

Excessive workloads: A risk worth assessing

A further education toolkit

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Excessive workloads: Time to tackle a growing problem with an agreed approach.

There has probably never been a time when excessive workloads and working hours in further education has been a bigger or more relevant issue to as many UCU members as now. This guidance outlines an approach based on the national agreement with the AoC "Guidance for the regulation of Working Hours in Further Education Colleges" which branches can use to tackle both longstanding workload problems and those created by more recent circumstances.

UCU Stress surveys show that factors associated with excessive workloads dominate the top causes of stress for our FE members. Excessive workloads are the single most common factor that members reported making a very high contribution to unacceptable levels of stress. The next top three responses are lack of time or opportunities to develop teaching, poor work-life balance and lack of time for research; all factors that arise out of excessive working hours and workloads. Always or often having to work very intensively was a factor that the vast majority of respondents said contributed to their stress at work and one in five report that they had to work more than 50 hours per week to complete their duties.

Surveys of UCU and other union's members have shown that issues associated with work life balance, dignity at work and stress at work are as important to them as issues associated with pay. It is clear that excessive working hours and workloads are among the most important issues at work for a large number of UCU members in FE.

Since 2008 government funding cuts have become more savage; ministers have publicly called for more to be done for less across the entire public sector and specifically in FE. FE has suffered further waves of redundancies, re-structures and mergers attributed to the funding cuts leaving the fewer staff that remain to do more. As funding pressures increase on colleges together with the push to extend market competition, members are also increasingly facing increases to student contact time, higher student/staff ratios and cuts to holiday entitlements. We can only assume that the pressure on members to accept onerous, excessive, and un-safe workloads will grow as a result.

While the agreement does not re-establish nationally agreed limits on working hours, it is significant because it very clearly puts the issue of regulating working hours into the context of being a workplace health and safety issue with excessive working hours a potential workplace health and safety hazard.

Together with this toolkit, branches are now armed with a nationally agreed document on the way colleges should approach the problem of excessive working hours. It provides a means to help counter threatened or imposed changes to working conditions and/or the

opportunity for branches to re-launch campaigns to deal with excessive workloads with the potential for more success.

This toolkit provides guidance or links to already existing guidance and advice for UCU branch officers and members on:

- National Joint Agreement on Guidance for regulating Working Hours in FE
- Important points in the national agreement
- Using the national agreement
- Protecting staff from stress caused by excessive workloads
- Guidance on what risk assessments are and how they should be conducted
- Model workload survey
- Model hours monitoring form

National Joint Agreement on Guidance for Regulating Working Hours in FE Colleges

This agreement very clearly puts the issue of regulating working hours into the context of being managed as an issue of workplace health and safety with excessive working hours identified as a potential workplace health and safety hazard.

All workplace health and safety issues covered by health and safety legislation and Health and Safety Executive guidance. This legislation creates a legal obligation for the employer to conduct risk assessments of their working practices including the total working hours that result from their structures and practices. Health and Safety Executive Guidance recommends that employers work cooperatively with recognised trade unions in identifying and finding solutions for risks in the workplace and therefore in the context of this agreement in identifying and dealing with issues of working hours. The statutory requirement on the employer to assess health and safety risks together with the HSE recommendation to work closely with unions on safety issues provides a much stronger legal framework for dealing with working hours and workload issues than those rights established to support collective bargaining.

An employer that ignores concerns raised by recognised trade unions about excessive working hours and refuses to conduct a risk assessment may find themselves in breach of health and safety legislation and leave themselves exposed to claims from employees who suffer injury as a result of excessive working hours.

In addition to placing working hours in the sphere of health and safety legislation the agreement also acknowledges that those activities and duties such as marking, assessing, preparing lessons and other duties that most often occur outside of the class room contact time should be counted towards calculations of total working hours. It is the amount of time spent on these activities that often leads to excessive working hours accumulating on top of class contact time and the inclusion of a non-exhaustive list of these in the agreement opens up an opportunity for branches to get these and any other periods spent performing college duties and tasks on the table and measured as part of the real total working hours.

Excessive workloads and working hours are not new issues for FE. However in the past many members and branches have felt that there was little that could be done to tackle them or accepted it as an inevitable part of working in FE. This agreement gives a much stronger framework for branches to use to raise working hours and workload issues by placing them in the context of health and safety legislation.

While all national agreements with the Association of Colleges(AoC) are agreed as recommendations to colleges and are therefore not compulsory or binding, the majority of

clauses in this agreement spell out and highlight college's legal obligations to employees when dealing with regulating working hours from the perspective of statutory health and safety requirements. Therefore the bulk of the provisions of this agreement, particularly in part 1, are actually legal requirements on colleges which colleges do not have a choice about implementing.

Either before or at the same time as using this agreement to raise working hours and workload issues with management, branches should undertake campaigning and organising activities around the workload issue (see section in this toolkit on using the agreement) . Successful outcomes to negotiations with management are far more likely when members actively campaign for changes themselves and know and fully support what their branch officers are raising on their behalf. Survey after survey of staff in FE reveal that excessive workloads and working hours are at least as important an issue as to members as pay. Indeed, whenever a conversation about workloads occurs among a group of FE lecturers it's not long before passions run high! Therefore branches that are seen to be doing something about workload issues are likely to be able to generate widespread support for a workplace campaign and can hopefully use this as an opportunity to boost levels of UCU membership amongst staff affected by these issues. The results of negotiations backed up and supported by strong membership levels will always be better.

