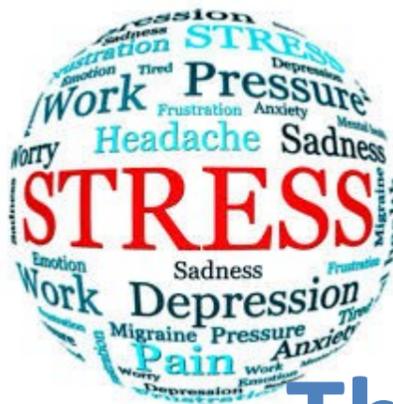


UCU UWE Branch

November 2014



The Stress Edition

In this month's edition we are focusing on stress:

Are you feeling the pressure of high workloads?

Are you finding it hard to take your annual leave?

Are you finding it hard to take your scholarly leave?

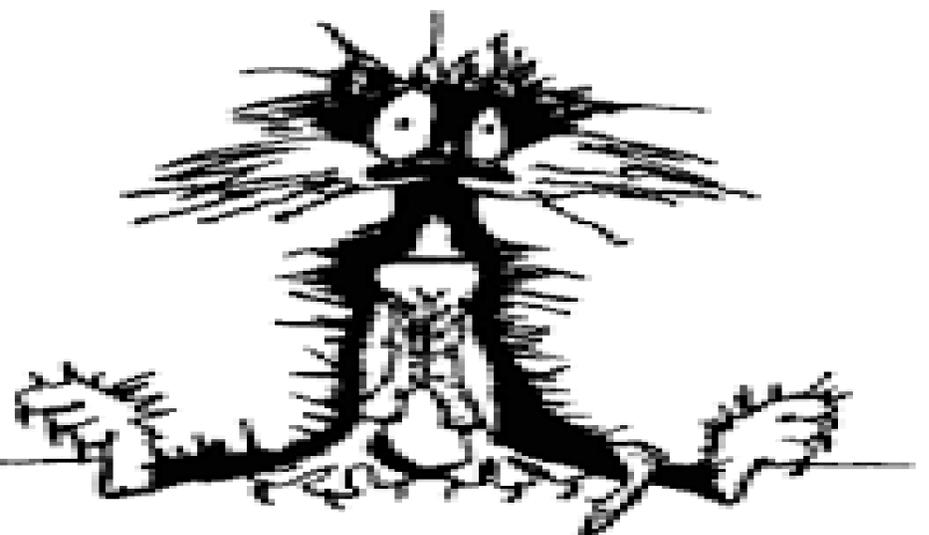
Do you feel that your health is suffering?

In this edition we have useful information from Sandy Thomas, Glenside UCU REP and Terry Bacon, Bower Ashton UCU REP. We also reflect on the Workload survey conducted by the Branch in the summer.

There are also useful hints and tips on how to manage your workload and your stress, as well as an example of a poster to put up in your workplace to remind us all that there is every need to support ourselves and consider each other during such pressurised times.



Before Work



After Work

Sandy Thomas GLENSIDE REP



Stress and Workload

Are you affected by stress? Is this related to your workload at UWE?

The Health and Safety Executive gives six guidelines for managers to tackle stress at work, including the following guideline which relates specifically to workload, work patterns and the work environment:

Management Standard – ‘demands’

employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

the organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work;

people's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands;

jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees; and

employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed.

Employees also have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and of others who may be affected by their actions.

Employees should:

Inform their employer if they feel the pressure of the job is putting them or anyone else at risk of ill health

Suggest ways in which the work might be organised to alleviate the stress.

Inform their employer if they are suffering from a medical condition that appears to be long-term and is affecting their ability to carry out day to day tasks, including memory and learning.

Discuss any reasonable adjustments that could be made to assist them in performing their job.



Are you well bundled for the winter or actually buckling under the strain?

Keep in touch and let us know.....

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UCU believe that demands on staff are not achievable within reasonable hours, and our concerns are not always addressed. We suggest that if any staff have concerns about the potential for this pressure to put them at the risk of ill health, they should inform their manager in writing in accordance with the above guideline.

We have compiled a list of Frequently Asked Questions that we are asking management to work with us to answer and publish.. We believe they represent some of the concerns that staff would like to have addressed.

Workload and Absence FAQs



Do you know where I might find an outline of the expectations of a module leader?

