

Allocation of Academic Workloads (National)

To be read in conjunction with the Local Text on the Determination of Duties of Lecturing Staff

1.1 Purpose

These guidelines are issued to the institutions in the HEFC sector to enable them, to seek to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) to achieve education provision of a high standard;
- (ii) to recognise the professional contribution which lecturers make to the HE sector;
- (ii) to avoid lecturers undertaking unreasonable workloads;
- (iv) to enable the distribution of work to be carried out locally and fairly within an institution taking into account the local circumstances.

1.2 Principles

- 1.2.1 The duties and responsibilities of a lecturer are inherently of a professional nature and are wide ranging. They include direct teaching, tutorial guidance to students' learning, research and other forms of scholarly activity, curriculum development, educational management and administration, participation in quality assurance procedures, recruitment and admission of students, staff appraisal, income generating activities, and representing the institution on or to appropriate external bodies.
- 1.2.2 The proportion of time an individual should devote to any of these activities is a matter for professional judgment, which is necessarily made on an individual basis, bearing in mind the needs of both the individual lecturer and the institution.
- 1.2.3 Both staff and management jointly have a responsibility to seek and enhance the quality of educational provision, but at the same time to increase access to HE to all sectors of the population, since the extent to which this is achieved is also a measure of the quality of the service. To this end there is mutual concern to improve flexibility and to bring about changes in working practices and methods of delivery, supported by a commitment to the professional development of staff.
- 1.2.4 However, workloads which damage performance and which are detrimental to the lecturer, students and the service must be avoided through good management practice in which academic managers (Heads of Departments, Subject Lecturers, Course Tutors etc.) and their colleagues collectively determine optimum working practices which safeguard standards for all aspects of a lecturer's role, and for individuals to manage their time in a fully professional way towards individual and corporate objectives.

1.3 Working Hours

- 1.3.1 On the matter of the working week, it is not appropriate in a professional contract to be specific as the exact hours of-availability for duties; moreover, it is accepted that in the case of the obligation to undertake research and other scholarly activity that obligation will not necessarily require attendance at the institution. However, in relation to teaching duties a reasonable norm may be helpful at institutional level. Such a norm should be comparable with those of other employees in the institution and with those of related professional groups; it is not to be regarded as either a minimum or maximum.
- 1.3.2 Due to the range of teaching and learning methods involved and the different needs in various subject areas, a precise specification of teaching hours is neither possible nor appropriate in a professional contract. As a general guide, however, an individual lecturer may normally expect to have formal scheduled teaching responsibilities for students within a band of 14 to 18 hours a week on average over the anticipated teaching year of that lecturer.
- 1.3.3 Formal scheduled teaching responsibilities should not exceed 18 hours in any week or a total of 550 hours in a teaching year. However, this provision will not apply in subject areas where the nature of the curriculum and teaching style make it inappropriate such as aspects of Teacher Education, Art, Design, Performing Arts, Music: in these subject areas schedules will be determined in accordance with paragraph 1.3.2 above.
- 1.3.4 Where possible, in arranging a lecturer's timetable special regard should be given to the family responsibilities of individual lecturers.

1.4 Factors to be taken into account

- 1.4.1 The specific teaching responsibilities of an individual lecturer, and the time to be devoted to other duties, is a matter for discussion between the lecturer and the relevant line manager (e.g. Head of Department) and will be such as to enable the lecturer to be effective in the overall discharge of his/her professional responsibilities. In allocating responsibilities, the following factors shall be taken into account:
- (i) the full range and extent of actual duties to be performed (see paragraph 1.2.1);
 - (ii) personal development needs both as a teacher and a subject specialist, and in relation to research and other scholarly activity and to overall career development;
 - (iii) teaching experience;
 - (iv) the numbers of students for whom there would be overall responsibility;
 - (v) teaching group sizes, with particular regard for methods requiring interaction (e.g. seminars), and the assessment implications;
 - (vi) differing subject needs;
 - (vii) the teaching methods appropriate;

- (viii) the number and range of the curricula to be taught, with particular consideration given to the development and delivery of new (for the lecturer) and innovative courses;
- (ix) the desirability of achieving a reasonable balance of activities;
- (x) wider internal and external responsibilities.

1.4.2 Regard for the implications in lecturers' workloads should be had at the appropriate stages of course and institutional planning, particularly in relation to those courses having specific professional demands.

1.5 Procedure

1.5.1 Determination of a lecturer's duties will normally be achieved by annual consultation between the Head of Department and the individual lecturer, and should be linked to the institution's procedures for staff appraisal. However, there should be fairness in the allocation of overall duties and equal opportunities for all staff to develop their professional skills. Moreover, it will be important to maintain an ongoing review of the situation so as to adjust to changing circumstances and to deal with any difficulties which might occur. To these ends:

- (i) the outcome of the process should be open within each peer group (Department);
- (ii) senior management has a responsibility to maintain an overview to ensure a measure of consistency across the institution in the application of the guidelines;
- (iii) individual institutions should ensure that there exist effective procedures to deal with grievances or disputes over the allocation of duties and the application of these guidelines, at both the individual and collective levels. Where appropriate, the recognised lecturer unions should be involved at both levels.