

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



University Work Plan Policy

2023

UNIVERSITY WORK PLAN POLICY 2023

SECTION 1 – PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

- (1) The University Work Plan Policy exists as a requirement of the Western Sydney University Academic Staff Agreement 2022. The policy's currency is maintained by the University Work Plan Committee.
- (2) The Academic Staff Agreement 2022 states the University will have a University Work Plan Committee consisting of:
 - a. Chair: A Deputy Vice-Chancellor nominated by the Vice-Chancellor;
 - b. 3 Heads of Academic Units nominated by the Vice-Chancellor; and
 - c. 3 Employees nominated by the Union.
- (3) The role of the University Work Plan Committee is to:
 - a. Provide oversight of the Academic Unit Work Plan Policies and their implementation in accordance with the University Work Plan Policy;
 - b. Maintain currency of the University Work Plan Policy; and
 - c. Deal with Individual Work Agreement Disputes under subclause 23.37 of the Western Sydney University Academic Staff Agreement 2022.
- (4) Accordingly, the University Work Plan Policy aims to ensure Academic Unit Work Plan Policies are collegial, equitable, transparent, and comparable across the institution.
- (5) The Academic Staff Agreement 2022 also requires the Committee to make decisions by consensus and be transparent in its processes.

SECTION 2 – DEFINITIONS

- (6) For the purposes of this policy:
 - a. **Academic unit** means a School or Institute.
 - b. **Employee** means an academic staff member of the University employed on an ongoing, fixed-term or casual basis who is covered by the Western Sydney University Academic Staff Agreement 2022.
 - c. **Enterprise Agreement** means the Western Sydney University Academic Staff Agreement 2022.
 - d. **Head** means a Dean or Director.
 - e. **Supervisor** means the person nominated by the University to whom an employee reports, whether directly or indirectly.
 - f. **Union** means the National Tertiary Education Industry Union (NTEU).

SECTION 3 – POLICY STATEMENT

- (7) All work plan policies should aim to positively promote quality educational experiences for students and support career development aspirations of employees.
- (8) This policy recognises that academic units across the University have different needs and circumstances that affect delivery of student and employee outcomes.
- (9) This policy therefore sets out broad processes and procedures to guide collegial development and administration of contextualised Academic Unit Work Plan Policies.
- (10) Academic Unit Work Plan Policies provide local frameworks for the development of Individual Work Agreements.
- (11) Individual Work Agreements should balance the professional autonomy of employees with the resource and operational needs of an academic unit.
- (12) Academic Unit Work Plan Policies should acknowledge the variation between academic unit resourcing issues and work plan issues.

SECTION 4 – PROCEDURES

Part A – Academic Unit Work Plan Committees

- (13) Clause 24.7 of the Enterprise Agreement states Academic Unit Work Plan Committees must consist of:
 - a. A Chair appointed by the head of the academic unit;
 - b. At least two employees appointed by the head of the academic unit; and
 - c. Elected employees equal in number to those appointed by the head under subclause 24.7(b).
- (14) Clause 24.8 of the Enterprise Agreement specifies that a quorum for an Academic Unit Work Plan Committee is 4, and to be quorate a meeting must include the Chair (or nominee) and at least 1 elected academic representative.
- (15) The Academic Unit Work Plan Committee must annually review its Academic Unit Work Plan Policy, taking the University Work Plan Policy and feedback from the academic unit's employees into account.
- (16) An Academic Unit Work Plan Committee must monitor the equitable distribution of workloads in accordance with the Academic Unit Work Plan Policy it develops.

Part B – Academic Unit Work Plan Policies

- (17) The Enterprise Agreement requires an Academic Unit Work Plan Policy to be developed and maintained by each academic unit.
- (18) Heads of academic units will consult with their Academic Unit Work Plan Committee before designating academic groups and defining their respective teaching responsibilities.

