Workload Allocation for Academic Staff Guideline

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) These Guidelines provide a framework for the planning and allocation of workloads for academic staff.

Section 2 - Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

Term	Definition
Enterprise Agreement	The University of Queensland Enterprise Agreement 2021-2026, or as amended or replaced
Director	Director of Institute or Centre
Head	Head of School

Section 3 - Guidelines Scope/Coverage

(2) These Guidelines apply to schools, institutes and centres and other units involved in the allocation of workload for Teaching and Research, Teaching-Focused, Clinical Academic and Research-Only academic staff.

(3) These Guidelines do not apply to the allocation of workload to casual academic staff.

Section 4 - Guidelines Statement

(4) The University of Queensland is committed to maintaining a framework for the planning, allocation and management of academic staff workload. As a background to this commitment, the Enterprise Agreement imposes obligations on Heads of School and Directors, as set out in the Enterprise Agreement:

a. Heads of Schools and Directors of Institutes and Centres must ensure that staff are consulted, and that workloads are allocated fairly and distributed equitably among staff in the school, institute or centre, taking into account reasonable consideration of family and personal responsibilities.
b. To achieve this and to monitor workloads of staff generally within the school, institute or centre, the Head of School or Director, in accordance with these Guidelines, will:
    i. develop, in consultation with academic staff of the school, institute or centre and implement, an agreed method of calculating comparative workloads of academic staff, and presenting them publicly within the school, institute or centre;
    ii. where it is feasible and agreed by the School as part of the method of calculating comparative workloads of academic staff, workload relating to teaching will be expressed in equivalent hours;
    iii. provide flexible guidelines for the development and on-going management of acceptable workloads for individual staff members having regard to the school, institute or centre's needs and the individual's expertise and research and professional interests and level of appointment;
    iv. the agreed maximum number of hours which a full-time academic can be required to work in a calendar year is 1725;

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v. academic staff may, by agreement, be assigned to teach or convene courses in each of three consecutive semesters where that includes a summer semester. Where academic staff agree to work during summer semester in this context, this will be recognised in the School's workloads allocations by provision of an equivalent teaching-free or convening-free time during the rest of the year, or other agreed offset;

vi. strike an appropriate balance among teaching (including supervision), scholarship or research, and engagement for each individual (relevant to their designation as Teaching and Research, Teaching Focussed or Research Only staff) so that the overall work carried out by the combined staff meets the goals and objectives of the school, institute or centre; and the agreed professional development needs of staff members;

vii. changes to the Guidelines will be subject to consultation with the Academic Staff Consultative Committee (ASCC) and affected academic staff. The maximum number of hours specified in the Agreement and guidelines will not be varied within the nominal life of the Agreement.

(5) The aim of these Guidelines is to help Heads of School and Directors to plan, allocate and manage workloads through full and reasonable consultation with all members of academic staff to provide transparency and accountability. Although certain important principles should apply across all schools, institutes and centres, detailed prescriptive guidelines are unlikely to be helpful, given the diverse nature of the University, its schools, institutes, centres and disciplines.

(6) Both the principles and other considerations set out below need to take into account the availability and use of various tools and methods used by schools, institutes and centres across the University to identify, measure and compare academic staff workloads.

Section 5 - Principles

Equity

(7) It is essential that the allocation of workload within schools, institutes and centres is equitable. The allocation of academic duties should be performed on a basis that recognises and promotes the University's policies relating to equity as set out in the University's policies, procedures and guidelines on Equity and Diversity. Equity does not imply that all staff perform the same tasks in the same proportions, but rather that a roughly equal load (taken across all areas of work and over a reasonable period of time) is allocated to, and undertaken by, each staff member. There should be reasonable consideration of family and personal responsibilities, early career status, fraction of appointment, etc.

Balance

(8) Over a period of time, the duties which staff are expected to perform should strike an appropriate balance among teaching (including supervision), scholarship or research, and service and engagement for each individual (relevant to their designation as Teaching and Research, Teaching-Focused, Clinical Academic or Research Only staff) so that the overall allocated work carried out by the combined staff meets the goals and objectives of the school, institute or centre, and the agreed professional development needs of staff.

(9) The importance of balance means that:

a. Teaching activities need to accommodate the full range of teaching-related tasks, and take into account such factors as student numbers;

b. Shortfall of activity in one area needs to be compensated for by the allocation of greater responsibilities in another area. So, for example, in the case of roles where research or scholarship are expected, schools, centres

or institutes may choose a higher allocation of teaching and/or service/engagement for staff with low research or scholarship activity or output, although this should not be seen by individual staff as a way of replacing research activity. Conversely, schools, centres or institutes may choose a lower allocation of teaching and/or service/engagement for staff with strong research or scholarship activity or output, although this should not be seen by individual staff as a way of replacing teaching duties; and

c. The demands of different types of service/engagement roles need to be taken into account, particularly administrative roles important to the operation of a school, institute or centre.