As with all national guidance agreements nothing in this, or any of the other national agreements, is intended to recommend colleges reduce or undermine existing agreements or practices which have established superior provisions to the minimum standards recommended in the national agreement. Branches should only seek to implement national agreements where they would represent an improvement on existing procedures.

The agreement can be found

at:http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/1/6/fe_workhoursagreement_nov09.doc

Important points in the national agreement

The two most important clauses in the agreement are:

Clause 3.2 which acknowledges those periods spent outside of classroom contact time performing other duties such as marking and preparing lessons etc should be agreed as part of the working time.

Clause 4.1 which confirms that colleges are required to conduct risk assessments on health and safety hazards and that includes assessing whether working hours are causing or could cause harm.

Part 1: Commitment

Clause 1 of the agreements sets out the context, approach and aims of the agreement with the most important points being:

- Colleges have a legal obligation to provide a safe working environment and therefore good practice in relation to excessive working hours.
- Colleges should adopt a partnership approach with local trade unions, working together to identify and tackle the problem of excessive working hours where it exists.
- The agreement aims to provide a framework for assessing working hours practice and providing practical guidance on ways to reduce long working hours where a problem is identified.
- There are many benefits to both the employer and employee in achieving good practice in the regulation of working hours.

Clause 2 sets out the relevant pieces of legislation and the legal framework that apply to the issue of regulating working hours. This clause makes it clear that the issue of working hours is a workplace health and safety issue. Employees contract's of employment may have explicit terms in relation to weekly or annual working hours or class contact hours however in addition to these all employment contracts have implied terms that the employees should be provided with a safe way of working and an implied duty of mutual trust and confidence which would not allow an employer to require and employee to perform duties in a way that may cause them injury such as excessive working hours.

The importance of using a health and safety approach to tackling the issue of excessive working hours cannot be underestimated. The legislation applicable to health and safety issues provides trade union health and safety representatives with much stronger rights to facilities and to intervene than other trade union rights legislation.

Important points:

- Excessive working hours are a workplace health and safety issue and are therefore covered by health and safety and working time legislation.
- Explicit and implied contractual terms require colleges to honour limits on working hours and to provide safe working conditions.
- Health and Safety legislation provides trade union health and safety representatives stronger rights to facilities and to intervene in health and safety issues than trade union rights legislation.

Clause 3 seeks to define what working time is and therefore what time is to be included when measuring workloads and determining if working hours are excessive.

The working time for which there is most often confusion and disagreement is the time spent carrying out duties other than class contact time and especially that work which is

often carried out away from college premises and outside normal working hours such as marking, assessing and lesson planning and preparation. It is significant that clause 3.2 of the agreement lists some of these non-teaching duties as being periods that should also be included as part of working time. While this list may not be exhaustive it does open up the opportunity for branches to discuss the full breadth of duties which occur outside the class room and build these into a comprehensive list with in a local agreement to ensure that all aspects of members work is included in periods which are measured as part of working time.

Important points:

- The agreement acknowledges that periods of time such as those spent preparing lessons and marking, which are often performed outside of the class room and often off college premises should be included in the definition of working time.
- Local agreement should be sought to include all duties and periods of work that members perform for the college when assessing working time.

Clause 4 of the agreement states that, in accordance with health and safety legislation, colleges are required to conduct risk assessments on any potential hazards in the workplace including assessing whether working hours are or could cause harm to employees.

Important points:

- College's should work with recognised trade unions to determine whether long working hours practices exist and have the potential to cause harm to employees.
- When conducting risk assessments the steps recommended by the Health and Safety Executive should be followed as identified in clause 4.2
- Additional risk assessments should be performed when employee circumstances change eg. when an employee notifies the college they are pregnant (legal obligation) or following a return to work after illness or injury or a change in duties arising from a proposed restructure.

Clause 5 outlines the various responsibilities for ensuring that safe levels of working time are practiced with in a college.

Important points:

- Senior management commitment to the process is essential.
- Line managers responsible for monitoring and regularly reviewing all aspects of workload and working hours.
- Trade union representatives responsible for contributing to risk assessments, raising concerns about excessive working hours and proposing appropriate steps to be taken to protect employees from any risks.

- Employees are responsible for working efficiently, taking rest breaks and annual leave and monitoring their own working hours and raising concerns with line managers.

Part 2 Practical ways to reduce working hours

The second part of the agreement seeks to provide examples of very practical ways and approaches that can be used when tackling problems of excessive working hours when they have been identified. The guidance here recommends that an initial assessment of potential underlying causes or factors that create the working hours problems be identified. Various options and approaches for finding solutions to working hours and workload problems are suggested by looking at college wide organisational factors or those associated with specific curriculum areas and teams and the management of workflows associated with these and also cultural factors that influence working hours behaviour in the college.