- (19) Quality of student learning, and the opportunity for staff to develop their scholarship in related areas, should be considered when developing Individual Work Agreements. This includes taking account of staff disciplinary expertise, promoting a strong nexus between teaching and research, and the need for time to provide quality feedback to students.
- (20) All staff should have an opportunity to develop their scholarship as part of their professional development, subject to the approval of a plan and reporting against same. Academic Unit Work Plan Policies should be developed transparently and collegially.
- (21) Academic units must integrate the requirements of the Enterprise Agreement and the University Work Plan Policy into their Academic Unit Work Plan Policies.
- (22) Academic units must use their Academic Unit Work Plan Policies to explain how the requirements of the Enterprise Agreement and University Work Plan Policy are operationalised in context. This means the strategic objectives and specific needs of the academic unit should be reflected in the Academic Unit Work Plan Policy clauses.
- (23) Academic Unit Work Plan Policies must specify ranges for acceptable workloads and avoid micro-counting effort.
- (24) Academic Unit Work Plan Policies must include the following elements:
- a. Principles and procedures, including how the Policy guides the development of Individual Work Agreements in the academic unit;
 - b. A commitment to annually:
 - i. review the Academic Unit Work Plan Policy; and
 - ii. report to the University Work Plan Committee by 30th September of each year;
 - c. A description of how the academic unit defines the areas of academic work, taking into account clauses 23.22 to 23.26 of the Enterprise Agreement;
 - d. Research work plan profiles, including a transparent methodology for how the academic unit determines which staff fall into which profile;
 - e. Teaching work plans, addressing the allocation requirements specified in clauses 23.5 to 23.6 of the Enterprise Agreement;
 - f. A standardised subject coordination allocation approach which adjusts subject coordination workloads based on subject size;
 - g. University-agreed allocations for:
 - i. Academic leadership positions;
 - ii. Committee-based responsibilities; and
 - iii. Participation in Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FULT);
 - h. An acknowledgement that workloads for Health and Safety representatives have been developed in consultation with relevant Health and Safety Committees and Campus Provosts;
 - i. Recognition that staff members may have workload allocated by their home academic unit to teach and/or develop curriculum for another academic unit (for example, in cross-unit collaborations and multidisciplinary units);

j. Clear dispute resolution processes.

(25) Academic Unit Work Plan Policy allocations may be summarised in tables or spreadsheets, which may act as numeric workload calculators to total up different policy elements.

(26) Any numeric workload calculator must be consistent with the academic unit's Work Plan Policy requirements.

(27) If disparity arises between a numeric workload calculator and an Academic Unit Work Plan Policy, the policy document will prevail.

(28) Pro rata calculations for part-time staff are to be used to create an equitable assessment and allocation for full-time and part-time staff.

Allocations calculated based on past performance (eg research allocation) will be calculated pro-rata based on the actual fraction FTE which was worked during the assessment period.

Allocation for the current period will be calculated pro-rata to the actual fraction FTE in the current period.

Generally, where work plan models allocate load for specific tasks based on a proportion of a full-time load, the equivalent allocation for a part-time staff member on will be divided by the annual fraction FTE of the part-time staff member.

Part C – Academic Groups

(29) Academic groups must be designated by the head in consultation with the Academic Unit Work Plan Committee.

(30) Academic groups must be based on disciplinary, teaching, or research concentrations.

(31) Academic groups must conduct open and collegial work plan negotiations with employees working in academic units.

(32) Work plan negotiations within academic units will be conducted in an open, collegial manner in designated groups, based on disciplinary or teaching and research concentrations, to be known as 'academic groups'. They will also provide the security of Individual Work Agreements co-signed by supervisors and staff. This aims to provide a balance between the professional autonomy of academic staff and the ability of Heads of academic units to manage staff resources and operational needs.

Part D – Individual Work Agreements

(33) Individual Work Agreements are negotiated on an annual basis between an employee and their supervisor, who should be familiar with the Enterprise Agreement, the University Work Plan Policy, and their Academic Unit Work Plan Policy.

(34) Supervisors must then recommend the signed Individual Work Agreement for approval by the Head of an academic unit, as per clause 23.34 of the Enterprise Agreement.

(35) Individual Work Agreements are agreed through a process of negotiation. This is distinct from the leadership and support provided during Academic Career Development, Planning and Review.