(10) The overall balance of activities is also likely to include both duties allocated by the Head of School or Director (such as teaching, supervision and administration) and those activities in which the amount of work involved is largely self-determined (such as research and some forms of professional service). The balance between these kinds of activity should not be such as to remove the opportunity to exercise the high level of professional autonomy which is one of the most valued characteristics of academic work.

(11) On the other hand, the exercise of professional autonomy implies a responsibility to perform, and balance cannot be interpreted as a right to undertake certain kinds of activity irrespective of performance or irrespective of required duties. Staff are expected to perform satisfactorily in all areas, whether it is workload specifically allocated by the Head of School or Director, or activity of a more general, largely self-directed nature.

Total Load and Reasonableness

(12) The actual hours of work for academic staff, or the span of hours, are not prescribed, nor is it always easy to quantify the work associated with particular activities. However, there is an expectation of reasonableness in the total work required of an individual under a workload allocation policy.

(13) The Enterprise Agreement provides that the agreed maximum number of hours which a full-time academic can be required to work in a calendar year is 1725. This would equate under a workload allocation model to a maximum of approximately 37.5 hours per week over a 46-week working year (52 weeks less annual leave and public holidays).

(14) In the context of overall allocated workload, notions of what is reasonable will emerge from the methods agreed to calculate comparative workloads of academic staff and present them publicly within the school, institute or centre. This practice will highlight changes in workload over time and will facilitate discussion of what is reasonable within the respective school, institute or centre context.

(15) Whatever norms of reasonableness emerge, staff should not need to exceed them in order to achieve a satisfactory level of performance. Allocated loads should not inhibit staff from doing more to achieve their personal academic and career goals.

Transparency

(16) The method used within each school, institute or centre to calculate and allocate comparative workloads of staff must be transparent, developed in consultation with staff, readily understood and be in a form that can be presented publicly within the school, institute or centre. The method used should be appropriate to the discipline.

(17) Where it is feasible and agreed by the school, institute or centre as part of the method of calculating comparative workloads of academic staff, workloads relating to teaching will be expressed in equivalent hours, but can also be expressed in other ways, such as through the use of a workload tool.

Section 6 - Measuring Workloads

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Variety of Academic Activities

(18) Academic activities are traditionally categorised under the headings of teaching, research and service/engagement. However, within these categories there is a wide range of activities which academic staff may undertake, depending on the nature of their academic appointment. These include, but are not restricted to, the following.

Teaching

a. Preparation and delivery of lectures.
b. Preparation and conduct of tutorials.
c. Preparation and supervision of practical classes.
d. Course coordination.
e. Clinical teaching and supervision.
f. Supervision of honours and research students.
g. Marking of examinations and assignments.
h. Compilation and submission of examination results.
i. Student consultation (during semester and pre- and post-examinations).
j. Preparation and delivery of material in flexible mode.
k. Teaching in summer sessions (which may involve any of the above activities).
l. Teaching in weekend seminars or inter-semester periods.
m. Teaching in intensive mode (e.g. one week professional education courses).
n. Cross-campus teaching.
o. Off-shore teaching.

Research

a. Individual or team research in a variety of settings (office, laboratory, library, study, field, other institution).
b. Maintenance of currency in the area.
c. Preparation of grant submissions and funding proposals.
d. Writing and submission of monographs, journal articles etc.
e. Supervision of research staff.
f. Attendance and presentations at conferences.
g. Commercialisation of research.

Service with the University

a. Administrative roles at the school, faculty or University levels.
b. Membership of committees at the school, faculty or University levels.
c. Supervision or mentoring of other staff.

Service and Engagement (Unremunerated) Outside the University

a. Administrative roles or committee membership in professional bodies.
b. Membership of government bodies.
c. Membership of commercial boards of Directors.
d. Membership of editorial boards or conference program committees.
e. Provision of advice to governments, professions and educational or community bodies.

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(19) It is important to note that not all the activities listed above would necessarily form part of allocated workloads within a school, institute or centre and, depending on the school, institute or centre and its strategic objectives, there could be others included. Some activities (e.g. in the research category) would form part of what an academic staff member chooses to spend time on, rather than the activity being part of their allocated workload.

Weighting Academic Activities

(20) It is common practice to moderate the variety of academic activities using other criteria (such as class size, types of assessment items, types of lectures, supervision types, nature and quality of research outputs etc.). Different schools, institutes or centres will approach these matters differently, depending on the discipline and the school's, institute's or centre's strategic objectives. Weights can be attached to the types of academic activities accordingly. The patterns of academic activity vary widely across disciplines. While there are common elements, the balance between them may differ from one discipline to another. Furthermore, the amount of time required for each activity may be dependent on the discipline.

(21) Because of differences among disciplines, it is not always possible to quantify the work associated with a particular academic activity (e.g. giving a lecture, supervising a PhD student) in a way that is valid for the whole University. However, it is usually possible to do this locally within a school, institute or centre, and it is expected that there will be similarities across related disciplines.