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 is a reproduced extract of the Health and Safety Executive management Standards for Work related Stress which is pertinent to the management of working hours and workloads in order to provide further guidance.

Using the national agreement

The national agreement provides branches with a practical, straight forward and credible framework to engage college management in dealing seriously with excessive working hours and workload issues. The framework is endorsed and agreed by the Association of Colleges as the recommended approach for dealing with these issues.

The important elements of the agreement

- delivering broad agreement and acceptance that excessive working hours are a potential workplace hazard and should be managed using “risk assessments” under health and safety regulations
- demonstrating realistic and practical ways of addressing workload issues to disprove the belief that nothing can be done.
- providing an agreed framework for analysing workload issues more broadly including workplace culture, workflow and other factors not all of which cost money.
- acknowledging non-contact tasks including marking and preparation, often completed at home or out of sight, are legitimate inclusions for counting total working hours.

These important changes create a new opportunity for branches to take a more confident and proactive stance when taking up individual cases or campaigning generally against excessive working hours and workloads. This agreement is a useful tool no matter if workload issues have been stuck in negotiation deadlock for years or have just reached breaking point following the most recent cuts, redundancies or restructure.

For branches bracing themselves to fight a new round of cuts and attacks this agreement offers something too. The agreement framework and the “risk assessment” approach can be used as a powerful tool to mount opposition on health and safety grounds against:

- restructures that increase working hours to excess
- redundancies that increase working hours and workload for staff that remain
- increased class sizes that increase hours and workload to unsafe levels
- changes to contact times, attendance and cover that increase working hours and workload
- proposals that reorganise the teaching year and create excessive frontloading or intensity of working hours for certain periods of the year
- any other changes that have a negative and excessive workload impact for staff

The national agreement’s framework offers hope to branches that have found themselves forced to accept some of the changes listed above in order to defend or maintain existing pay and conditions or jobs and are now feeling workload issues becoming an increasing problem. The agreement gives these and other branches another option to re-visit and deal with the excessive workloads that have been created.

A nationally agreed framework set in stronger workplace laws than collective bargaining which requires managers engage in a process of assessing the real risk to health and safety posed by excessive hours and workloads to their staff is bound to be of use to almost all UCU branches!

The next few pages outlines the process and steps branches should take where colleges adopt the national agreement fully and for where colleges resist implementing the agreement either completely or in relation to a specific workload problem. There are links to further guidance and reading on risk assessments and workplace inspections and draft resources to use to kick start your branches' workload fight back.

Making the Agreement Work

There are two main types or phases of activity associated with using the agreement on regulating excessive working hours in FE:

- Campaigning and Organising activities on the issue
- steps to take within the framework to address instances of excessive hours

Campaigning and organising activities are likely to be the first activities you undertake in the build up to initially seeking local endorsement of the agreement and these will help build branch readiness for later more difficult discussions on specific cases. Working hours and workload issues lend themselves well to getting members actively involved in a campaign so using the opportunities on this issue will deliver benefits in branch organisation that can be used on others.

The two types of activity may often overlap and indeed some activities like involving members in the gathering of hours and workload information may fall into both categories

Implementing the agreement

Agreements that the unions negotiate nationally need to be implemented locally and in general terms it is good practice to have local agreements in place covering most of the issues for which there are national agreements.

In the case of this agreement the process of securing local endorsement/implementation of the agreement may in itself be relatively easy due to much of the agreement highlighting statutory requirements upon them which exist regardless. However it is still a good idea to use the occasion of seeking management's endorsement of the agreement locally as a reason to launch a campaign on workloads within the branch prior to the formal request. The purpose of such a campaign should go beyond just securing the agreement and may just be the beginning of a longer running campaign on hours and workloads.

The aims of the campaign may include:

- Raise member awareness of the issue, the agreement and its benefits
- Involve members in campaign through meetings, petitions, model survey & hours monitoring form
- improve branch understanding of the scale and severity of problem by using the model survey & hours monitoring forms(both attached to this toolkit and available online)
- demonstrate to non-members that UCU is campaigning on issues which are important to them and support branch recruitment activities.
- Improve branch bargaining strength on the issue before negotiations
- Potential for a quick and win to boost member's confidence to tackle harder cases later

- showing management active member involvement in the campaign

Information gathered through the use of surveys and hours monitoring forms should be retained and analysed so that the branch has a snapshot of the situation and future comparisons can be made to assess progress on the issue. The information gained through these activities will assist the branch in developing its arguments for negotiations with management.

Branches should consider if they have enough recognised health and safety reps. The facility time provided to health and safety reps should also form part of these discussions as it is likely that branches will want to access the rights of health and safety reps for those members that get involved with the workload issues.

Branch officers should seek the advice of their regional office if they are un-sure what the best approach for their branch would be.

Before making any formal request for implementation or negotiations about this or any other agreement branch officers should identify where the agreement potentially undermines existing conditions and agreements in order to make clear from the beginning that these areas are not covered by the branches request to implement the agreement.