- (36) Individual Work Agreements must address the content requirements of clause 23.28, or clause 16.13 where relevant, of the Enterprise Agreement.
- (37) Individual Work Plan Agreements must be approved annually by the head of academic unit no later than 31 March of each year.
- (38) Individual Work Agreements must be collegially negotiated and agreed in writing in line with clause 23.34 of the Enterprise Agreement.
- (39) Individual Work Agreements are subject to renegotiation if circumstances substantially change after the date they are agreed.
- (40) Copies of Individual Work Agreements must be stored in a location where they are available to employees of an academic unit and to the Academic Unit Work Plan Committee.
- (41) Where staff are employed on a contract that specifies a research allocation, this research allocation must be used in an Individual Work Agreement instead of a Research Profile Allocation.

Part E – Dispute Resolution

- (42) Disputes about Individual Work Agreements must be referred to an Academic Unit Work Plan Committee or a head of academic unit in the first instance.
- (43) An Academic Unit Work Plan Committee must either:
 - a. Attempt to resolve the dispute, or
 - b. Escalate the dispute to the head of the academic unit.
- (44) The head of an academic unit must attempt to resolve any dispute referred to them.
- (45) If a resolution cannot be reached between the head of academic unit and the employee, the matter must be referred to the University Work Plan Committee. Either party may refer the matter.
- (46) The University Work Plan Committee must determine whether the workload allocation process has complied with the Enterprise Agreement, the University Work Plan Policy, and the Academic Unit Work Plan Policy.
- (47) Decisions of the University Work Plan Committee will be binding and final.

SECTION 5 – ALLOCATIONS

Research Profiles and Allocations

- (48) Academic Unit Work Plan Policies must describe how the relevant University Research Profiles are defined in the academic unit.
- (49) The process by which staff are allocated to Research Profiles must be transparent and clearly explained with reference to the quality, quantity, and impact of research outputs.
- (50) Academic Unit Work Plan Policies must specify how non-conventional research is judged if it is relevant to research profile allocation in the academic unit.

(51) Academic Unit Work Plan Policies must define leadership and mentoring in a way that is appropriate to their disciplines and research fields.

(52) Clause 23.1 of the Enterprise Agreement exempts 'research-only academics' from academic workloads. Research-only academics include those employed on research contracts of five years or less which may include positions funded by external grants or fellowships (such as DECRA and Laureate Fellows).

(53) The University Research Profiles relevant to Schools are:

a. **Scholarship or Developing Research Profile** – 20% Research Allocation

- This profile is characterised by few, if any, recognised high-order publications over the previous three years. Employees in this profile may be early career academics, developing their research profile, or returning to more active research. Supervisors and academic group colleagues should assist research development by encouraging teaching and research synergies, and by allocating workloads accordingly. A workload allocation for a research higher degree (RHD) enrolment may be granted for this profile, subject to satisfactory annual RHD progress.

b. **Substantial Research** – 20-40% Research Allocation

- Employees in this profile will have substantial research standing in their discipline and, depending on the character and methods of their research, will generally aspire to achieve national and/or international publication as well as competitive external funding.

c. **Research Leaders and Mentors** – 40-60% Research Allocation

- Academic staff in this profile will have an advanced research output in their discipline area, usually including significant external income and a well above average publication output. They will be required to play a research leadership and/or mentoring role for staff in the other profiles. Leadership and mentoring may include being the head of a recognised research program or unit, and/or guiding and supporting the research efforts of less experienced researchers.

(54) The University Research Profile relevant to Institutes is:

a. **Research Intensive Scholars** – 60-70% Research Allocation

- This profile relates to academic staff in University-designated Institutes, where competitively appointed RIF-funded scholars from Levels A to E are expected to have an advanced research standing relative to their colleagues at the same level, and where their primary role is to advance the research standing of the University.

(55) Allocations to Research Profiles should be made on a triennial basis, taking into account reasonable breaks in research activity for parental leave, illness or other valid reasons.

(56) Clause 23.16 of the Enterprise Agreement specifies that an employee's entire workload may be allocated to activities other than research where:

- a. The employee has had opportunities to produce research outcomes; and
- b. In the preceding 3 years, without good reason, has consistently not produced evidence of reasonable productive engagement in research consistent with the expected outcomes for the

employee's academic level, discipline and personal career plans.

- (57) The Academic Career Development, Planning and Review process is the ongoing reference point for expected research outcomes. If an Employee has shown signs of positive research engagement, they will be invited to submit a research plan within the workload allocation process and finalisation of their Individual Work Agreement for the forthcoming period.

