

u+we in solidarity

Newsletter of UWE Branch of the UCU

1st November 2012

The Workload Model

The university is to introduce a new workload model in November. Some changes within it fulfil the agreement we reached to end our dispute with them last June. We want you to know exactly how far this agreement has been implemented so far:

- We required the university to cease requiring staff to work more than 550 bundles per year. This was agreed and managers have been informed and should have been implemented. So if anyone at all has been asked to do more than 550 hours you should let your faculty reps know immediately so that it can be rectified. This is pro-rata for those working fractional contracts. 550 is the nationally agreed contract time.
- We required the university to increase the flexibility of the model to deal with contingency situations and the need for additional work. The university agreed and has aimed at 10% of the 550 teaching bundles. So there is no reason anyone should be near 550 bundles at this stage of the year. We understand that in fact faculties are only using 3% and we are asking the university executive to clarify this situation which seems to be so far below what we were led to believe. Another reason we wanted flexibility was to allow staff time to complete all of those necessary activities that were not explicitly recognised in the workload model. Managers were asked not to allocate more than 500 bundles at the start of the year to allow for these situations. We believe that most managers have ignored this instruction.
- We demanded that managers could no longer require anyone to work over 550 bundles except in a real emergency – that is to cover a totally unforeseen circumstance, and even then overwork was to be avoided if possible and rectified as soon as possible. This was another reason we asked for greater flexibility. This was agreed and you should not be asked to do any overwork at all.

If last year you worked more than 550 bundles you should be compensated. Our agreement says that those with large excesses of workload in 2011-12 can opt to receive either equivalent compensatory time in the 2012-13 allocation of workload or overtime pay, or a combination of the two. The choice is *yours* and **not** your manager's.

Payments in October

Faculties were asked to produce the figures in September for payment to be made in October pay packets. FBL and HLS have made good progress with this, but ACE and FET have failed to implement this instruction in a timely fashion. We are asking the university executives to insist that these faculties get their act together and sort it out immediately. We are also very very upset about the rate of compensation offered which is only £50 per bundle. This values your additional work at only £20 per hour which is well below your normal pay rate. We are now discussing with management what they intend to do about this. It may be we need to ask you to take a collective action about these two matters. We will keep you informed.

We want members to feedback to us how well this arrangement is working. Have you received compensation for overworking last year? Please let us know if you are unsatisfied with how you are being treated.

The New Model

We asked for the workload model to be changed to recognise teaching related activities. This included making assessment an explicitly accounted activity.

The university agreed and in the new workload model assessment is an explicit activity with a specific time allocated for assessment activities, and includes time for resit marking. It does not explicitly recognise the requirements of double marking. We are pursuing this. The amount of time allowed for assessment is slightly higher in the new model than in the old one. We argued for a larger amount of time for assessment but could not reach agreement. Your feedback on this is required.

The new model differentiates between undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. The university believe that postgraduate teaching requires less time than undergraduate teaching. We seek your feedback about this.

We asked that the new model worked in hours rather than bundles, because we think hours are a clearer measure of work, and one that all staff understand. The university are still using bundles, but in April

they will launch a website where you can calculate your workload in both hours and bundles. We will be asking the university to consult us about how this is presented.

The university wanted any changes to be cost neutral. In fact they have made a small increase in their resource by about 0.7%. We are going to campaign for them to increase their investment in teaching. Until we succeed and persuade them that they need to do this, a consequence of changes in the model is that where one module gains there is a consequential loss in other modules. This is outside of the scope of the agreement we reached when we settled the dispute over workload. The impact of the changes will not be clear until December when the new model has been implemented and student numbers are known. We must have your feedback (positive and negative) about how this new model has affected you and your teaching. So enclosed with this newsletter is a spreadsheet for you to compare how your module bundle allocations are changed by the new model.

We also provided the university with a list of unrewarded activities where we wanted them to clarify. These activities were those provided by you in response to the survey last year as well as subsequent activities you told your reps about. We have not had any response to our little list (it is quite a long list) and we are actively demanding that this task is completed now so that the situation is clear for all staff. It is never too late to add to the list, so if you undertake activities that you feel should get recognition but that do not get bundles please let us know asap. We are meeting to look at this list next month, so don't delay tell us about your unbundled/underbundled activities.

We also required that the university honour the national contract by making sure staff did not average more than 18 hours teaching contact per week. This was agreed in principle but no detailed arrangement about how this would work was reached, We continue to negotiate this matter, and we need feedback from you about how this affects your work.

Overall we have made important gains but there are still enormous improvements to be made and the university needs to complete implementation of our agreement forthwith.

New Academic Related Staff Rep

We would like to welcome Lysandra Marshall to the branch executive. Lysandra will be taking on the role of representative for academic related staff.

Stress Awareness Activities Next Week

The workload model has caused significant stress for our members and we want to know about it. So please let us know if you are suffering any symptoms of stress and what you think is the cause.

We urge all members to take part in the stress awareness activities taking place next week and already circulated by the university.

In the meantime, the branch executive will be organising a stress survey for all members. This will start in a couple of weeks.

Module Leaders' Duties

At the OGM held last week, it became clear that certain module leaders, notably at Glenside, are performing duties that we believe should be part of the role of a cluster leader or head of department. Such duties include organising cover for absent and sick members of staff, and the minutiae of organising day to day timetabling of staff. There are nationally agreed role models for each staff grade, and we believe that such activities belong firmly to the manager. Where it is sensible that such activities be devolved to module leaders and module teams, then this should be recognised and appropriately compensated.

If you believe that you're being called upon to perform duties that are above your grade then you should discuss this with your local faculty rep. Once we know the scale of the problem then we can take further steps to address it.

Workload Model - Executive Statement

This issue of **u+we in solidarity** describes our best understanding of the new workload model. You may hear comments from senior management that the university has "worked closely" with this branch, but it is important that members are aware that this "close working" is strictly limited to the university telling us their plans and then politely listening while we pass comment. Some of our views have been taken into account, but the current model is most definitely **not** the result of joint collaborative working between the university and this union. It has been devised by the university and what goes into it is controlled solely by the university. It is *their* model, not ours.

The university is pressing ahead with the implementation of this model, but members can be assured that we shall be monitoring the situation most closely.