Campaigning and organising on workloads

In a toolkit about workloads we can't ignore the workload strains experienced by UCU branch officers. A common observation made is that there are not enough members who get involved to help do the vital work of the union at the branch level leaving too many tasks to be done by the exhausted few – a workload issue! This reinforces the importance for branches to have members that are used to getting involved, familiar with taking on small tasks for the branch that together make the work of the union lighter but more powerful. Engineering opportunities for members to get involved with small tasks can sometimes create more work and as workloads are the issue here engineering more work isn't ideal.

The story of excessive hours and workloads is the experience of many individuals even working alongside each other but feeling isolated and uncertain if it is just them that can't keep up or if the job they are being asked to do is impossible. They remain silent because what could they comfortably do about it or achieve by raising the issue on their own? It is part of the very individual nature of excessive working hours and workloads that presents an opportunity to get members directly involved in campaigning, gathering and producing evidence in support of the union's claims and taking ownership in the work of the branch. Not all workplace issues lend themselves so readily to giving members small tasks which only they can perform for the union and on an issue which can then be collectivised and which members commonly feel so passionate about.

The best way to win improvements in any terms and conditions, including working hours and workloads, is to have a strong and united UCU branch which can demonstrate to management the solidarity and commitment to their union and what it is asking for. Branches should consider conducting member involved organising and campaigning activities in the build up to either asking for implementation of the agreement or when tackling specific instances of excessive workloads. Even in cases when management are likely to respond positively to the branch requests it is still worth considering a member involved campaign that will increase the branches readiness to deal with other challenges. Indeed if there is a successful campaign even better that members have a way of being involved and feel the success arising from their involvement.

Whether building support for general negotiations on terms and conditions or gathering evidence in relation to specific instances of excessive working hours and workloads the following resources can be used or amended:

- Model workload/stress survey (attached)
- Hours monitoring form (attached)

More general information on campaigning, organising and ways getting members involved which can be applied to the workloads issue can be found by following the "branch & rep resources" link button found on the right hand side of the UCU website:

www.ucu.org.uk

Challenging instances of excessive working hours

When dealing with excessive working hours issues branches should approach the issue on the basis that the college is:

- required by law to provide a workplace that is safe
- required to conduct risk assessments of hazards that may endanger the health of its employees
- excessive working hours have been agreed nationally to be a potential workplace hazard and should be risk assessed as such

Branches will need to consider who the best person is to take the lead for working hours issues when it comes to meeting with management and dealing with members. It is likely that established Health and Safety reps will initially have a better understanding of the language and procedures of risk assessments and they also have the advantage of being able to perform workplace inspections and most other aspects of the role under Health and Safety facilities time and rights. It makes sense for whoever takes on the role to be or become one of the unions recognised Health and Safety Reps. Given the potential for an increase in the H&S work arising from workloads branches should consider if they have enough H&S reps and take steps to increase their numbers to the recommended one for each work area.

Clause 5.4 of the agreement sets out the role of the TU H&S rep as:

- 5.1 Trade union and health and safety representatives should contribute to the risk assessment process by raising concerns about long working hours and assisting Colleges to identify reasonable, practical and appropriate steps that may be taken to protect employees from any risks.

The approach of using risk assessments advocated in the agreement can be used to raise existing or longstanding issues of excessive working hours which have previously remained unresolved and have not been subject to a risk assessment approach. If the workload or working hours have increased since the last risk assessment then another one should be requested.

When colleges propose re-structures and redundancies leaving existing work to be done by fewer people, a risk assessment should also be requested. Using risk assessments on new or changed job roles before anyone is required to work the role should help eliminate unsafe workloads before they are created.

The HSE recommends 5 steps when conducting a risk assessment which are also contained in the agreement at Clause 4.2. Colleges should not be waiting for a union to notify them of excessive working hours before taking any of these steps. They are required to follow these steps for all workplace hazards. However where management have either failed to act or failed to identify the Hazard, we outline below corresponding steps the branch can take to try to get management back on the case.

Remember these HSE recommendations apply to colleges regardless of whether they have signed up to the agreement or not. Therefore branches are still able to follow the steps outlined below with their college even if they don't say they honour the agreement. However it might be expected if a college won't honour the agreement they may be less likely to be cooperating even with their statutory obligations.

The ultimate sanction against a college that fails to observe its responsibilities and conduct the required risk assessments is very costly; successful claims from injured staff that they knew were at risk of injury because the union told them. The more detailed and accurate information gathering a branch does and is therefore able to provide management on such cases, the harder it will be for the college to maintain that they were not aware that there was a real risk to the staff concerned. Colleges' insurance companies may also place pressure on the college to take action on workload if there is an increase in claims.

Identify the hazard:

When the branch becomes aware of a case or multiple cases of excessive working hours existing or are likely to be created by a management proposal for changes to contracts or other changes in the workplace, the branch should notify management of their concerns and request that a risk assessment be conducted.

Branches may notify management of their concerns about workloads and their request that a risk assessment be done either through existing regular negotiating forums or where the branch has trade union health and safety representatives on a health and safety committee. In urgent cases the branch should seek a meeting to raise the issue or communicate the request for a risk assessment in writing.

