University of Aberdeen

Workload Planning Review Group

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 29 October 2020 (Teams Meeting)

Present: Karl Leydecker, Debbie Dyker, Amanda Lee, David Muirhead, Chris Collins, Tracey White, Ruth Taylor, Syrithe Pugh, Laura McCann, Neil Vargesson, Brian Paterson, Adam Price, Laura Benvie, Sarah Duncan, Garry Fisher, Hulda Sveinsdottir, Lindsey Hamilton (clerk)

Apologies: Marion Campbell, Brian Henderson

1. **Minute of Meeting 21 September 2020**

The group approved the minutes of the meeting 21 September 2020.

2. **Update on Actions from 21 September / Matters Arising**

Actions from 21 September

It was confirmed that all actions were complete.

Matters Arising

2.1 It was confirmed that following discussion at a previous Workload Review Group meeting, SMT had agreed an extra 4 days of leave to be taken over the Christmas Closure Period**.**

2.2 The Staff Survey would launch next week (02 November)

2.3 The group discussed the recent article in Nature Magazine which highlighted that in the future it was likely that Research Funders would not see attainment of an Athena SWAN award as a necessary requirement to secure funding with them. It was discussed that the Athena SWAN Leads and EDIC would be following this development closely, but the University would still want to continue the good work that has been put in place by the Athena SWAN groups.

2.4 It was highlighted that BLITFG were reviewing how they could streamline blended learning processes to take away any bureaucratic elements.

3. **Planning for the Future Workload Allocation Policy**

The group discussed what points needed to be considered and addressed with regards to a future policy and the following was suggested:

- The policy had to be transparent and implemented with truth grounding (e.g. data backed up by information from TRAC or other objective sources).
- Any data collected for review should try and capture the actual workload undertaken (e.g. a realistic estimate of the time taken to complete different activities) that also included elements not currently captured like honours exam marking.

- There should be overarching principles for all staff at the University, rather than each school/area having their own principles (it is accepted that there would then be some variances in allocations depending on the discipline)
- The policy should detail how workload is allocated for different situations; e.g new starts / probationers, E&D roles such as Athena SWAN leads, for individuals following periods of family leave (maternity / paternity/shared-parental leave).
- It was recommended that there is a reference to other policies like the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Strategy that has an action for addressing workload stress
- There are inconsistencies between the Schools and even within a School where there is more than one model being used and this should be addressed.
- The current workload models do not include reference to some activity that would be considered as part of promotion criteria, for example external meetings.
- A review of the different models/ways for allocating time for teaching needs to be undertaken (e.g. should there be a different allocation of time for face to face teaching, compared with online or blended) and likewise a review of how research time is allocated (should this be on REG income, external grant income or other metrics). It should be considered how individuals with large research grants are supported in terms of their workload to ensure their projects are completed successfully.
- The 2040 strategy should be incorporated into the principles; this should make it clear what work we value and how it is rewarded (link to the Promotion / Recognition and Reward Strategy)
- It was agreed that two sub-groups would be formed, one focusing on Academic workload the other Professional Services staff. There should be a Professional Services representative on the Academic Group.

    Action: Karl/Tracey to consider membership of the groups.

- The current academic workload time allocation of 40/40/20 was discussed. It was highlighted that when the current policy was implemented there was considerable discussion and review of other research led institutions before agreement of this model was implemented. However, it was felt that it would be good to review this allocation time now:

    Action: The sub-group focusing on Academic Workload will undertake a review of this time allocation.

- It was agreed that whilst the sub-groups would focus on the two separate categories of work, there would be overarching principles/a statement that covered all categories of staff and the main group would continue to meet and discuss outcomes of both groups together.

    Action: A workload statement would be drafted for consideration by the Group, which would then be widely disseminated for consultation

- There was discussion on whether an appropriate system for capturing workload should be discussed or a company like Simitive be invited to give a presentation. However, the group felt that this wasn't a current priority, and this should be considered once the group had agreed principles.
- It was agreed that the sub-group should refer to the documents that had been uploaded on the Teams as there was useful sector information on workload as well as the presentations from Terry Threadgold.
- Once the sub-groups had met, they could agree how they were going to consult and listen to community views on workload.

4. **Date of Next Meeting**

It has been agreed that there will be a further meeting on Friday 27 November, 1pm

TABLE OF ACTIONS

Reference	Description	Action by	Action Date
3	Membership of sub-groups to be agreed	Karl Leydecker/Tracey White	05 November 2020
3	Review of current workload time of 40/40/20	Academic Workload Sub-group	
3	A Statement on Workload to be agreed	Workload Review Planning Group	31 December 2020