



# UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

## ACADEMIC WORKLOAD ALLOCATION POLICY

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\*Where the University deems it necessary, the policy may be reviewed earlier than the stated review period

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Purpose**

1.1.1 This policy establishes the basic principles for fair, equitable, transparent and sustainable allocation of workload at institutional level for members of University of Limerick faculty staff. This policy provides line managers (Heads of Department/Schools/Executive Deans) with an effective institutional approach for the planning and allocation of academic workload.

1.1.2 It is expected that all academic staff make a full contribution to the goals of the University, Faculties and Departments/Schools; however, this policy does not seek to alter the relative flexibility of working time of academic staff.

## **1.2 Scope**

### **1.2.1 To whom does the policy apply?**

This policy applies to members of University of Limerick faculty i.e. all Heads of Department/Schools, Assistant Deans, Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors.

### **1.2.2 In what situations does the policy apply?**

This policy applies in cases where workloads are allocated to members of University of Limerick faculty by line managers (Heads of Departments/Schools/Executive Deans).

### **1.2.3 Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure is implemented and monitored?)**

The line manager (Heads of Department/School/Executive Dean) is responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented as approved. The Director of Human Resources is responsible for policy review and compliance.

## **1.3 Definitions**

### **1.3.1 Workload Allocation Model**

The University of Limerick Workload Allocation Model is an institutional level model which seeks to allocate work to members of Faculty in a manner which is fair, equitable and transparent. The academic workload allocation model provides a framework for workload to be allocated to teaching (40%), research (40%) and service activities (20%). Workload should be allocated by the line manager in a manner which provides for averaging/balancing over a three-year period.

## 1.3.2 Academic Activity

- 1.3.2.1 Teaching, Research and Service are all valued activities. The line manager (Head of Department/Head of School / Executive Dean) will ensure an equitable distribution across the range of these valued academic activities. The UL Workload Allocation Framework provides for an allocation of 40% of research time, 40% of time to teaching and 20% to service activities.
- 1.3.2.2 Teaching responsibilities require academic staff to achieve a satisfactory standard of instructional competence, to contribute to their Departments / Faculties curriculum diversity and richness, to foster students' critical and creative abilities and to share equitably the annual instructional responsibilities of their Departments / Faculties.
- 1.3.2.3 Research responsibilities require academic staff to maintain a programme of research, scholarship and/or artistic creativity through which they should aspire to a national and international reputation as scholars. Academic staff will publish and aspire to disseminate research in high-quality, internationally prominent journals and books and carry out their research in accordance with disciplinary benchmarks/subject norms as set out with the discipline area/Faculty and the university.
- 1.3.2.4 Service refers to the annual contributions that academic staff make to University governance, its various committees, its various leadership roles including course leadership, their profession, the development of their discipline locally, nationally and internationally, and to the furthering of positive relations between the University and its various external communities.

## 2. Context

### 2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context

2.1.1 The following legislation informs this policy:

#### **The Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997, as amended**

Academic staff are expected to carry out their duties in a manner which is consistent with the Organisation of Working Time Act.

#### **Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, as amended**

The Equality Employment Acts 1998-2015, as amended, prohibit discrimination under the nine grounds (gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community) in employment.

Accordingly, the University of Limerick Workload Allocation Model (WAM) recognises equitable workload allocation under these nine grounds and

supports UL's strategic objective to continue implementing and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion.

## **2.2 Regulatory Context**

### **2.2.1 Academic Role Profiles and Academic Contract of Employment**

The Academic Role Profiles and Academic Contracts of Employment of the University of Limerick set out the teaching, research and service duties for academic members of staff as assigned by the President or their nominee when required to do so.

## **3. Policy Statements**

### **3.1 Principles for Workload Allocation**

#### **3.1.1 Principles Underpinning the Workload Allocation Model:**

The aim of the workload allocation model is to capture data to help achieve an evidence based approach to the planning and allocation of academics' duties across each academic unit, to support professional development and to ensure equity and equality around sustainable current and future workloads. This includes equitable allocation of duties, workload management, and resource allocation which are not discriminatory or biased towards seniority or tenure. Both academic staff and the wider University should benefit from an academic workload allocation that achieves an equitable and sustainable balance of teaching, research and service activities facilitating achievement of work-life balance. The key principles upon which the Workload Allocation Model are based are:

- Fairness
- Openness
- Consultation
- Career Development
- Adaptability
- Sustainability

#### **3.1.2 Additional Principles for Workload Allocation**

The University expects line managers (Heads of Department/Heads of School /Executive Deans) to apply the following principles when managing workload:

- Reasonable workloads will be distributed among academic members of faculty in line with the workload allocation model framework and will involve open discussion with individuals regarding their allocations.
- Time should be made available during reasonable working hours for the full range of academic activities (i.e. teaching, research and service) as well as professional development as appropriate.

- Staff will have access to development time (and resource) for training appropriate to their role. Training and development needs will normally be identified through the Performance Development Review system (PDRS).

### **3.1.3 Working Time and Workload Allocation**

- 3.1.3.1 Whilst there is a clear expectation that all academic staff will make a full contribution to the goals of the University, Faculties and Departments/Schools, this policy does not seek to alter the relative flexibility of working time of academic staff. It is also important to consider this flexibility in relation to maintaining an appropriate work-life balance.
- 3.1.3.2 Academic Staff are expected to manage their own time to achieve the objectives of their position, in line with their contracted hours of employment and in support of facilitating the achievement of work-life balance.

