Management of Professional Staff Workloads Guideline

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) This Guideline suggests ways in which supervisors and professional employees can work together to actively manage workloads and working hours effectively and responsibly.

(2) This Guideline applies to all professional employees covered by the [Enterprise Agreement](#) and their supervisors.

Section 2 - Guideline Statement

(3) Effective workload management is the joint responsibility of supervisors and professional employees. This can be achieved through effective planning and prioritisation of tasks, appropriate resourcing, employee development and ensuring that the University's policies, relevant legislation and Enterprise Agreement are followed.

(4) Most concerns about workloads will be able to be managed through day-to-day interaction between employees and their supervisors and with reference to this Guideline.

Section 3 - Supervisor's Responsibilities

(5) It is part of the managerial role of supervisors of professional employees to take active measures to wherever possible consult with employees when planning, monitoring and adjusting workloads and working hours to ensure that employees work within the authorised policies and procedures referred to below.

(6) Supervisors must determine and implement systems and procedures suited to their local needs.

(7) Active management of workloads and working hours will also require supervisors to manage the availability of their employees by careful implementation of policies and procedures relating to leave.

(8) For forms of planned leave, this will involve an emphasis on monitoring leave balances to avoid excessive accruals and scheduling leave to ensure optimum deployment of employees within recognised workload peaks and troughs.

(9) For forms of unplanned leave, this will involve an emphasis on allocating tasks and priorities to employees affected by the absence of their colleagues. Wherever possible, affected employees should be consulted before tasks are allocated or re-allocated.

Section 4 - Work/Life Balance

(10) Active management of workloads should take account of work/life balance and related policies and procedures including the following:

    a. [Flexible Work Policy](#);

b. [Attendance, Hours of Work and Overtime (Professional Employee) Procedure](#); and
c. [Leave Entitlements Policy](#).

Section 5 - Workload Management

(11) Supervisors also need to systematically review the allocation of tasks to employees. As a minimum this should be done annually when conducting an employee's performance appraisal (which will include a review of position descriptions). Refer to the [Staff Development Policy](#) and [Staff Development Guideline](#).

(12) Under the Recognition and Development Program for professional employees, the annual performance appraisal is an opportunity to look at the complete workload of the employee being reviewed and to address any problems that may be emerging from either the supervisor's or employee's perspective. Where the duties of the position have changed significantly, employees should refer to the [Evaluation and Classification of Professional Positions Procedure](#). It is also a time to jointly identify any particular staff development needs that may assist or improve the employee's ability to carry out the duties of the position successfully.

(13) The constraints under which employees work make it imperative that supervisors plan:

a. employee leave takings;
b. the priority tasks to be achieved and the order in which they will be completed; and
c. the current tasks which may have to be discontinued or substantially modified.

(14) To ensure that employees are not required to work unreasonable hours to meet deadlines or to organise special events, supervisors must pay particular attention to the allocation of resources. At times it will be necessary to hire casual employees to assist with peak loads, or fixed-term contract employees for specific projects. Supervisors should clarify priorities with their supervisor, in situations where their current or available resources are unable to meet the expected demand.

Information and Staff development

(15) Staff and supervisors can access relevant training through My Learning in [Workday](#), to develop skills and knowledge regarding workload management.

Section 6 - Practical Guidance

(16) By actively managing workloads in accordance with the policies and procedures referred to above in conjunction with this Guideline, supervisors and employees should minimise concerns regarding working arrangements and workloads.

(17) The following practical guidance can help to ensure that there is a working environment that wherever possible benefits everyone.

For the Supervisor

(18) Understand Your Employee's Job.
Unless you understand the range and scope of the duties you expect employees to perform, it will be hard to assess and manage workloads. Ensure that your employees have an up-to-date PD which clearly reflects the job that they do. If the PD is out of date, it is time to review it - together. The annual Performance Review meeting offers the perfect opportunity, but if that is not due for some time an earlier review of the PD may be appropriate. At the same time you may be able to re-design the position and adjust workloads.

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(19) Discuss Expectations.
Ensure that your employees know exactly what is expected of them when performing their duties including, where appropriate, the priority in which tasks are required to be completed. This should be done with their input and should include mutually-agreed goals. Weekly meetings with employees to discuss tasks will help all involved understand what is required to be done.

(20) Discuss Timeframes.
If you need to allocate additional duties to employees, discuss these duties with them and how they will impact on other existing duties. It may be that you will need to re-prioritise tasks, agree on new timeframes, delete tasks or re-allocate jobs. It may be beneficial to trial any new arrangement and review the outcomes before making permanent changes.

(21) Reporting Lines.
In the majority of circumstances, employees will only have one supervisor. If employees are being asked to perform tasks by more than one supervisor, for example as a result of a job-share arrangement, it may make the situation difficult for the employee and lead to confusion and inefficiencies. It is desirable for all tasks to be channelled through the one supervisor wherever possible.