Assess who may be harmed and how:

This is also where the unions health and safety rep can feed information that the union has gathered through its member surveys and hours monitoring forms about areas and roles that do have excessive working hours. Members who have given information in the surveys should be made aware of how the information may be used.

The branch may also be better placed to provide information on the ways in which its members are experiencing harm.

Branch Officers and H&S reps can try to talk about roles rather than naming individuals as much as possible. However there will be cases when that information will make it obvious who that person is and this will also be necessary to get the problem fixed. The members concerned will need to be made aware of how their information is being used.

If a college has refused to conduct a risk assessment it may be useful at this stage for a union H&S rep to conduct a work place inspection to gather more information about the cases and to make records in case members need to make future claims for injury against the college. This information can also be used to mount further arguments with management in favour of conducting a risk assessment.

Evaluate the risk and take action in consultation with recognised trade unions:

When a specific workload issue is analysed using a risk assessment the results of that risk assessment should be shared with the branch. That means we will have details of the problem with evidence gathered in an agreed process that provides a common starting point for discussions with management on how to reduce the hazard. Having this evidence in itself helps lead discussions towards reaching an understanding of what safe levels of working would be and how these could be achieved.

Quality information gained by the branch, in earlier campaigning and organising exercises or workplace inspections, on the real experience of its members in the areas concerned will greatly assist branches ability to respond to any management proposals that don't adequately address the issue.

Where a college has not conducted a risk assessment the branch will be continuing to gather supporting evidence of the harm being caused and using this to mount further arguments for a risk assessment whilst also retaining the findings of its own reps workplace inspection for potential evidence injury claims.

Record your findings and implement them:

Branch reps have a role here to ensure that the records are accurate and to maintain pressure where necessary to have the recommendations implemented as agreed.

Monitor, review and update if necessary:

Branches should conduct their own monitoring perhaps through new surveys and hours monitoring forms to test the effectiveness of the actions taken to reduce the risk. Original surveys and hours forms will provide a useful snapshot comparison when judging the effectiveness of the actions taken.

General workload concerns

Part 2 of the agreement outlines a way of approaching excessive workloads in a more holistic way which can also be used by branches to engage management in a dialogue about general concerns of workload across the college or in specific areas but either before or outside of the risk assessment process in other negotiating forums.

For more information on risk assessments and how they should be conducted please see other sections in this toolkit and follow the links in the Health and Safety section of UCU's website www.ucu.org.uk

For more information, checklists and resources on conducting workplace inspection please see other sections in this toolkit and follow the links in the Health and Safety section of UCU's website www.ucu.org.uk

Protecting staff from stress induced by excessive workloads

UCU guidance on adopting a safe working practice approach

Introduction

Employers are required to take steps to control hazards and risks in the workplace, including those that can affect the mental health of staff. There are many factors in the workplace that can cause stress and related illness; a major stressor for lecturers is their workload. This document gives guidance on what needs to be done to ensure that the hazard of excessive workload, and the risks to health associated with that, are removed.

Risk Assessment

Regulation 3 of the *Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations* require employers to use risk assessment to identify the hazards and evaluate the risks they pose to staff. A good risk assessment will identify the causes of hazards and risk; this information is then used to devise control measures which protect workers from the risks identified.

The general principles of protection are set out in *Regulation 4*. These require the employer to adopt strategies that avoid risk, and eliminate hazards and their causes at source. UCU's position is that hazards should be eliminated – that way all risks are also eliminated.

Avoiding the risk and resolving the problem at source by removing or modifying the factors that cause stress are known as *primary interventions*. UCU and the other sector unions have concluded a national agreement with the Association of Colleges to enable employers to meet their legal duties under health, safety and welfare legislation in respect of excessive workload causing ill health. This agreement is intended to guide employers towards achieving their primary duty to remove the source of work-related stress – in this case workload – at source.

Measures aimed at the individual do not provide an effective means of dealing with stress in the workplace. The danger is that they will institutionalise stress hazards, and they do not remove the problems at source - they implicitly accept the permanent existence of stress, and leave individual workers to cope with it. The law requires employers to put primary controls in place, and provide effective, collective protective measures aimed at removing the hazards at source, and NOT secondary interventions aimed at helping individuals to cope. This means institutions adopting safe working practices that prevent the emergence of risks, and UCU has produced this guidance to help its branches and members ensure this is achieved.

This safe working practices document is based on HSE guidance aimed at employers. "Managing the Causes of Work-related Stress" (HSE Publication HSG 218) follows the six key factors identified by the HSE in its stress management standards; the basis for stress

risk assessment. You can download a free copy of this important HSE publication from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg218.pdf>

We know that in some institutions the management has adopted a culture of bullying as the means of pushing excessive workload on staff, thus creating unsafe and threatening conditions. This is something that branches need to be aware of when tackling the problems associated with excessive workloads. An effective risk assessment will need to address this hazard as well. It is our experience that such cultures are not uncommon in further education and that there are many parts of the sector where there needs to be serious reorientation of institutional culture.

Safe working practice guidelines

In order to ensure that the workload does not place undue or potentially damaging conditions on members of staff, management should attend to the actions listed below, as a minimum.