## **4. Related Procedures for Workload Allocation**

### **4.1 Responsibilities of the Line Manager**

- 4.1.1 The line manager (Head of Department/School/Executive Dean) will ensure that each academic staff member has a balanced, reasonable and equitable workload in terms of activities and overall contribution relative to all academic staff in the Department/School. Workload will be allocated by the line manager in a manner which provides for averaging/balancing the workload over a three-year period.
- 4.1.2 The expectation is that each Department/School will use the principles set out in this document in order to consider the overall distribution of work, which can be reasonably managed within the available resources.
- 4.1.3 It is the responsibility of the Head of Department/School/Executive Dean to collect and review data relating to workloads annually while noting that workload will be allocated in a manner which provides for averaging/balancing over a three-year period and in accordance with contracted hours of work.
- 4.1.4 The academic workload allocation framework provides for workload to be allocated to teaching (40%), research (40%) and service activities (20%). Teaching, research and service will be included in individual workloads whether performed within the Department itself, the Faculty, at University level or externally, e.g. assessment/moderation of UL accredited modules (externally delivered, internally assessed).

## **4.2 Responsibilities of Academic Staff**

- 4.2.1 Academic Staff are expected to perform all duties and responsibilities as assigned by their line manager and in accordance with their job description. The academic workload allocation framework provides for workload to be allocated to teaching (40%), research (40%) and service activities (20%) as a standard for all academic members of faculty. Where there are circumstances arising which mean that it is not possible for an academic member of faculty to undertake one or more of the relevant activities (teaching, research, service) to an equitable level of workload allocation in the Department/School it is expected that they will undertake other duties to ensure balance. The alternative balance of activities will need to be agreed with the line manager and can only be agreed for a defined period to allow for the specific circumstance arising. The rationale for any temporary alternative balance must be clearly established and the sum of the percentages of activities should remain at 100%.

## **5. Workload Allocation Model**

- 5.1 The Workload Allocation Model Framework must be completed by academic members of Faculty annually, between Feb and June, via the online process.
- 5.2 Following a discussion with their Heads of Department/School, academic members of faculty will fill in the online Workload Allocation Framework Model form with the planned workload for the upcoming year and then endorsed/allocated by their line manager (Head of Department/Head of School/Executive Dean) and recorded for reference purposes. The process will allow an annual opportunity for a retrospective adjustment of workload and rebalancing/averaging of the workload allocation over a three-year period.
- 5.3 To ensure transparency as it relates to workload allocation, academic members of faculty will have full detail of their individual workload allocation as agreed with their line manager. At Department / School level anonymised, aggregate data will be provided by the Head of School/Department to academic members of staff annually detailing the average teaching and service allocation within the Department/School. This data will also be provided averaged over 3 years. In addition, at Department/School level an annual report will be devised by the Head of School / Department and discussed with all academic members of staff within the Department/School depicting the teaching and service responsibilities.

## **6. Application of this Policy**

### **6.1 Academic staff**

- 6.1.1 Academic staff are responsible for engagement with the academic workload allocation model by filling out the form on the online WAM system, following a conversation with their Heads of Department/School or Executive Dean (as applicable).
- 6.1.2 When managing workloads, Heads of Department/School/Executive Deans should take account of the need to provide the opportunity, during reasonable working hours, for academic staff to engage in the broad spectrum of academic work.
- 6.1.3 Academic staff can be expected to undertake scheduled teaching and examining duties during the normal academic year except when alternative arrangements are agreed.
- 6.1.4 The standard expectation is that work will be carried out during contracted working hours. Duties outside of these times should be agreed with the member of staff.

### **6.2 Newly appointed academic staff**

- 6.2.1 The line manager (Head of Department /Head of School/ Executive Dean) will take full account of the demands on new academic staff during the first two years of their appointment as provided for under the academic workload allocation framework.

## **7. Review**

- 7.1 Each Department/School and Faculty will review and manage the operation of workload planning models annually.
- 7.2 The discussion about individual workload allocations shall be aligned to the annual Performance Development Review System (PDRS) process. Two separate annual meetings (Meeting 1, WAM; Meeting 2 PDRS) should take place between the academic member of faculty with the line manager (Head of Department/Head of School/Executive Dean) at which both the workload allocation and the PDRS can be reviewed and completed.
- 7.3 Workload Allocation data emerging from this review will be retained within the Department and / or Faculty for a period consistent with the University's record retention policy in compliance with current Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation.

## **8 Review Process**

- 8.1 Academic members of Faculty who wish to challenge and dispute the volume of work allocation should speak with their line management (Head of Department/School/Executive Dean) as soon as possible. If unresolved the academic member of Faculty may seek a review of the WAM allocation decision within 10 working days following these discussions with their line manager. All decisions must take account of this timeframe in order to facilitate a review if required.
- 8.2 To seek such a review, the academic member of faculty will make a written submission setting out the entire grounds for their review request to the HR Director or their nominee.
- 8.3 Upon notification of a request for a review, the Human Resources Director or their nominee will appoint an internal academic reviewer to conduct the review.
- 8.4 Any such review will be completed within a reasonable timeframe, where possible not to exceed two weeks.
- 8.5 The reasoned determination of the reviewer will be submitted to the Human Resources Director and will be provided subsequently to the academic member of Faculty who sought the review and their line manager.
- 8.6 Subject to any statutory or other legal remedy available to the affected parties, the result of this review will be final.
- 8.7 No employee shall be subsequently disadvantaged or victimised for exercising their right to seek a review.

## **9 Breaches of this Policy or any associated procedures/guidelines**

- 9.1 This policy applies to all members of University of Limerick Academic Faculty (as outlined in section 1.2 Scope) and it is imperative that the policy is adhered to and fully implemented.
- 9.2 Failure to implement this policy and its associated procedures within a Department/School/Faculty will constitute a breach of this Policy.
- 9.3 A suspected breach of this Policy must be notified in writing to the Office of the Director of Human Resources.

## **10 Related Documents**

UL Academic Workload Allocation Framework (HR Website)