The management of academic workloads: full report on findings

Barrett, LC and Barrett, PS

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SERIES

The Management of Academic Workloads

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Lucinda Barrett and Peter Barrett
University of Salford

Leadership Foundation
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Acknowledgements

The support of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education has been greatly valued. Without their funding this work would not have been possible.

Special thanks are due to all of the universities and their staff who gave their time to help with this research, and to the non-higher education organisations that also took part. All interviewed were refreshingly open and we are grateful for the high quality of their engagement.

Valuable assistance in the logistical organisation of the project was given by Anna Higson and this was greatly appreciated.

Professor Peter Barrett and Lucinda Barrett, University of Salford

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First published in January 2008
Leadership Foundation for Higher Education

Published by the Leadership Foundation
for Higher Education

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ISBN 0-9553788-7-7
ISBN 978-0-9553788-7-4

Designed & produced by Abbey DPM

Printed in the United Kingdom

Editor: Helen Goreham

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The pressures on UK higher education (from explicit competition and growth in student numbers, to severe regulatory demands) are greater than ever, and have resulted in a steady increase in measures taken by universities to actively manage their finances and overall quality. These pressures are also likely to have impacted on staff and, indeed, recent large surveys in the sector have indicated that almost half of respondents find their workloads unmanageable. Against this background it would seem logical that the emphasis on institutional interventions to improve finance and quality, should be matched by similar attention given to the allocation of workloads to staff, and a focus on how best to utilise people's time - the single biggest resource available within universities.

Thus the aim of this piece of research was to focus on the processes and practices surrounding the allocation of staff workloads within higher education. Ten diverse organisations were selected for study: six universities in the UK, two overseas universities and two non higher education (but knowledge-intensive) organisations. In each, a cross-section of staff was selected, and in-depth interviews carried out. A total of 59 such interviews were carried out across the ten organisations. By identifying typical practices, as well as interesting alternatives, views on the various strengths and weaknesses of each of their workload allocation approaches was collated; and associated factors requiring attention identified. Through an extensive process of analysis, approaches which promoted more equitable loads for individuals, and which might provide synergies for institutions were also investigated.

Key findings

The findings reveal that most universities have policy guidelines on workload allocation practices, but these are often rather limited and not well known by Heads of Department/School or other staff. Generally the guidelines included some universal advice on transparency and equity, but allowed each department or school to determine their own approach. None of the universities studied had a single system covering the whole institution, in fact it was universally felt that disciplinary differences rendered this impossible. Across the various departments examined, a wide variety of models were found, falling in three broad categories:

Informal approaches where the HoD/S collected various bits of background information, consulted and then divided the work among colleagues. These could work well if they knew all staff very well and created a positive consensus, however, the trend to larger departments is making this "traditional" approach harder to sustain.

Partial approaches where there was a move to combine data formally or numerically to give an approximate output in terms of points or hours. Sometimes this approach only covered teaching as this was timetabled so contact hours were more easily defined. In other cases administration was also included, but typically the research aspect was left out. This was partly because it was felt to be harder to quantify, but there was also a sense that academics were motivated to work on their research without having hours allocated for it. These partial approaches allowed for easier comparisons, but by being incomplete could not fully support achieving equity.

Comprehensive approaches where teaching, research and administration were all factored in with various weightings and multipliers to reflect the different loads involved. This could support equity in principle, but many were actually limited in some way with the involvement of 'capped' items. Further they could create problems if they became too detailed, and in some cases undermined the heads' abilities to tune allocations to individual circumstances.

A huge variety of practices surrounding workload allocation were found, with no single method without its problems. There was, however, agreement on some ideal principles in relation to these methods, for example on equity and transparency. Additional factors were also noted within this study, such as the impact of the general disposition of many academics, who seem to have a high regard for autonomy and a fairly well developed cynicism about managerial practices. The surveys also reported long working hours, with the majority of interviewees working in the evenings and at weekends. Along with this, at lecturer level there was some anxiety shown about ensuring the quality of their work and about the need to be efficient. Staff seemed to have a good level of trust for their head, but they were often unclear about the overall direction of their department and lacked feedback about their role in achieving this, which in turn led to anxiety about their performance.

Recommendations

A broad 'ideal' process is suggested along the following lines: There is a need to explicitly identify at university level, the essential elements which must be included within workload allocation: equity, transparency and consultation; and a framework model must be developed, again at a university level. Results show that development of a broad, neutral framework is feasible; and it is suggested that a display of transformational leadership of this type can help to improve transactional leadership at a local level. Departmental factors such as particular teaching delivery methods, should inform the variable features of the allocation process and iindividualise' the framework to ensure a 'good fit' at a departmental, and to some extent an individual, level. Hence the workload allocation (WLA) model itself might be usefully viewed as part of a dynamic process rather than a fixed feature, and staff themselves should feel they have a responsibility to actively engage. This could allow for incremental improvements to help staff feel involved in the process, and reduce negative thoughts on managerialist interventions. After accommodating staff views, the implementation process should involve a balance between the 'model' and discretionary inputs from HoD/S, to fine-tune allocations for individuals, as in this study, case studies that operated with a strong imbalance between these two elements (technical and social) seemed to have more problems. It was also noted that attention should be given to informal bonds and feedback within the department, so that drives for efficiency do not leave overworked staff feeling inadequate and underperforming

