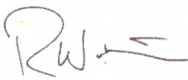




Agreement reached at the Special Joint Consultative and Negotiating Group (JCNG) Meeting held Friday 30 July 2021.

University senior management and UCU have reached an agreement on a means by which to settle an official dispute registered by UCU. The dispute, which had reached stage two of ARU's Collective Dispute Procedure, concerned academic staff workloads and the need to ensure implementation of the Academic Workload Balancing Model (AWBM) for 2021-22 to recognise and support the range of academic activities which colleagues will undertake.

As a result of collegiate, constructive and pragmatic approach taken by UCU colleagues and senior management, an interim solution to cover the coming academic year 2021-22 has been reached and the details of the agreement reached on AWBM between UCU and the University is appended.

Signed 

Professor Roderick Watkins, Vice Chancellor

On behalf of the University

Signed 

Dr John Hogan, Chair UCU branch

On behalf of UCU, ARU branch

Agreement reached at the Special Joint Consultative and Negotiating Group (SJCNG) Meeting held Friday 30 July 2021.

Preamble

The University and UCU welcomed the opportunity to discuss our aims and objectives for our academic workforce. We are committed to making ARU an excellent employer and the destination of choice for both staff and students.

We all want the very best for our employees, and there is a commitment to continue to work together to identify practical solutions to the challenges of workload for our staff, with particular reference to their health, safety and wellbeing. This is particularly important as we face post-pandemic challenges within the Higher Education Sector.

Background

The University is committed to ensuring that staff are not required to work excessive hours and to ensuring that staff are fully supported.

As a result of constructive discussions between UCU and the University, several changes to the Academic Workload Balance Model (**AWBM**) have been agreed.

1. AWBM Working Group

The University stands by the commitment and understanding reached in the collective agreement with UCU of August 2020, which states, "The University is creating an academic leadership working group to review the AWBM and will invite UCU to participate in that working group. The outcomes of this working group will be brought back to JCNG for consultation and negotiation in accordance with the Recognition Agreement with UCU".

The University established an AWBM Working Group in the Autumn of 2020. Both UCU and the University acknowledge that the AWBM, up to this time, does not fully reflect the reality of the academic workload and that the task of establishing a meaningful model is a complex and lengthy task. It is clear the AWBM as it stands does not reflect the full extent of the time required by academic staff to carry out their duties. The working group is to continue its work into 2021-22. However, in order to address the immediate challenges faced for the academic year 2021-22 and to move towards a full recognition of the work carried out by academic staff, UCU and the University agree to the following allowances, to be factored into staff AWBMs, to take effect and without exception, unless otherwise specified below, from September 2021.

2. Approval ("Sign off" process)

Approval of individual workloads is encouraged for August 2021. However, it is acknowledged that this may not be possible for all Schools due to timetable availability and the need for more certain student numbers. Workloads should be signed off by 1 October 2021 at the very latest. For future years we anticipate that this will be achieved by 31 August.

To ensure that staff members are not required to work excessive hours, an additional step in the sign off process has been introduced. Once the Head of School reviews the individual AWBMs, these are then passed to the PVC/Dean for formal sign off.

Following the sign off stage the PVC Dean will share summary information with all staff for their School. Anonymised summary AWBM data will be shared with UCU.

3. Headroom

Individuals and their line manager are expected to agree a 'headroom' figure to be built into workload allocations for the coming academic year (2021-22) to bring working hours to 75-85% of the 1585 (1FTE) target at sign-off stage. Both senior management and UCU colleagues recognise that this will not be achievable consistently across ARU until we have recruited to our academic vacancies. Where this is the case, we will endeavour to get as close to 75-85% as possible and review workloads when new staff are appointed.

This will allow in-year headroom and capacity for use during the year to support unexpected changes in staff, new research and knowledge exchange, teaching projects, etc.

If the individual and line manager cannot agree a suitable workload plan then this should be escalated to the PVC Dean for review, in discussion with the member of staff and their line manager. If agreement cannot be reached at faculty level the matter can be referred to a DVC.

4. Research & Knowledge Exchange (R&KE)

We are committed to growing our research and knowledge exchange in line with our new strategy.

We are grateful to those staff who sacrificed research and/or knowledge exchange time to assist in meeting the challenge of the pandemic.

We propose a minimum default of 160 hours for research and knowledge exchange time, conditional on each academic member of staff presenting a research and knowledge exchange plan for consideration.

The R&KE plans must include realistic timelines for achievement of aims, clear outcomes and rationale for time required, to line manager at AWBM discussion, with a view to reaching agreement and for incorporation into workload plans for the academic year ahead. If agreement cannot be reached the Deputy Dean (R&I) should review the plan to support a final decision being made.

