



September 15th, 2025

Dear Professor Butler (Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering),

As you know, UCU and ARU management concluded a workload agreement in order to measure and represent the time required by academics to work in a sustainable fashion and to safeguard health and wellbeing. In addition, the model adopted is designed to assist in planning and identifying appropriate staffing levels, to meet student needs and preserve the health safety of colleagues. This agreement was signed by the Vice Chancellor ([signed-agreement-may-2022.pdf](#)).

It has been brought to our attention that there are major problems regarding the implementation of the workload agreement within your faculty. Across the entire School of Psychology, Sport and Sensory Science, UCU has been made aware of the following:

- a) **Workload negotiations:** As per our Collaborative Agreement, workloads must be agreed through negotiation, not unilaterally imposed by line managers. However, multiple staff members have felt that they have had their workloads imposed on them. Additionally, to the extent that discussions did happen, they focused only on teaching and marking, with other work not being discussed at all. There have also been cases where line managers have agreed to certain allocations in the workload negotiations, only for the concerned staff members to notice later that their line managers have given them less time than had been agreed.
- b) **Updating the AWBM during the academic year:** The AWBM is a live model, that is meant to be kept up-to-date throughout the year, as staff duties evolve. However, this is mostly not happening. Consequently, some staff get allocated extra duties throughout the year, without it becoming visible in the model that they have been taken above 100% of their yearly workload.
- c) **AWBM hours “massaged”:** Multiple staff have told us that their line managers have explicitly reduced some hours allocations, in order to bring their total AWBM allocations below 100%, so as to create the appearance that staff are not overworked. This happened even when the line managers knew that the numbers they were

entering into the AWBM were not correctly reflecting the actual work being done by the staff members. Moreover, in many cases, this “massaging” of numbers also directly involved breaking the Collaborative Agreement, by denying staff the hours that they are explicitly entitled to.

- d) **Only HoS can edit the AWBM:** Numerous staff have expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that only the HoS can edit the AWBM. They feel that this makes it much more difficult to agree their workloads, because there is no certainty that what they agree with their DhoSs will actually be implemented, because the HoS may not action it.
- e) **FTE issues:** Staff must have their correct Full-time Equivalent (FTE) noted in all places where this number appears in the AWBM. However, in multiple parts of all the AWBMs in the School, staff who are in reality on 1.0 FTE contracts have been noted as being on less than 1.0 FTE, with various allocated hours (Core research hours, Researcher development and support credit, All standard school duties, Training half-days, Scholarship activity to support teaching and research, and others) seemingly reduced more or less in line with this FTE reduction. Not only does this directly contravene our Collaborative Agreement, but the pro-rata reductions are also not affecting all staff and all activities equally, and there is a complete lack of transparency over why this is the case.
- f) **Preparation time:** 15 credit modules are to receive 100h of teaching preparation time, while 30 credit modules are to receive 200h. However, virtually no modules across the entire School have been allocated the mandated preparation time, with very many having drastic under-allocations. Staff have also been told to treat the 100h or 200h as maximum preparation times, which they are expected not to take unless they can provide a “justification” for it, which goes directly against our Collaborative Agreement.
- g) **Marking:** Across the entire School, we have noticed what seem like irregularities in allocating marking, where it appears that not all marking has been allocated in the AWBM or that insufficient time has been given for marking.
- h) **Core research and innovation hours and Researcher development and support credit:** Numerous staff across the School have not had their core research and innovation and their researcher development and support hours allocated at all. Some staff have reduced allocations.
- i) **Externally funded research hours:** Externally funded research hours should not replace the core research and innovation hours. Rather, they come on top of them. However, some staff have had their core research and innovation hours reduced in line with the hours they got for their externally funded research.

- j) **Teaching reviews, appraisals, and mentoring allocations:** Time must be provided for teaching reviews, yearly appraisals, and mentoring (if a staff member has mentoring duties). However, virtually no staff have been given time for yearly appraisals, no staff have been given time for mentoring duties, and some staff are missing time for teaching reviews.
- k) **Failure to allocate PhD supervision time properly.** A number of staff have told UCU that second and third PhD supervisors do not get any time allocated. The Collaborative Agreement explicitly notes the times to be given to second and third supervisors.

As our Vice Chancellor has made explicitly clear in recent Town Hall addresses, the university needs to address the issue of student satisfaction through the promotion of excellence. UCU welcomes his intervention and regards any attempt to overburden academics through the massaging of workload allocations and deviation from the tenets of our collectively negotiated and agreed workload agreement as an assault upon our health and wellbeing, as well as active sabotage of the student experience.

Rather than declaring a branch wide dispute in the first instance, we want to give you the opportunity to investigate what has been going wrong and provide UCU with a full explanation, along with an action plan to correct the mistakes discovered and misconduct revealed. In order to stave off further escalation, if you could provide a written response to our reasonable requests by Friday, September 19th we would be most grateful.

ARU UCU Branch Executive