(22) Employee Development.
Employees may need additional skills to cope with their duties or an increasing workload. Courses in project management, spreadsheets, time management, etc. are all available, often free of charge via the Staff Development Program. However, additional employee development may not be the only solution to the effective management of workloads.

(23) Recognise Employees.
Recognise employees who have made extra efforts. A simple thank you will go a long way.

(24) Multi-Skilling.
As a supervisor you should ensure that where possible, other employees have the required skills to take on the work of absent team members or when times are busy. Investment in employee development for the purpose of creating multi-skilled team members has benefits to both employees and the University. Employee development opportunities should be provided equitably amongst employees. Be mindful of the ability of the employee to complete their own duties, as work can build up while they are covering duties associated with another employee's position. Such arrangements can cover short-term workload pressures, but longer term absences should be addressed by an appropriate temporary appointment.

(25) Secondments.
If you have a particularly busy period, you may be able to organise additional employees via secondments. Secondments are temporary arrangements and should not be established on a long-term basis.

(26) Avoid Loading Particular Employees.
It is easy to keep 'loading up' employees who you know will do a good job. Ensure that you take into account workloads and the equitable distribution of tasks amongst all employees. If you have employees who do not perform satisfactorily, address the issue immediately in accordance with the Diminished Performance and Unsatisfactory Performance Policy.

(27) Timesheets.
Monitor timesheets to identify work trends and recognise the potential for increasing workloads early.

(28) Review Staffing Arrangements.
Periodically review existing team arrangements to ensure that employee numbers are sufficient to perform the organisational unit's functions effectively and without excessive workloads. Consider employing additional employees

as appropriate.

For the Employee

(29) The first step is to discuss your workload with your supervisor.

    a. Be Specific.
Provide specific examples of your workload concerns. Rather than make general comments about your workload, give examples of occasions where you feel your workload has been excessive. Provide details of the volume and complexity of the duties you perform, and how long they take to complete. Outline any workflow concerns such as where other employees/organisational units have an impact on your ability to complete tasks efficiently.

    b. Discuss Priorities.
Discuss the work you are expected to complete. Outline the way in which you prioritise tasks so that you can have a discussion with your supervisor and agree on priorities. Talk with your supervisor about what is urgent, routine or non-essential.

    c. Provide Solutions.
Discuss any barriers or problems you encounter when completing your work. Sometimes supervisors are not aware of what the problems are. Bring any solutions or new ideas to help resolve issues to your supervisor's attention.

    d. Discuss Realistic Timeframes.
Discuss any timeframes imposed for getting work completed. If you feel the timeframes are unrealistic, it is best to talk about this before things get behind. For complex tasks, break these down into individual jobs and discuss realistic timeframes. This type of project plan will demonstrate what needs to be done and the timeframes allocated. It will help you keep on track and clearly demonstrate the complexity of tasks.

    e. Discuss Any Development Needs.
If you are required to take on new responsibilities, you should have the skills and competencies required. For example, if a new aspect of your position requires you to perform complex calculations and you do not know how to use a spreadsheet, this will result in both frustration and inefficiency. If you need training assistance, suggest this to your supervisor and explain how it will help you better perform your duties.

    f. Agree on an Action Plan.
During the discussion with your supervisor, agree on some possible solutions and a time frame to implement them. Also set up a time for the two of you to meet again to discuss progress towards better managing your workload.

Other Options

(30) Job Re-design.
Sometimes jobs grow and it is not feasible for one person to continue to manage all aspects of the position. If the job has changed it is important that an up-to-date PD is prepared. Listing each accountability and responsibility will assist your supervisor in understanding the job and its demands. Once this is completed, it may be possible to re-design the job to assist in managing your workload.

(31) Teamwork.
If the employee works as part of a team they may be able to ask other team members to assist them during busy periods. The employee or the supervisor may also wish to consider discussing any general workload concerns in a team meeting.

(32) Grievance Resolution.
Should an employee have concerns about the workload that has been assigned to them by their supervisor or manager, the employee (or their Representative) may raise the matter in the first instance with their supervisor.

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Should the matter not be resolved through these discussions, the employee may refer the matter to the next level of management for review. Where the concerns remain unresolved, an employee or their representative can utilise the Dispute Avoidance and Settlement Procedures, in the Enterprise Agreement.

Section 7 - Appendix

Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

Term	Definition
Enterprise Agreement	The [University of Queensland Enterprise Agreement 2021-2026](#), or as amended or replaced.
PD	Position Description.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	5th February 2024
Review Date	5th February 2027
Approval Authority	Chief Human Resources Officer
Approval Date	5th February 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Policy Owner	Phil Vaughan Chief Human Resources Officer
Enquiries Contact	Human Resources Division