PVC Deans will have an overview of all research and knowledge exchange time allocation through their oversight of the AWBM.

This is in addition to the principally self-managed research and scholarly activity time allowance of 185 hours which remains unchanged. This is as set out in section 8 of the lecturers' terms and conditions.

5. Annual Leave

All parties agree that enabling staff to take their full annual leave entitlement wherever possible is in the interests of both staff and ARU and that this should be our priority.

Staff who were unable to take their full 2020/21 annual leave entitlement will be able to carry forward into their AWBM for 2021/22 up to 5 working days (37 hours). Where there are exceptional situations and staff have more than 5 days leave outstanding, line managers will work with those individuals to accommodate annual leave where possible and ensure 2021/22 workload is appropriate where this is not possible. In very exceptional circumstances, and in agreement with the Line Manager, this

outstanding leave can be accommodated in the “other” section of “Academic Management and Planning.”

For years from 2022/23 onwards, in the exceptional circumstances that an employee is unable to take his/her full entitlement to leave in the previous leave year, an allowance of up to 5 working days (37 hours) may be included in his/her AWBM in consultation with his/her line manager

6. Academic year 2021/22 – additional credit for teaching preparation and assessment

In addition to the revised Teaching Preparation and Assessment allowances (see 6.1 and 6.2, below) a one-off credit allowance will be made for the year 2021/22, in recognition of the need to consolidate the work that has been undertaken by academic staff during the pandemic in responding to the need to adapt teaching, assessment and provide increased levels of student support.

The allowance will be up to 100 credits; individual colleagues will determine through discussion with their managers how the credit would be used, and how much of it. UCU colleagues accept that this allowance may negatively impact the amount of headroom that is permissible for some individual staff members for 2021/22.

The University will carry out a benchmarking exercise so that a sustainable AWBM allowances model can be agreed with UCU and adopted for academic year 2022/23 onwards.

6.1 Teaching Preparation

It is jointly acknowledged that teaching preparation time for new lectures is low and further work needs to be done to resolve. As an interim measure for the year 2021/22 the following preparation time has been agreed:

- New lecture - 4hrs per lecture
- Repeat lecture - 1 hr per lecture
- Seminar - 1 hr per seminar

For 2022/23 the University commits to review preparation time and benchmark against equivalent Alliance universities.

6.2 Assessment

It is jointly acknowledged that assessment time is low. Following provisional AWBM modelling across the four faculties and acknowledging the wide variation in assessment practice, it is proposed that the following interim position is adopted for 2021/22:

- 45 mins per student on a 15-credit module
- 90 mins per student on a 30-credit module

For 2022/23 the University commits to explore opportunities to review and reduce assessment loads where applicable, undertake a full review of assessment practice and credits, and benchmark against equivalent Alliance universities.

7. Awards Boards

Preparation time for Module Assessment Panels and Awards Board is increased from 3 to 5 per board.

8. Doctoral Supervision (both Professional Doctorates and PhDs)

First Supervisor: 50 hours Second Supervisor: 30 hours, pro rata on student FTE.

9. Review of AWBM 2022/23

The University and UCU agree that there is to be a review of current Academic Management and Planning roles (e.g. course leader, admissions tutor); this will feed into a review of weightings for these roles for 2022/23 and consideration will be given to the career grading attached to such roles. The University agrees that the review will be concluded by April 1st 2022, at which point it will be presented to UCU for discussion, with a view to reaching an agreement, in time for implementation by or before September 2022.

10. Associate Lecturer Review

The University has set up a working group (including representation from UCU) to review our Associate Lecturer provision. There are agreed Terms of Reference for this group. The aim is to complete this review, with an agreed action plan being in place, by the end of December 2021. Any outcome(s) of the review which relate to terms and conditions of employment for this group of staff will be dealt with through the normal formal collective bargaining mechanisms. This agreement reflects the University's stated opposition to casualisation and seeks to position ARU as the exemplar and best employer within UK Higher Education.

11. Open Days

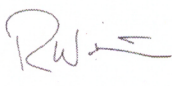
Attendance at Open Days will be fairly distributed within teams and specified in the AWBM for each member of staff.

12. Resources

The University is committed to further improvements which will help to reduce staff workloads and improve work/life balance. We have already announced a recruitment campaign to recruit 50 additional Lecturer / Senior lecturer / Practitioner positions which will have a dramatic impact on workloads for academic staff.

Our AWBM Working Group will continue its work over the coming months including a full review of credit allowances.

The University and UCU are committed to working together to improve organisational efficiency.

Signed 

Professor Roderick Watkins, Vice Chancellor

On behalf of the University

Dated 3rd August 2021

Signed 

Dr John Hogan, Chair UCU branch

On behalf of UCU, ARU branch

Dated 3rd August 2021