasonable time;
  - make individual workload allocations accessible by all staff in a Faculty;
  - have due regard to diversity and equal opportunities issues;
  - not be used as a basis for gathering TRAC data.

#### **Guidelines**

5. Workload planning models should be based upon measurements of time for tasks performed, rendered either as actual hours or through a points system derived from a time value allocated to each task. In either case, the assumptions of the model should be based upon reasonable expectations of the time taken for a task, derived from general experience. These assumptions should be kept under regular review and updated as required through discussion and consultation at Faculty level, with the UCU able to comment on substantive changes or the introduction of new schemes..
6. The achievement of objectives or outputs are the business of performance management and 'Achieving Success' reviews, but in association with workload planning arrangements.

7. Workload planning models should be comprehensive, that is, they should take account of all the required tasks to be performed in a role. Any additional or amended required duties should be incorporated in the work plan only following consultation with affected staff.
8. However, while models should identify the full range of possible tasks and duties, they should not anticipate that every person will always perform all these duties. Models should always be sensitive to the balance of duties and responsibilities in individual cases and should be sufficiently flexible to allocate these across a staffing complement without unduly increasing any individual's overall load.
9. Any imbalances between actual and planned workloads, or between the workloads of individuals, should be evened out by subsequent adjustments within a reasonable period of time, normally no longer than one academic year.
10. Academic contracts do not specify hours of work. In academic areas workload planning models should nevertheless assume a reasonable total contribution over the year based on an annual norm in terms of hours worked. Examples of such models drawn from current practice within the University are appended to this document.
11. In cases where contractual hours are worked, these should be respected by the workload model.
12. Models should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate unforeseen or contingent tasks. In some service areas of the University, re-prioritisation at short notice and the immediate allocation of unplanned tasks is a regular occurrence. In such cases, it is only possible for agreed individual allocations to obtain for short periods of time before being revised. By contrast, the planning period in academic areas is usually the academic year.
13. Models should find a midway between, on the one hand, undue and burdensome detail in the analysis of duties and, on the other, too general an approach to allow an accurate assessment of the time worked.
14. In Faculties and in service areas workload planning should actively involve the staff concerned. In the event that an individual feels their work allocation is unreasonable or excessive they should have available to them a recognised process by which (supported and accompanied as they wish) they can raise issues of concern. Informal resolution of such concerns within the line management structure of the academic section is strongly encouraged. Further to this, the informal and formal mechanisms of the grievance procedures are available to staff.

## SERVICE and SUPPORT STAFF WORK PLANNING

15. While in academic departments, the primary focus of workload planning is the working duties and responsibilities of individual members of staff and the secondary objective is the workload of the overall department, in Service and Support Staff Areas the consideration of the workload of individual members of staff is regarded as a managed process which is dynamic and regularly reviewed, involving an ongoing dialogue between line management and staff.
16. Hence, the process that occurs in some, but not all, service/support areas is *work planning* and will involve determining the priority areas of work over a particular time period, the stages of the work including milestones and deadlines, who will lead the task and which other members of staff will be involved. The frequency with which this planning takes place will vary from department to department as will the documentation generated from it. The overall distribution of work across a department will be important but the process will not focus on the workload of individuals or generate workload allocations and, because of the nature of the work and the level of the plan, will not necessarily cover all individuals in a department.
17. The key objectives of a service/support area work plan are:
  - to generate a plan which ensures that projects and other work that are a priority for the University are identified and planned appropriately, recognising relative priorities
  - to ensure that the timescales and milestones are clear and can be met
  - to ensure that resource is allocated to each area of work and that those individuals involved in specific pieces of work are aware of their role and the expectations of them and have an opportunity to contribute to this top level planning
  - to ensure that no individuals are unduly overburdened
  - to have due regard to diversity and equal opportunities issues.

### Guidelines

18. Service/Support area work plans will focus very specifically on tasks and the achievement of objectives and outputs. They will also only cover specific areas of work, generally of a project nature, and not the general day to day operational responsibilities of the department.
19. A service/support area workplan is therefore not a comprehensive summary of all work undertaken by the department. It will not consider hours worked, duties allocated or individual workload allocations. These issues form part of management responsibilities.
20. Service/support areas will have different arrangements for the preparation of work plans. Some will undertake this task annually and for others the term of the plan may be much shorter. The review of progress against the plan will form part of the management arrangements for the department.
21. The nature of work planning in service/support areas reflects the nature of the work undertaken by these departments. This generally comprises an element of provision of operational services plus specific tasks that may respond to strategic priorities, changes in legislation, priorities within the HE sector etc. Only an element of the work repeats year to year, the rest is likely to be quite different. In addition, new priorities can occur at any time and this will often require the work plan to be reviewed and for some deadlines to be adjusted. The concept of *workload* planning, as understood by academic areas, would neither suit the business of service areas nor add value to it.

22. All Service/Support areas are encouraged to develop a formal process of work planning within which exists documented departmental prioritisation of specific projects and ongoing work , and division of responsibility and accountability.
23. Consideration of available resources, their capacity and capability, is a normal expectation of this process and part of an ongoing dialogue with the contributing staff.
24. In the context of a departmental work plan, individual objectives and personal development objectives and actions are agreed and reviewed through the Achieving Success process.
25. In cases where contractual hours are worked, these should be respected by the workload model.
26. Fluctuating workloads and demand are a normal feature of support activities; it is nevertheless expected that appropriate working practices are in place to ensure that individual workloads are not subject to sustained excessive demands. ,Examples of such models drawn from current practice within the University are appended to this document.

### **EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

The following are examples of practice in the University which meet the expectations set out in this document:

Faculty of Social Science

Stirling Management School – Division of Accounting & Finance

Faculty of Health, Sciences and Sport