Summary of conclusions

At its simplest, it is suggested that the following are needed to achieve effective workload allocation practice in the higher education sector:

- Transformational leadership is required to drive university wide policy and a general framework model is needed which sets out agreed workload allocation criteria.
- Transactional leadership is required through consultative local tuning of the general framework model to fit departments / schools (loop process).
- All work areas should be integrated within workload allocation models - including research.
- The workload allocation model must be linked to other systems.
- There must be potential for feedback from staff to the university model (loop process).
- Heads should fine-tune the resulting model to fit individuals.
- In addition there should be informal regular monitoring of loads - and individual responses to stress noted.
- Heads need training to support these systems.
- Existing teaching allocations should be refined – management of peak periods, role stability.
- Staff should be encouraged to think about / negotiate the balance of their own activities.

Most universities will be taking some of these actions, but to achieve the full effect demands action, including appropriate leadership, on all fronts. In this way equitable workloads can be achieved, the fit between organisational needs and staff interests can be improved, synergies with other university performance management systems can be facilitated, and the universities' capabilities to achieve strategic alignment in a complex environment can be enhanced.

Workload allocation could be seen as a low-level operational issue, but given the centrality of staff to the success of universities, it is in fact a major strategic process,
which if not done well can disable the organisation. If it is effectively and authentically handled, universities can create strong socio-temporal contracts with their staff that embody the vision of the university. We hope that this work will provide a way forward to the benefit of university staff individually and universities in general.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The context of the higher education (HE) sector is volatile and complex with many pressures within it, not only from resource issues[1], but from factors such as the move to a mass market, tuition fee increases, and pressures from quality review systems, such as the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). There is at least an apparent tension between these pressures and the notion of academic autonomy and negative feelings about increasing bureaucracy and managerialism. The challenge for workload allocation systems then, is to support individual needs and organisational goals without adding to the administrative burden. The allocation of staff time operates within a complex set of relationships. In terms of its administration it has a bearing on management issues and leadership styles. It also relates to issues of trust and institutional justice. Stress is another important aspect that effective and equitable work allocation may help to mitigate.

The aim of the project then, was to focus on processes and practices surrounding academic workload allocation[2]. Through identifying typical practices as well as identifying interesting alternatives it was hoped to collate views on the various strengths and weaknesses of these approaches, as well as clarifying the associated variable factors that might need attention. Through this process potential approaches could be identified that would promote more equitable loads for individuals as well as providing synergies for institutions.

Recent large studies in the sector[3] have shown that almost half of respondents found their workloads unmanageable; similar results can be seen in an Australian survey[4] and other Australian studies also show increases in working hours over the years and a general decline in job satisfaction[5]. The literature reveals the complex relationships with many other factors at play such as role conflict and the degree of autonomy individuals experience in their work life. Much research has also been carried out into the nature of the response to the various stressors, including the effect on wellbeing, mental and physical health, and reactions such as withdrawal and cynicism about the institution[6].

Staff in higher education in the UK have been put under much pressure in recent years from increases in student numbers, greater accountability in respect of the Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) and the RAE, the resultant increase in administration tasks and a greater degree of competition for resources. Rather than starting with a focus on the issues surrounding management of time, this review will look at the findings of two large surveys on workload that detail responses of academic staff in terms of stress and then introduce the research on issues that impinge upon it. The following major sections will look at the overall context of higher education and leadership issues, looking at trust and communication aspects before turning to actual models of resource allocation.

1 UUK (2003)
2 The term "workload allocation" has been used for the policy and modelling aspects of the process, however, "workload balancing / tuning" relate to the more individualised/negotiated dimensions of the process the importance of which clearly emerges in this study
3 Kinman, G. and Jones, F. (2004)
4 Winefield, A. *et al.*(2002)
5 McInnis, C. (1999)
6 Taris, T. *et al.* (2001)

2. LITERATURE SYNTHESIS

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2.1 Studies Relating to Workload in Higher Education and Stress

One of the biggest studies on stress and work life balance among UK academic staff, is Kinman and Jones' survey *Working to the Limit* from 2004[7], commissioned by the Association of University Teachers (AUT). The survey examined job stressors, and how individuals experienced and coped with such challenges, measured how supportive features of the work environment were, and looked into the issue of work-life balance. Questions investigated the main indicators of stress, job satisfaction (and turnover intentions) and physical and mental health. Kinman's earlier study, *Pressure Points*[8], was used to benchmark results[9].

The research involved a questionnaire sent to a random selection of 5,000 academic and allied staff within higher education institutions in the UK. The response rate was 22 per cent, but although this means the researchers had over 1,000 returned questionnaires, it does raise issues of the representativeness of the sample. They selected a range of stressors to investigate including: workload, work control, role conflict, job security, relationships at work, and organisational culture. The questions consisted of a range of self-report measures covering these aspects. To measure psychological wellbeing a general health questionnaire (General Health Questionnaire variable)[10] was used to assess general levels of distress. These were measured in relation to various theoretical frameworks such as Siegrist's Effort-Reward Imbalance Model[11] that predicted that a combination of high effort and low reward at work results in adverse health effects.