Organisational culture

- Institutional culture should ensure there is mutual respect and inspire confidence and trust.
- Recognise the contribution that staff make to the job and the institution.
- Have effective communications so staff know what is happening.
- Establish consultation practices that enable staff and their unions to participate meaningfully.
- Consider staff views before decisions are made.
- Value all staff equally.
- Have procedures in place to enable quick and effective response when problems are raised.
- Create a climate in which staff can raise problems without fear.

Demands

- Ensure that job descriptions are clearly defined.
- All staff to have an agreed personal work plan defining their role and responsibility.
- Guidance from management to ensure correct task prioritisation by staff.
- Regular consultation so staff know what is expected of them.
- Employ sufficient staff to cover expected section or departmental workload.
- Hold end of academic year meetings to provisionally case-load staff for new year.
- Finalise agreed case-loading early in the new academic year.
- Ensure targets that are reasonable and manageable.
- Agreement between individual staff and manager on workload, including hours.
- Ensure procedure in place to resolve case-loading disputes.
- Monitoring of individuals workload to ensure it does not become unreasonable.
- No increase in tasks without consultation and agreement.
- Increased workload should trigger appointment of additional staff.
- Agreed limits on class sizes.

- Timetable allowance for travel between sites - not in peoples own time.
- Timetables to minimise need to travel between sites.
- A place in an office to work and keep materials.
- Adequate resources for teaching and a proper resource provision service.
- Sufficient administrative and clerical support for non-teaching tasks.
- Ensure staff welfare facilities suitable and adequate for all staff.
- Ensure staff take their lunch break.
- Ensure staff do not take work home habitually - only in exceptional circumstances.

Control

- Establish a culture that allows and encourages staff to participate in the planning and organisation of the work.
- Encourage staff to be flexible in deciding how work should be completed.
- Provide appropriate job enrichment opportunities.
- Restrict close monitoring of individuals.
- Organise regular meetings to review what is happening, allow staff to share experience and ideas, and to provide opportunities to discuss problems.
- Use meetings to provide practical support and encouragement when necessary, and ensure staff are coping.
- Make sure staff are confident of continued management support even when things go wrong.

Relationships

- Aim to create a culture of trust and confidence.
- Encourage staff and management to recognise each individuals contribution.
- Managers should lead by example and good practice.
- Work in partnership with staff to ensure that bullying and harassment do not arise as issues.
- Ensure suitable and effective procedures are in place to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
- Draw up effective policies on bullying, harassment and discrimination in consultation with trade unions.
- Make all staff aware of the policies, and emphasise senior management support for them.
- Ensure all grades of management understand their duties and responsibilities under the policies, and that they are implemented.
- Ensure effective investigation of complaints, and that complainants will be protected.
- Communicate the consequences of a breach of the policy.
- Ensure managers are trained in management and interpersonal skills.

Support, training etc

- Ensure positive support mechanisms in place, especially when things go wrong.

- Make sure that staff are valued.
- Listen to staff and work out solutions to problems jointly.
- Involve staff in day-to-day matters.
- Make sure that task allocation reflects peoples skills, knowledge and strengths.
- Encourage a healthy life-work balance - ensure staff not working excessive hours by workload "creep".
- Ensure mechanisms in place so that staff can raise concerns/problems.
- Joint determination of training needs.

All these approaches require the employer to recognise that workload-related stress is a problem that causes illness; that it is within the employers control to identify and remove the risks, and that they need to demonstrate the necessary level of understanding and commitment to resolving it. This may mean the need for a significant cultural change.

Doing a workplace inspection for workload

Investigating problems in the workplace, and taking them up with the employer is what UCU safety representatives do. The Safety Representatives & Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (SRSC) give trade union safety reps a number of statutory functions, and require employers to permit them to take time-off to undertake these. One of the most important of these functions is a regular 3-monthly inspection of the workplace. We can use this inspection to investigate workload issues.

The workload inspection is a fact-finding and problem identification activity. We have included two inspection aids in the toolkit - the Hours Monitoring Form and the Workload Questionnaire. You can use these, or amend them, or produce your own.

- 1) Give your employer reasonable notice in writing that you intend to conduct a workplace inspection, and that you will require time-off to do it. Your authority to do this is under Regulation 4(1)(e) and Regulation 5 of the SRSC Regulations.
- 2) Your employer **does not**:
 - have to agree that you can do the inspection
 - have any control over what you inspect
 - have any control over how you conduct the inspection
 - have a right to accompany you
- 3) Your employer **does** have to:
 - permit you to take the time-off during working hours to do the inspection
 - pay you as if you were doing your normal job
 - give you any assistance or facilities you reasonably require to carry out the inspection
- 4) Use either the Hours Monitoring Form and the Workload Questionnaire as a basis for the inspection, (whichever you think is most appropriate) or you could amend the Workload Questionnaire to suit local circumstances, or develop your own.
- 5) Circulate the questionnaire a week or so before the inspection date, with a covering note that you will be coming round to collect completed forms, and give members the opportunity to have a discussion about particular issues, or give you any additional comments or information. When you talk to people, remind them that all information they give you will be treated in confidence.
- 6) Make a plan of how you will go around the workplace, and how you will talk to members. (For instance, will you aim to have a short staffroom meeting, or approach people individually, or a mix)
- 7) Produce a notice to let members and staff know the inspection is going to take place and circulate it. You can put paper notices out, or develop an e-mail list. Mark e-mails

as High Priority, and make the subject line something like "UCU safety reps inspection coming up".