(22) Weighting can also take account of such factors as the likelihood that there is generally more work involved in designing a new course than in taking over an existing one, and there is generally more work involved in taking over an existing course from another staff member than in a staff member repeating a course which he or she has previously taught.

Section 7 - Allocating Workloads

Career Development and Aspirations

(23) University staff represent all stages of career development, from initial appointment to retirement. The University's expectations of staff legitimately vary according to level of experience and appointment. Such expectations are set out in more detail in University policies, in particular in the Criteria for Academic Performance Policy

(24) At the same time, staff expectations of the University may vary according to the stage of career development. In particular, junior staff may expect duties to be allocated with a view to nurturing their development, and all staff can expect an opportunity to demonstrate performance which leads to promotion. Such expectations are recognised in the University's Staff Development Policy.

School, Institute or Centre Goals and Priorities

(25) Heads of School and Directors are responsible to Senate (through the Executive Deans and the Vice-Chancellor) for the effective management of their schools, institutes or centres. Managing workloads is part of that responsibility.

(26) At the same time, workload allocation must be strategic (that is, aligned with key budget and reputational drivers for the school, institute or centre), and designed to help the school, institute or centre meet its goals and priorities. Workload allocation must also be geared to core school, institute or centre activities rather than to all possible academic activities in which individual staff might choose to engage. In this context, the school-based and institute-based Performance Frameworks are relevant.

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Consultancy, Secondary Employment and Internal Work

(27) Many staff undertake paid consultancy or other outside work within the limits of the Consultancy, Secondary Employment and Internal Work Policy.

Other Matters to be Considered

(28) The following specific matters should be considered when developing the school, institute or centre workload allocations:

a. A Head of School or Director may allocate workload in any area of academic activity, subject to the staff member's type of academic appointment;
b. Individual workloads need to be a topic for discussion in the annual performance appraisal of each academic staff member from Levels A to E;
c. Balance and equity in allocated workload may not be achieved in every year, but will normally be assessed over a period of two to three years, depending on the career development needs of staff;
d. Allocated work will reflect the academic role and specific job description (some academic appointments, such as those funded by external agencies, may have specific duties or limits prescribed);
e. The allocations should strike an appropriate balance among teaching (including supervision), scholarship or research, and engagement for each individual (relevant to their designation as Teaching and Research, Teaching-Focused, Clinical Academic or Research Only staff) so that the overall work carried out by the combined staff meets the goals and objectives of the school, institute or centre, and the agreed professional development needs of staff;
f. In this context, the allocated workloads will recognise the need of academic staff (depending on their type of appointment and duty statement) for time for research and other scholarly activity;
g. The allocated work will normally reflect the level of appointment of staff, with generally greater levels of responsibility and leadership expected of more senior staff;
h. The total allocated workload will reflect the fraction of appointment;
i. Consistent with the University's Staff Development Policy, in assigning workload a Head of School or Director will take into account the career development of all staff. Consistent with the University's policies, procedures and guidelines on Equity and Diversity, the Head of School or Director will also take reasonable account of family and personal responsibilities and (where appropriate and relevant) other special circumstances of staff;
j. The specific needs of staff undertaking higher degree study which relates to their work, will be recognised;
k. Academic staff may, by agreement, be assigned to teach or convene courses in each of three consecutive semesters where that includes a summer semester. Where academic staff agree to work during summer semester in this context, this will be recognised in the school's, institute's or centre's workload allocations by provision of an equivalent teaching-free or convening-free time during the following year, or other agreed offset;
l. The workload implications for staff involved in broad curriculum revision within an academic unit will be recognised;
m. Staff required to perform work across different campuses, or off-campus, will have the extent of essential inter-campus or other relevant travel factored into workload considerations.

Section 8 - Implementation

Workload Recognition Tool

(29) A web-based workload recognition tool is currently under development by the University for use by schools, institutes and centres in workload allocation. The University is developing this tool to assist schools, institutes and

centres with academic workload measurement and allocation, and to provide a simple but detailed and transparent method of identifying, measuring and comparing academic workloads.

(30) Other existing workload allocation methods and tools are also available within schools, institutes and centres and can continue to be used.

Management of the Guidelines

(31) Should a staff member have concerns about the workload that has been allocated to them by their supervisor or manager, the staff member may raise the matter in the first instance through the Staff Grievance Resolution Procedure. Under this Procedure, the first step is for the staff member to approach their supervisor. Should the matter not be resolved by the end of Step 2 of the Staff Grievance Resolution Procedure or later, the staff member may choose to move to the Dispute Settlement procedure under the Enterprise Agreement. Any steps taken initially under the Staff Grievance Resolution Procedure will constitute steps taken under the Dispute Settlement procedure.

(32) Changes to these Guidelines will be subject to consultation with the Academic Staff Consultative Committee and affected academic staff.

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