One of the most pertinent findings of Kinman and Jones in relation to this study was that 69 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I find my work stressful', a finding which was very similar in the 1998 survey. Both volume and diversity of tasks were found to be problematic for staff, so that almost 42 per cent of academic staff regularly undertook over a fifth of their work during the evenings and weekends in order to cope with high workload[12]. The survey responses highlighted problems with satisfying conflicting roles, and 65 per cent indicated that they had too much in the way of administrative paperwork, with quality assurance procedures one of the most commonly cited causes of stress by respondents. Further, 32 per cent of respondents claimed that they had insufficient time to prepare for classes[13] and only 37 per cent felt positively happy with the quality of their research[14].

In terms of control, most respondents felt that they had some control over what they did at work and how they did it. However there was a feeling that these levels of control had been slowly eroded to meet the demands of quality systems. Both those who reported greater job control and those reporting clearer boundaries between home and work had higher levels of job satisfaction and physical and psychological health. One of the most interesting aspects of the report is the interconnection between the various issues. For example, staff cited the many interruptions at work as stressful[15]; in the 1998 study this was one of the most frequently mentioned sources of pressure. It was also one of the reasons staff chose to do certain tasks requiring concentration at home. The study then revealed the implications this has had on the blurring of boundaries between home and life, and the effect this had for the psychological wellbeing of employees, with 65 per cent reporting that work was still on their mind when they went to bed.

The report found that 58 per cent of respondents were moderately satisfied with their jobs in general. However, in terms of intrinsic satisfaction, such as intellectual stimulation and teaching and supervision of students, 72 per cent gained satisfaction from their work. In contrast, for extrinsic satisfaction, such as hours of work and promotion prospects, 54 per cent expressed dissatisfaction. Despite academics being satisfied with some aspects of their work then, almost one-half indicated that they had contemplated leaving the profession. The main reasons cited were insecurity of employment, work overload, stress, bureaucracy, poor work-life balance, and few prospects for promotion. Strain indicators measured in the study revealed that 50 per cent of the sample had borderline levels of psychological distress. This finding, that showed no significant difference from the 1998 study, corresponds with results of a similar survey in Australia discussed below[16]. Further, the report notes that the figure is 'considerably higher than that reported by most

7 Kinman,G. and Jones F. (2004)
8 Kinman, G. (1998)
9 Other studies have also been commissioned by the AUT, such as that of Court (1996) on *The Use of Time by Academic and Related Staff*. The findings were similar to the Kinman survey with growth in workloads and many hours worked outside of office hours.
10 Goldberg, D. (1981)
11 Siegrist, J. (2000)
12 Kinman,G. and Jones F. (2004) p19
13 Kinman,G. and Jones F. Ibid. p20
14 Kinman,G. and Jones F. Ibid. p21
15 Kinman,G. and Jones F. Ibid. p46
16 McInnis, C. (1999)

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other occupational groups'[17]. When set against the Health and Safety Executive benchmark (HSE), the results are also found to fall well short of these standards. For example, the figure of 38 per cent of staff indicating that they found their work manageable is less than half the minimum of 85 per cent set by the HSE. The Kinman and Jones' report also found that in terms of the actual number of hours worked per week there had been a reduction in those reporting working typically over 45 hours. In 1998 the figure was 66 per cent but in 2004 it had reduced to 59 per cent. In terms of correlations, the various psychological wellbeing measures (GHQ) had surprisingly low correlations (0.12) with the average number of hours worked in term time. Their study suggested that over the past six years staff may have become 'acclimatised'[18] to increasing demands and also suggested that slightly higher levels of support from various sources were present. However, correlations of GHQ to over-commitment (0.54), perceived stress (0.51), work-family conflict (0.50), and job satisfaction (-0.55) were more expected findings.

Most pertinent to this study was that in answer to an open question on improvements to minimise work-related stress, one of the most commonly mentioned items was 'the need for a managed allocation of workloads and transparency in workload planning'[19]. The survey does have interesting findings and gives a longitudinal view of the profession in relation to work and stress. However the low correlation between wellbeing measures and hours worked would benefit from greater explication.

Another ongoing study was carried out in Australia for the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs in 1990[20]. This survey, with 2,609 responses from fifteen universities, had a response rate of 58.4 per cent. The survey found that over the last five years more than half of respondents felt that their hours had substantially increased, with 40 per cent of staff working over 50 hours a week. Satisfaction levels had dropped, both from factors such as pay and job security, but also in relation to the opportunity for staff to pursue their own academic interests. Findings on stress also proved interesting, with higher proportions of females experiencing this. Another survey of Australian universities[21] commissioned by the National Tertiary Education Union, (NTEU) looked at very similar issues to Kinman and Jones' study. This survey was of 17 universities and a representative sample of 8,732 staff, both academic and general, but again only had a 25 per cent response rate.

The two main indicators of stress and wellbeing used were psychological strain, again using the GHQ indicator, and job satisfaction. The aim of this study was to identify staff groups with the highest levels of strain and /or lowest levels of job satisfaction and to identify predictors of stress and wellbeing.