- 8) Take copies of the factsheet that tells your members exactly what UCU health & safety representatives do, and give them out to members.
- 9) Submit an inspection report form to the employer, copy to the branch committee on your findings, and what you want the employer to do. Your report should only record problems and issues that require attention. Make sure this is a main agenda item for the branch committee. Negotiate with the employer to resolve the problems.

UCU model workload/stress questionnaire

Teachers and lecturers have reported that an increasing workload is affecting their health, well-being and job satisfaction. In order to gather evidence, which may be presented to management, the UCU branch is conducting this short survey.

The survey is for all teaching staff, UCU members and non-members alike. We hope that all staff will appreciate the importance of this and take a few minutes to fill it in. Results will be aggregated and treated in the strictest confidence.

Please return the form to.....by

Part 1: Background details about you

1. Please indicate your position/staff grade:

Please Circle

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Lecturer | 1 |
| Researcher | 2 |
| Senior Lecturer | 3 |
| Principal Lecturer | 4 |
| Management Post | 5 |

Please Circle

2. Is your post:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Permanent | 1 |
| Temporary/fixed term | 2 |

Please Circle

3. Is your post:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Full-time | 1 |
|-----------|---|

Fractional 2

Hourly paid 3

: *Please Circle*

4. Are you Male 1

Female 2

Please Circle

5. Do you consider yourself a disabled person? Yes

No

6. Your department

Part 2: Stress Symptoms

7. How would you describe your general health 3 years ago and now:

Please Circle

	3 yrs ago	Present
Good	1	2
Reasonable	1	2
Poor	1	2

8. Do you currently experience, or have you experienced any of these stress symptoms in the last year?

Please Circle

	Never	Sometimes	Often
a. Headaches/migraine	1	2	3
b. Aches and pains	1	2	3
c. High blood pressure	1	2	3
d. Poor sleep patterns	1	2	3
e. Skin Rashes	1	2	3
f. Loss of appetite	1	2	3
g. Indigestion	1	2	3
h. Stomach ulcers	1	2	3
i. Asthma	1	2	3
j. Heart disease	1	2	3
k. General anxiety	1	2	3
l. Depression	1	2	3
m. Dread of going to work	1	2	3
n. Exhaustion	1	2	3
o. Inability to concentrate	1	2	3
p. Low self esteem & confidence	1	2	3
q. Erratic moods	1	2	3
r. Increased smoking	1	2	3
s. Increased drinking	1	2	3

9. While working do you ever feel:

Please circle

	Never	Sometimes	Often
a. Irritated	1	2	3
b. Angry	1	2	3
c. Frustrated	1	2	3
d. Helpless	1	2	3
e. Anxious	1	2	3
f. Depressed	1	2	3
g. Unable to concentrate	1	2	3
h. Over tired	1	2	3

10. Have you taken leave in the past 12 months due to work related stress?

Please Circle

Yes No

11. If Yes, how long for?

Please Circle

A few days	one week	two weeks	longer
1	2	3	4

12. Have stress related symptoms returned on your return to work?

Please circle

Yes No

13. Has your GP suggested that your condition was due to your work?

Please circle

Yes No

14. Are you receiving treatment from your GP for stress related symptoms?

Please Circle

Yes No

Part 3: Workload

15. What are your contractual hours per week? Hours

16 Please estimate the average number of hours per week that you actually work (*both on and off site*) during term time.

Please circle

30 – 35	1
36- - 40	2
41 – 45	3
46 – 50	4
51 +	5

17. (a) Please indicate how, if at all, your *total workload* has changed over the last five years, and two years

Please circle

5 years 2 years

Workload has decreased	1	1
Remained the same	2	2
Workload increased	3	3

If your workload has increased, please go to questions 18 & 19 below.

If your workload has decreased or remained the same, please go to question 20.

18 *If your workload has increased, please indicate below the approximate extent by which it has changed.*

Workload has increased by:

Please circle

	Over 5 years	Over 2 years
<i>a. about a quarter</i>	1	1
<i>b. about a half</i>	2	2
<i>c. about three quarters</i>	3	3
<i>d. about double</i>	4	4
<i>e. more than double</i>	5	5

19. If your workload has increased please indicate below:

- a. which factors have been significant in causing the increase
- b. which single factor has contributed most to your increased workload.

