

Academic work plans – how do we achieve equity, efficiency and transparency?

Key Points

1. Current work plans are governed by separate Work Plan Policies for each School and Institute. They do not achieve comparative justice in work plans, because academics from different schools can receive quite different work allocations in percentage terms for doing the same work. They also cost UWS more than they should because many work plans do not require sufficient productivity.
2. In research workloads, many policies reward people who do not produce any or many concrete research outputs, or they over-reward people who produce too few. In teaching, many work plans do not seem to align the required percentage of work allocated with the number of face to face (f/f) hours taught. We need to take immediate action on this as it is unsustainable and puts particular pressure on the casual academic budget line in schools.
3. To improve this for 2013, we have put a proposal to the UWPC. In research, this suggests a cap on publications outputs of 20% of an individual's total work plan (25% if it includes an authored book), as currently we over-publish but under-perform in external grants. In teaching, it requires a 75% f/f teaching load should equal 14 hours per week as specified in the Agreement. This would be applied across all Schools, and would lead to significant changes to our 2012 practices.
4. We need a longer term and more sustainable solution to this problem. This could involve developing a common UWS Work Plan Policy which embeds a common way of describing, measuring and allocating academic work across Schools and Institutes, to ensure we have institution wide approaches which are transparent and which deliver on comparative justice and efficiency in academic work allocations.
5. Below are some key questions to address as we develop a longer term, more equitable and more sustainable approach to academic workloads. These are:
 - a. Should UWS have a single Work Plan Policy to replace the current multiple academic unit policies as a means of ensuring comparative justice, sustainability and transparency in academic work allocation?
 - b. In terms of allocating work time for *research*, should a Work Plan Policy focus on measuring the actual research output achieved by academics?
 - c. In terms of allocating work time for *research*, should a Work Plan Policy reward the gaining of external grants more, and publications less?
 - d. In terms of allocating work time for *teaching*, is an approach based on the numbers of students taught (EFTSL) preferable to one based on the number of hours taught?
 - e. Are there other issues or solutions that should be considered as we move to re-framing the way in which academic work is allocated to staff?

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Table No.:

Table leader:

Table note taker:

Please consider and discuss some or all of the following key questions to be addressed in developing a longer term, more equitable and more sustainable approach to academic workloads:

- a. What do we need to consider in working towards a single Work Plan Policy at UWS to replace the current multiple academic unit policies as a means of ensuring comparative justice, sustainability and transparency in academic work allocation?

- b. In terms of allocating work time for *research*, should a Work Plan Policy focus on measuring the actual research output achieved by academics? What issues and solutions do we need to consider?

- c. In terms of allocating work time for *research*, should a Work Plan Policy reward the gaining of external grants more, and publications less? What issues and solutions do we need to consider?

- d. In terms of allocating work time for *teaching*, is an approach based on the numbers of students taught (EFTSL) preferable to one based on the number of hours taught? What issues and solutions do we need to consider?

- e. What other issues or solutions should be considered as we move to reframe the way in which academic work is allocated to staff?