The study used three predictors of individual stress centred around demographic factors, personal factors and workplace factors. The analysis indicated that the strongest predictors of psychological strain were personal factors, such as hardiness and negative affectivity, followed by workplace factors, such as job insecurity, work pressure, autonomy and procedural fairness. Using the indicators there were high levels of psychological strain, with 54 per cent of academic staff being at risk. The level of job satisfaction for academics was 53 per cent. Most dissatisfaction occurred with the way the university was managed, and 35 per cent were dissatisfied with their working hours, which were on average 50 hours a week for the academic staff. Further, 81 per cent of academic staff reported having to work after hours either most days or at least one or two days a week. The best predictor of job satisfaction was found to be procedural fairness, so the fairer the procedures the more satisfied academics were with their jobs, and this was also an important predictor of commitment to the university. Significantly, only 19 per cent saw senior management as trustworthy, although 53 per cent had trust in their Head of Department (HoD). These figures are similar to the results in Kinman and Jones'study where the question was phrased in terms of "happiness with the level of support from more senior and line managers" respectively[22].

The Australian study findings utilised three theoretical frameworks. In sum they used firstly Karasek's[23] 'Demand / Control' theory which suggests that high stress jobs combine high demands and low control. He used data from two large surveys, one in Sweden, the other in the US, to test the hypothesis that strain results not from a single aspect of the work environment but from the joint effects of demands and decision latitude. He described this as an interactive relationship, and one that allowed the true source of strain to be overlooked. Another feature that he suggested was that of 'disappearance' where the effects of demands might be cancelled out by decision latitude. Although he admitted that his findings took no account of personality issues or stress outside of work, he saw that in both countries it was

17 McInnis, C. Ibid. p44
18 Kinman,G. and Jones F. (2004) p5
19 Kinman,G. and Jones F. (2004) p47
20 McInnis, C. (1999)
21 Winefield, A. *et al.* (2002)
22 Winefield, A. *et al.* (2002) p52
23 Karasek, R. (1979)

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the workers with high demand and low decision latitudes that experienced exhaustion, nervousness or depression. In contrast, jobs with high demands and high control over judgements at work got high satisfaction ratings. However jobs that were both low on decision making control and demands were also found to be unsatisfactory, with problems such as apathy experienced. The implications of this study suggest the importance of decision making in relation to strain. These findings may be pertinent to the study of academics that have traditionally enjoyed high levels of autonomy. However as the recent Kinman and Jones survey suggested[24] changes such as "complying with internal and external quality procedures were extremely onerous and had effectively 'de-professionalised' academics"[25].

The second measure the Australian survey used was Siegrist's model of Effort-Reward Imbalance Model described above. Lastly they used the Person-Environment Fit Model[26], which suggests that job stress can be a consequence of a mismatch between the worker's ability or expectations of a job and its requirements and incentives. This research by French and his colleagues looked across a variety of job types (blue and white collar workers, including professors) and distinguished between objective and subjective variables that were measured using both objective observations (such as intelligence tests and physiological tests) and subjective perceptions. A high degree of correspondence between objective and subjective stress was revealed. One of the many hypotheses used in their study was that the 'greater the subjective misfit between the person's subjective abilities and goals and the corresponding job demands (e.g. workload and complexity) the greater the psychological and physiological strain'[27]. Misfit included too much or too little ability or supplies (motives to meet needs) and the subjective response to this situation would be defence mechanisms that caused strain. The implications from the findings of their research means that 'intervention designed to improve person-environment fit must be individualised'[28]. The Australian study supported this hypothesis in that the degree of misfit when calibrated with strain outcomes was found to provide a powerful explanation. More generall, when the researchers compared their results with all of these three theories, they concluded that findings on strain were consistent with the predictions of each in relation to stress and work demands, autonomy and rewards.

An earlier study by many members of Gillespie *et al.*'s research team[29] looked at factors that helped staff to moderate the effects of stress and help them to cope. It found that two thirds of academic staff coped by lowering their standards and self-expectations, compared with a quarter of staff using this approach in general staff groups. They also used the work of Lazarus[30] to gain an understanding of the complex and dynamic play of variables involved in the conceptualisation of stress. Conditions in the environmental alone (ie. stressors) are, he suggested, inadequate to explain the stress process. Rather, stress refers to a kind of relationship between person and environment, where demands exceed resources. He described this as a process of transaction that is appraised by the individual as either involving harm, the threat of it or, more positively, a challenge[31]. The emotional reaction, both positive and negative, is a measure of how the world is interpreted through which inference can be made of cognitive, motivational and coping processes.

Stress, then, can be viewed as a subjective phenomenon and 'is always a product of appraisal'[32]. The appraisal process can be affected by both commitments and beliefs that determine the extent that harm, threat or challenge that is felt. Commitments will determine what is felt to be important and will guide the reaction to the situation. Beliefs may relate to views in areas such as control or hope. Once this appraisal has occurred then coping approaches are brought into play. In a previous study, Lazarus defined coping as 'constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person'[33]. Further, he suggested that a person's resources such as health or beliefs may determine coping but these may also be constrained by things such as competing demands[34]. Coping responses can include problem-focused coping, and emotion-focused coping, such as in distancing. O'Driscoll and Cooper described some organisational interventions that can be of use when individual coping responses are insufficient[35].