	Significant factors <i>(You may select more than one)</i> (please circle)	Single most important factor <i>(choose one only please)</i> (please circle one)
Factors		
<i>Conditions of service changes</i>	1	1
<i>Teaching new courses</i>	1	2
<i>Administration</i>	1	3
<i>Promotional & student recruitment</i>	1	4
<i>Increased class sizes</i>	1	5
<i>Increased number of courses</i>	1	6
<i>Student assessment processes</i>	1	7
<i>Inspection/auditing processes</i>	1	8
<i>Meeting targets/deadlines</i>	1	9
<i>Keeping up with new initiatives</i>	1	10
<i>Need to generate income</i>	1	11
<i>Multi-site working</i>	1	12
<i>Staff appraisal</i>	1	13
<i>Staff shortages/providing cover</i>	1	14
<i>Requirement to undertake research</i>	1	15
<i>Insufficient time for scholarship and/or research</i>	1	16
<i>Other (please specify below)</i>	1	17
.....		
.....		
.....		
.....		
.....		

20. Which other factors associated with your workload problems do you think contribute to your work related stress? Please circle on the scale below, how significant each of these factors are:

Stress related factors	Not applicable	Occasionally stressful	Stressful	Very Stressful
a) Not able to exert control over demands made on me	1	2	3	4
b) Lack of participation in decision making	1	2	3	4
c) Dealing with competing demands – unable to plan working day	1	2	3	4
d) Work linked to deadlines & targets	1	2	3	4
e) Changes without consultation	1	2	3	4
f) Lack of resources, facilities & support to do the job	1	2	3	4
g) Given responsibility without the authority to take decisions	1	2	3	4
h) Bullying behaviour by managers	1	2	3	4
i) Harassment by managers	1	2	3	4
j) Lack of line management support	1	2	3	4
k) Lack of communication with staff	1	2	3	4
l) Feeling that your work is not valued	1	2	3	4
m) Lack of involvement and information	1	2	3	4
n) Conflicting demands in job role	1	2	3	4
o) Lack of participation in decision making	1	2	3	4
p) High degree of uncertainty due to restructuring & redundancies	1	2	3	4
q) Impact of restructuring on workload & responsibilities	1	2	3	4
r) Uncertainty due to merger	1	2	3	4
s) Pressures from funding organizations	1	2	3	4
t) Insufficient admin support	1	2	3	4
u) Limited or no access to training	1	2	3	4
v) Feeling work not valued	1	2	3	4
w) Lack of management support generally	1	2	3	4
x) Confrontational institutional culture	1	2	3	4

21. Please use the space below to provide any other information or comments you wish to make about your workload and factors affecting your stress levels.

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for taking the time to fill in the questionnaire. If you are not a UCU member we would like you to join us. The more members we have, the better our chances of improving the wellbeing of staff here.

Please contactfor an application form.

Hours monitoring form explanatory notes

Many lecturers justifiably complain of the long hours and excessive workloads expected of them by college management. Many people work far in excess of the hours identified in contracts of employment. By taking a rigorous and detailed snapshot of hours that are put in by lecturers, the results can undoubtedly be used to good effect by the branch.

The hours monitoring form must be used under the direction and support of the branch/local association committee.

It can be used as an organising tool by getting members involved in an exercise organised by the UCU branch/local association.

The results can also be used to take empirical evidence rather than anecdotal complaints to management at JNC.

Many lecturers find it very difficult to say no, particularly as this may involve "letting down" a group of their students. The information collected by using the form can allow teaching staff to place the burden of responsibility for managing the hours of teaching staff back on to management.

For example, the results can be used to place the employer in a position where they can be asked to prioritize which duties a lecturer or group of lecturers do and which they drop in order to keep within their contracted hours. The results could also be used to increase pressure on management to conduct risk assessments for excessive workloads for particular roles or generally where they have been resisting such moves.

In order for the exercise to be worthwhile, the completion of the form has to be done regularly and systematically over an appropriate period of time by those lecturers involved. Ironically this means staff putting in extra time on top of the already heavy workload they are trying to address!

It is suggested that a small group of staff, say in one department/section, take part in the exercise. This small group can be easily managed in terms of making sure forms are filled in and time accurately accounted for.

One UCU member in the department can be given responsibility for making sure their colleagues do this systematically each day for a week.

The results can be analysed and tabulated. The Branch Committee working with the cohort of staff involved can decide what to do with the data as described above. Results can be shared with colleagues through the UCU newsletter. This will no doubt generate further interest by other staff resulting in further organising opportunities and getting members involved.

The hours monitoring exercise should be organised by branch officers, who get together a group of staff who want to take part and explaining the nature of the form and data

collection. Stressing the importance of the systematic chronicling of hours put in is imperative. The regional branch organiser/RSO/RO can be utilised by the branch in talking with the group about how the initiative can be made to work.

The form is in Microsoft Word and can be altered to suit each situation. Perhaps this could be done in consultation with the group so that column headings reflect the nature of the work in the department/section.

The second table – ‘Other directed time’ - has blank cells, to cover work time that is suddenly dropped on individuals.

The form can be downloaded from the UCU website at:

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/1/m/stresstool_hourform.doc

UCU toolkits provide advice for branches and links to other sources of information. Anyone seeking specific advice in respect of the issues covered by this toolkit should consult their branch officers in the first instance, who in turn may need to take advice from UCU regional officials. Important time limits often apply; for further information about these or if you are seeking to pursue a legal claim on the issues covered in this toolkit, you should not rely on the toolkit alone but should seek additional advice from the union.