How should I deal with the stress caused by my workload which looks okay in total but is unbalanced between semesters?

Do I have the right to refuse to take on extra work if my HOD has instructed me to do so but I am running two modules simultaneously so I can do very little else at that time?

Who should I go to now about my inaccurate workload allocation? I highlighted this to my HOD and AHOD at the start of the academic year and I have sent several emails to them, but this has still not been resolved?

I had WLB removed from my allocation at the end of the year after I had done additional work – is it too late to sort this out now- is there a cut off date for this? What should I do if I believe I am doing a task that has not been given enough bundles?

Can I carry over scholarly or annual leave which I was unable to take last year because (as a module leader) I had to mark at the last minute when other staff dropped out? Who should we take workload issues to when we have no functioning HOD or no available manager?

If I am off sick, should I expect to see my bundle quota on WAMS reduced by the equivalent amount (even if no-one has done any of my work)?

What should I do if my workload allocation is late and I cannot therefore plan my leave? (My HOD says they do not have time to meet up and discuss this and I don't want to push them because I know how busy they are?)

As a researcher who also does some teaching, am I entitled to any time for scholarly activity? How is this calculated?

Should I continue to spend time attempting to recruit students when this is not being recognised in my WAMS?

Can I take the extra bundles I worked last year as a reduction in bundles for the current year's workload rather than payment?

Is there a date for calculating over bundling for the previous year and agreeing payment or bundle reduction for the following year? How does this process work?

Is there any further information I can refer to in order to calculate the bundles I can allocate (as a module leader) to each member of the module team? I do not understand the online calculator and would like to see a written explanation of how module leaders should allocate hours.

How do I know whether a colleague is already over bundled in order to allocate them work in my module? (Especially if they are on leave or not available at the time).

What are my rights if I have been told to undertake a project but have not been given any bundles for it? Can I refuse to do this?

Where is the time for bidding for research contracts accounted for in the workload model (for a researcher with no scholarly activity time)?

When and how should I tell my line manager about the extra work I have taken on?

Can I get bundles reinstated when my line manager refuses to allocate them despite the fact that I have already done the work?

What are the consequences of not submitting my sickness form or informing HR that I have been unable to work due to sickness?

Why do I need to fill in a leave card for Annual leave? Do I need to do the same for Scholarly Activity?

What counts as a 'large module' under the new system of calculation? (Last year, it was modules in excess of 200 students.) Do you have any idea?

Do bundles for protected characteristics need to be re-negotiated every year or can they be allocated as a permanent support for staff with long term disability?

Are bundles for protected characteristics set at a standard percentage or are they determined according to individual need?

Views from Bower Ashton: Terryl Bacon, UCU REP, reflects on the UCU Branch opinion regarding the recent Workload stress survey:

**Challenging Results from the New UCU Workload Stress Survey Reveals
Workplace management issues at UWE**

A recent survey of its membership by the University and College Lecturers Union (the world's largest post 16 education union) shows a very significant level of discontent and frustration amongst many UWE lecturers. Part of the frustration lies in the fact that almost half of lecturers in our university are on casualised contracts. This means that they are paid for only 10 months of the year at a rate of pay which, when the requirements for preparation, assessments, meetings, tutorials and seminars are taken into account, works out at about £10 per hour. Many of those with this type of what we might call a 'McContract' are guaranteed no more 30 hours of work per year!

For these lecturers, despite years of costly study to achieve postgraduate degrees, there is little hope of being able to take foreign holidays, much less buy their own homes. Add to this that those lecturers lucky enough to be on more secure, full-time contracts are not a great deal better off owing to unacknowledged hours of work required each week to do their jobs to a reasonable standard.

Lecturing has always paid less than comparable jobs in industry. To teach is a vocation and most lecturers went into their field because of a love of shared learning. Many are thinking of leaving the profession because of the current pressure of the job. So when lecturers don't respond promptly to emails, or don't return student assessments quickly enough, or don't manage adequate warning regarding last-minute changes in undergraduate programs, or, worse still, seem tired and distracted, can we blame them? Put the blame where it belongs: on a corporate style management which pays lip service to the student experience and treats teaching staff with disdain.



Burnt out?



Four out of five UCU
members say they
suffer **stress** at work