24 Kinman, G. and Jones, F. (2004)
25 Kinman,G. and Jones F. Ibid. p22
26 French, J. *et al*. (1982)
27 French, J. *et al*. (1982) p6
28 French, J. *et al*. (1982) p114
29 Gillespie, N. *et al*. (2001)
30 Lazarus, R. (1990)
31 Lazarus, R. (1990) p3
32 Lazarus, R. (1990) p9
33 Lazarus, R. (1984) p141
34 Lazarus, R. (1990)
35 O'Driscoll, M. and Cooper, C. (2002)

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This cognitive-relational view sees the process as dynamic with feedback constantly occurring, for instance, lowering of standards at work may in time become a factor that actually becomes an additional source of stress. Lazarus described the difficulty in measuring stress and described the limitation of using statements describing stress and its occurrence because they could not show the source of the stress nor distinguish responses qualitatively. He suggested instead an approach of repeatedly assessing the degree and content of appraised stress over time. The critical point in these transactions is the moment of transition or change in the relationship. As a compromise this may be done through a process of aggregation into discreet stages. In relation to every day stresses or *hassles* Lazarus declared that three kinds of data markers are useful: content of stressor encounters, the intensity of the stressful reaction, and fluctuations of content and intensity over time. Fisher[36] has done some work that may be related to this on worry levels. Here measurement was made of the number of times a day that a subject recalls being worried by a particular problem. These results were then set against other findings on perceived problem areas. Findings showed that, for example, research at 70 per cent was the most frequently cited worry, however it had only a 12 per cent intensity rating as a problem area.

Earlier studies by Dua in a single Australian university[37] have looked at similar issues to the NTEU study, but aimed also to see if stressors acted differentially in different subgroups of staff. He used the Cooper and Payne[38] model of the major stressors for workers generally: intrinsic job factors (hours and overload), role in organisation (role conflict or ambiguity), work relationships, organisational culture (including degrees of decision making), and career development. Dua also looked beyond this to issues such as non-work stressors. The results again showed correlational findings between stressors and health variables. It also showed that overall there was little difference between the various categories (e.g. gender, seniority) in terms of overall job stress; however, there were some differences in emphasis in the job stress factors[39]. For example, older staff reported more workload stress than younger staff and also males reported more workload stress then females, but females reported more stress due to work politics than males. The correlations between job stress factors and health-job dissatisfaction measures, however, were quite low, the highest at 0.41 related to the combination of 'work politics' and job satisfaction. Once again the actual impact of workload *per se* on a range of physical and mental outcomes appears on the face of it to be negligible, similar to the AUT findings[40].

The degree of agreement on the variables to be studied is exemplified again in Gmelch and Burns'[41] work. This looked at the multidimensional aspect of stress in relation to department chairs in 101 randomly selected establishments in the US. This study explored the factors contributing to stress for these academics, and looked further to assess the degree to which this was influenced by the dual nature of their roles both as administrators and as faculty members. Items were listed under five factor headings, stress in relation to: task, role, conflict mediating, reward and recognition, and professional identity. They also looked at stress factors in relation to personal attributes and to academic discipline. In respect of the dual role aspect this involved the development and validation of two stress indexes, administrative and faculty, which were then combined to give an index representing both factors. Results of the study showed that overall stress among department chairs appeared to be 'monolithic in its effects'[42], age, gender and discipline having no significant differences. In terms of the age variable they hypothesised that this may have been because variations in experience in the role were more important than actual age. However, in relation to what they termed the 'Janus position'[43] chairs of department suffered high stress loading in both administrative and faculty (staff) roles. The conflict-mediating factor was the highest scorer, where activities such as negotiating rules, regulations, programmes and disputes created a stressful situation of mediation between faculty and administrative pressures. This study provides useful insights into the relationship operating in relation to stress and issues such as management and leadership that will be discussed in greater depth later in this paper.

Siegall and McDonald[44] looked at responses of professors in the US with work-related stress using Maslach's Burnout inventory[45]. This theory describes mismatch between worker and workplace in terms of imbalance between demands and resources and their relationship to various responses in terms of exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced accomplishment and ultimately to outcome costs. Using this, Siegall and McDonald set out four hypotheses in relation to stress and burnout. They focused on professors as they were

36 Fisher, S. (1994)
37 Dua, J. (1994)
38 Cooper, C. and Payne, R. (1978)
39 Dua, J. (1994) p8
40 Dua, J. (1994) p14
41 Gmelch, W. and Burns, J. (1994)
42 Gmelch, W. and Burns, J. (1994) p8
43 Gmelch, W. and Burns, J. (1994) p3
44 Siegall, M. and McDonald, T. (2004)
45 Maslach, C. (2000)

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felt to have a good degree of flexibility in their choice of task and allocation of time. Their hypotheses were firstly, that a response to work stress might be to spend less time on work activities, or secondly that it would involve a shifting of time between different work activities or that it involved a shifting of time onto non-work activities. The fourth hypothesis used the Person–Environment Fit Model[46] as a basis to suggest that the degree to which a person suffered 'burnout' would be negatively related to the congruence of their values with those of the organisation. The results of this study supported the first hypothesis: less time was spent on work when under stress. However there was only limited evidence to suggest that time was shifted onto other activities either at work or non-work. They concluded that they needed a clearer picture of the contributors to burnout in order to understand the mechanisms operating here. As might be expected where there was a mismatch of values between the individual and the organisation there were higher levels of burnout and this caused them to spend less time on professional development and teaching. They concluded that it might benefit organisations if they looked into ways in which they could develop a sense of ownership by staff of their organisation's values.