Teaching Allocations

- (58) All employees must have a minimum of 20% of their workload allocated to teaching, including honours and higher degree by research supervision. The teaching of undergraduate and/or postgraduate coursework students, and/or postgraduate research students undertaking coursework as an approved component of their higher degrees must represent at least 10% of their work. This allocation does not apply to heads of academic units or Deputy Deans.
- (59) Academic Unit Work Plan Policies must provide a discipline-specific explanation for the number and type of subjects an employee is expected to contribute to in an academic year.
- (60) Academic Unit Work Plan Policies must include a reasonable assessment load defined in EFTSL, or in hours where EFTSL is not a workable numerical term for an academic unit.
- (61) No employee is expected to teach more than 50 EFTSL in a calendar year or 12 hours per week, unless the mode of teaching involves minimal or no preparation.
- (62) In addition to the teaching hours specified in clause 23.5 (c), no employee is expected to mark more than 150 students per teaching session.
- (63) Employees responsible for marking more than 150 students per teaching session will be eligible for marking relief.
- (64) Subject to the operational requirements of an academic unit, employees may concentrate their teaching to manage their research.
- (65) Where employees are required to teach on more than one campus on a single day, a travel time allocation of 2 hours must be provided. This allocation may be varied if a reason is specified in an Individual Work Agreement.
- (66) Each Academic Unit Work Plan Policy must provide a teaching allocation of 5% per year (to a maximum of 10%) to enable participation in Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FULT).

Administration and Governance Allocations

- (67) A standard administration and governance allocation of 10% must be included in Academic Unit Work Plan Policies to cover administrative duties and collegial responsibilities such as Open Day, careers markets, academic advising (not covering formal academic program advice as provided by appointed Academic Program Advisors) and graduations.
- (68) The following administration and governance allocations apply across the University and must be included in each Academic Unit Work Plan Policy:
- a. Disability coordinators: 5%;

- b. University governance committees: 5%;
- c. Human Research Ethics Committee: see [HREC Terms of Reference](#);
- d. Low and Negligible Risk Human Research Ethics Committee: see [LNR HREC Terms of Reference](#);
- e. Academic Unit Work Plan Committees: 2-5%;
- f. Senate-mandated academic unit committees or sub-committees: 2-5%;
- g. Work Health and Safety Representative: 2-5%;
- h. Work Health and Safety Deputy : 1-3%;
- i. Equity and Diversity Working Party allocations:
 - i. Members: 1%;
 - ii. Dual SAGE Self-Assessment Team Members: 2%;
 - iii. Chairs: 3%.

(69) Administration and governance allocations for specific roles must have an exact workload specified in Academic Unit Work Plan Policies. Where a range has been provided above, an academic unit must select a justifiable, exact allocation within that range.

(70) Heads of academic units and Deputy Deans must receive an administration and governance allocation of 80%.

(71) Individual contracts of Heads of academic units take precedence over work plan allocations set out in this policy.

(72) Heads of academic units must determine appropriate administration and governance allocations for other leadership roles within the academic unit, taking into account:

- a. The nature of work;
- b. The number of staff being supervised; and
- c. Student load in a program.

E-Learning Principles

(73) Teaching allocations for subjects that use e-learning should have regard (as in other modes of delivery) to tasks such as: material preparation, learning support, marking and student consultation.

(74) Allocation of e-learning workloads should consider:

- a. the size of groups/tutorials and implications for assessment;
- b. learning design and technologies used;
- c. that some facets of work (for example, preparation or updating of learning materials) may not vary with the number of students;
- d. whether the subject is being offered for a first time, is a major revision, or whether the subject is being converted from face-to-face to e-learning delivery; and

- e. the level of technical support provided for development pre-testing/piloting of technological infrastructure, dealing with technical problems encountered by students.

(75) Workload allocations for fully online subjects should be equivalent to allocations for the same subject taught face-to-face, even though distribution of work across teaching tasks may vary.

(76) Workload equivalence between e-learning and face-to-face subjects may be constructed across multiple years. However, where online teaching materials (such as lectures) are to be preserved over multiple years or iterations of unit, and where the workload for those tasks are also carried across multiple years, Schools and units will need to develop clear and transparent systems for assessing how long materials (and the workload associated with them) are to be preserved. This decision should not rest with the teaching staff who created the online materials.