Warr continued the focus on individual response mechanisms in *Psychology at Work*[47]. His discussion may help inform some of the theoretical underpinnings to the issues raised in the surveys reviewed earlier but from a generic perspective rather than specific to higher education workers. His theoretical framework on psychological wellbeing is especially useful. He examined people's feelings about themselves in relation to their job, their degree of overall satisfaction with it, and various other facets of it. He used a framework with three principal axes of measurement: firstly the horizontal axis of pleasure running from low to high, and then the diagonals, anxiety to comfort and depression to enthusiasm. These axes have been measured through questionnaire and interview analysis of feelings about the given variables. Warr's earlier research into the psychologically important attributes of work revealed the key features of it to be: opportunity for control, opportunity for skill use, externally generated goals (demands and workload, role conflict etc), variety, environmental clarity, availability of money, physical security, supportive supervision, interpersonal contact and social position. However, some of these job characteristics have been shown to be more predictive than others in relation to wellbeing. For example, he noted that high job demands were more strongly associated with the anxiety-comfort axis than the depression-enthusiasm one. In relation to the area of job strain, the research combined elements from more than one axis, usually the negative elements of both anxiety and depression. He hypothesised that correlations need not just be linear. For example, there were situations where too much of a factor, such as control or variety, might become undesirable. Warr noted, as do other studies[48], that individual dispositions would also affect wellbeing in this matter.

Another study looking at differential outcomes was done by Taris and colleagues[49] (2001). Their research was on academic staff in a Dutch university and looked at job resources (including decision latitude) and demands in relation to potential outcomes of strain or withdrawal (cynicism, lack of commitment, turnover intent). The purpose of the study was not only to increase understanding of the nature of stress affecting academic staff but also to present a dual process model for the effects of occupational stress that took into account not only stressors but also resources. To do this, they drew together two theoretical frameworks. Firstly the ideas of Lazarus and Folkman[50] and their Stress-Appraisal-Strain-Coping Theory that distinguishes between health outcomes and psychological withdrawal in response to *perceived* stressors. Secondly, Hobfoll and Freedy's[51] Conservation of Resources Theory that assumes that people have to strive to maintain resources, such as control, but that negative outcomes occur when these are insufficient to meet demands. The survey variables that accommodated these two models then were strains, withdrawal, resources and stressors. The results indicated that job resources and demands were differentially related to outcomes of strain or withdrawal. Those staff with higher levels of control experienced lower levels of strain or withdrawal. Time demands themselves affected the strain but disagreements or problems with other staff were more likely to cause withdrawal, a finding that seems to broadly accord with Warr's theories. Another interesting issue was that the combination of research and other tasks was a potent predictor of strain. The researchers suggested that academic staff in The Netherlands were employed primarily on the basis of their research and so needed more input to help them teach effectively.

An interesting angle on this issue of response to stress and workload is taken by Hockey[52]. He combined an energy-

46 French, J. *et al*. (1982)
47 Warr, P. (2002)
48 Siegrist, J. (2000); Winefield, A. *et al*. (2002)
49 Taris,T. et al. (2001)
50 Lazarus, R. and Folkman, S. (1984)
51 Hobfoll, S. and Freedy, J. (1993)
52 Hockey, G. (1997)

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based approach with an information model and he brought physiological evidence to the model. His work came from longitudinal and cross-sectional studies of the behaviour of young doctors. He developed a model to account for the different patterns of behaviour shown when under stress and high workload. Stress was looked at as a result of mismatch between prevailing and required task states. He suggested that 'energetical resources' may be allocated and controlled but not without attracting costs either to emotional or physiological subsystems and further that this control was motivational in force. The model that he set out defined a two-level system, where at one level relatively small variations in demand are met automatically and not felt to be effortful (effort without distress or active coping)[53].

When these variations become greater and broach the threshold of what could readily be accommodated there would be a subjective awareness of effort deployment. This response would be more varied and motivational in origin. Two avenues were possible. First, where the task in hand elicited effort beyond individual's comfortable capacity or the resources available then 'effort with distress' or 'strain coping' occurred[54]. Hockey pointed out these responses carry consequences for efficiency as any subsidiary goals were discarded. Further, negative impacts could result through reduced effort being available for other tasks. Both reactions could have cumulative negative effects over the longer term ("latent decrement").

The second avenue was to factor down the targets so that they could be achieved with the effort available ('distress without effort' or passive coping). This response, of course, could also have negative efficiency effects because of the acceptance of the reduced performance targets. These choices around targets, tasks and effort were influenced by such factors as individuals' response to tasks, their capacity for sustained work and tolerance to strain; further short term aspects such as fatigue might also have an influence[55]. Hockey went on to suggest that there was one more way of responding to increased load and this was to step back from the task in question and make a "strategic adjustment"[56], and to change the way the task was done. His later study on two doctors who were in high demand situations and low control opportunities showed different responses: either strain or passive coping mode. However, when they were placed in an enabling situation (opportunity for control and involvement were high) both exhibited high-energy effort and increased adrenaline.

Summary of Studies Relating to Workload in higher education and Stress

From both the union surveys and the theoretical models some degree of consensus can be seen in relation to the stressor variables and the indicators of stress, in terms of job satisfaction and strain. Those studies that looked at overall stress levels in different subgroups (gender, age etc.) at work showed inconclusive findings although there were differences in response to different stressors[57]. Further there seems to be some consensus on the importance of the individual response or interpretation of environmental stressors[58]. This might explain the complex and often unexpected relations between stressors and outcomes, and the problem of identifying the actual source of a strain. For example, long hours alone were not shown to have strong correlations with wellbeing[59]. Theoretical models explore the additional factors that might be at work here in relation to mismatches, or gaps, between workers and their work environment such as control and rewards[60]. Others go further still, looking at the whole relationship between the individual and their environment in relation to stress[61]. This might be in terms of congruence of values, abilities of the individual, and the control and rewards, in relation to the demands of the job. Further there are theories of differential responses to demand and resource variables, such as increased strain or withdrawal/passive coping[62].

The link between a person and his/her environment in relation to work and stress has been repeatedly demonstrated. Yet in this so many variables are relatively fixed. This discussion will, after looking at the general context of higher education, focus on those factors concerning work allocation that may be more easily changed.

2.2 The Higher Education Context

Overall, from these surveys and models it can be seen that there is a complex interplay of factors operating within the higher education context, beyond the relatively straightforward one of just high workloads. These include personal response and motivational issues as well as control

53 Hockey, G. (1997) pp81-2
54 Hockey, G. (1997) pp81-2
55 Hockey, G. (1997) p88
56 Hockey, G. (1997) p84
57 Dua, J. (1994); Gmelch, W. and Burns, J. (1994)
58 Lazarus, R. (1990); Hockey, G. (1997); Cooper, C. (2000); Siegrist, J. (2000); Warr, P. (2002); Winefield, A. *et al*. (2002)
59 Kinman, G. and Jones, F. (2004)
60 Karasek, R. (1979); Siegrist, J. (2000)
61 French, J. et al. (1982); Lazarus, R. (1990)
62 Lazarus, R. and Folkman, S. (1984); Hockey, G. (1997); Taris, T. *et al*. (2001); Warr, P. (2002)

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over work, support, perceptions of procedural fairness, and work politics. These latter areas can be seen to relate to issues of governance and leadership that affect the whole context within which people work. The 2003 Universities UK (UUK) report *Patterns of Higher Education Institutions in the UK*[63] gives a general statistical picture of this context. It compared the different subgroups, such as the Russell Group and the 1994 Group and questioned strategies that typecast institutions dependent on their status. It noted a general change in emphasis in demand for subjects, for example, a decline in demand for physical science and in modes of study such as increased demand for part-time provision. Wide differentials were found between the subgroups in terms of public funding of research, administration and accommodation costs. However, it reported a general decline in the financial security across the whole sector. No group was immune to the challenges that faced the sector. The 2006 Hefce report[64] on staff at higher education institutions (HEIs) gives a further statistical picture of trends in the sector. It showed, for example, the steady rise in numbers of academics over the last ten years, with significant growth in the proportion on permanent contracts. However, it also found there was a decline in numbers of permanent staff in many of the science areas.

Such a context is challenging. Jackson[65] saw the problem as one of creating an environment for dynamic development whilst set in a system of increasing regulation. He noted that the move from an elitist to a mass market in education has brought with it a customer-based emphasis and the drive for accountability. Such a regulatory process could provide universities with the opportunity to improve and develop. However, this would require a degree of self-criticism and openness that could also be seen as detrimental to the university. Ultimately he saw that the answer might come through a partnership of trust where the emphasis moved from accountability to development and improvement. In a similar vein, Holmes and McElwee[66] suggested that there was a danger in institutions becoming too managerialist and preoccupied with Total Quality Management (TQM) measures that focus solely on market responses. They suggested that this narrow focus could lead to a neglect of the area where true quality in education resides, that is, the 'personal fulfilment of the individual (staff member and student) as the true meaning and kite mark of institutional quality'[67].

Also looking at these pressures, Shattock[68] conducted a review aiming to find out what makes a university successful. He concluded that there can be no absolute predictors, but that managing a university was a holistic process and that those institutions that were most successful were those that combined high performance in research, teaching and student measures. In relation to governance he found a situation of mutual dependence, in which the executive and academic perspectives worked closely in partnership, with neither one dominating the other. A danger he warned about, was that financial pressures were making the universities become less collegial and more technocratic, for example in handling issues such as staff redundancy[69], and in general he viewed collegiality as an important mechanism to achieve the core business. More specifically he saw collegiality as vital because the academic community was responsible for 70 per cent of direct budget expenditure and to be committed to the budgetary strategy this community needed to be involved in consultations regarding how that budget was allocated[70].

From another perspective in relation to the changes in the higher education sector, in 2004 Middlehurst[71] reviewed responses to government demands for increases in efficiency and productivity. She cited Tapper and Salter's study[72] that suggested values in the sector have been influenced by Oxbridge-type ideas of autonomy and 'donnish domination'[73]. Middlehurst argues that change within the higher education sector was stimulated by a series of reviews that were associated with significant financial changes[74]. She charted the shifting relationship between universities and the state from the mid–1980s. The implications of this for university management were a move towards a bringing together of academic leadership and management, with stronger executive management[75]. Such alterations brought with them new cultural patterns that coexisted with different degrees of emphasis within each university. Middlehurst goes on to cite McNay's[76] analysis of university cultures of collegium, bureaucracy, corporation and enterprise[77]. External drivers such as student number targets and the issue of fees were also found to affect internal governance. Further, these changes were influenced by the need to compete with other institutions, but also at other times to collaborate in the process of knowledge creation and dissemination[78].

63 UUK (2003)
64 Hefce (2006)
65 Jackson, N. (1997)
66 Homes, G. and McElwee, G. (1995)
67 Homes, G. and McElwee, G. Ibid. p6
68 Shattock, M. (2003)
69 Shattock, M. (2003) p87
70 Shattock, M. (2003) p88
71 Middlehurst, R. (2004)
72 Tapper, T. and Salter, B. (1992)
73 Tapper, T and Salter, B (1992). p259
74 Middlehurst (2004) p258
75 Middlehurst, R. (2004) p264
76 McNay, I. (1992)
77 Middlehurst, R. (2004) p267
78 Middlehurst, R. (2004) p269

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Kelso and Leggett[79] saw similar issues in their review of Australian universities, and they also found a redefining of roles in institutions, a shift of the decision-making locus from professors to faculty groupings and a blurring of distinctions between academic and non-academic staff. Middlehurst suggested that the demanding operating environment in the UK will remain complex and volatile. She gave examples of the responses that have been used to address this, for example strengthening the role of vice-chancellor (VC), in part through an emphasis on their strategic vision and backed by a senior management team, and strengthened through the inclusion of new positions such as deputy. An increase in the size of academic units was also seen, creating synergies and increasing their power. These could then be linked with enterprise or outreach units to help create new posts and specialisms. However diversity was seen as a strong and persistent feature of universities so that no one solution could be highlighted in relation to governance. Middlehurst concluded that the discussion of these changes in internal governance needed to take into account the part of leaders and managers in making these changes sustainable. This would require them to address inhibitors to change in terms of bureaucracy, routines, risk aversion and defensiveness and inappropriate command structures.

Coaldrake and Stedman[80] offered some interesting insights into the Australian sector that has many parallels with the UK. For example, they discussed the culture of individualism and academic autonomy and how team working has shifted this emphasis, as well as the increasing need for academics to justify work in terms of 'market demand and economic viability'[81]. They also went further to examine the nature of this autonomy and described how factors such as professional accreditation, the law, and the responsibility to students had always circumscribed it. Another interesting issue they comment on is the relationship between teaching and research and the different arguments to describe synergies between the two. They noted the problems of ambiguity when defining the terms and also the lack of empirical evidence to support integrationist models of university teaching and research[82].

From the above it can be seen that the higher education context is highly turbulent. Financial uncertainty and instability is compounded by increases in both regulation and free market practices. So, within a tradition of collegiality and individual-organisational autonomy, serious questions are being asked of those who are leading universities.

2.3 Values and Leadership Issues in Higher Education

Barnett[83] focuses on academic and organisational values by looking at the intersection between universities and their external context, the preoccupation with managerialism and the dissatisfaction with it seen through the surveys. Questions can be raised as to what these values are? What does managerialism mean in terms of values? Can values be managed? Further, is there a big divide between academic and managerial values? These are questions that Stiles[84] went some way to address in his longitudinal study of business schools in Britain and Canada, with an aim to better understand the world of academic management. He stated that little work had been done on the identity and the embedded values of management academics. In relation to values he synthesised the idea of fundamental beliefs and their long-term influence on behaviour and preferences. He cited Rokeach's[85] work on how the values of individuals together make up collective organisational values that can be described using two distinct categories: terminal (end goals) such as happiness or freedom, and instrumental values that are the means to achieve them, for example by being honest, and logical.

From this study on higher education and from the literature on identity, values and strategy, Stiles went on to develop three theoretical bases, Separatist, Integrationist and Hegemonist, that he saw as representing different, coherent sets of academic organisation, academic identity and institutional strategies (see Table 1 overleaf). Some issues emerged when the values of academics did not correspond with the values of their 'academic organisation'. Problems could occur within schools where there were tensions between different values operating, such as finding a balance between theory and practice in teaching and research[86]. His study asked interviewees to rearrange two separate value lists in order of the centrality to their own working lives[87]. The results of the ranking of these various values, showed that over time there had been a move from a separatist base towards a hybrid integrationist model. Stiles argues that although there is much common ground, institutional strategy should be more informed by an understanding of the complex base of academic values.

79 Kelso, R. and Leggett, C. (1999)
80 Coaldrake, P. and Stedman, L. (1999)
81 Coaldrake, P. and Stedman, L. (1999) p12
82 Coaldrake, P. and Stedman, L. (1999) p21
83 Barnett, R. (2000)
84 Stiles, D. (2004)
85 Rokeach, M. (1968)
86 Stiles, D. (2004) p172
87 Stiles, D. (2004) p163

TABLE 1

THEORETICAL BASES OF ACADEMIC ORGANISATION AND IDENTITY (STILES, 2004)

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Theoretical base	Ontology (nature of social world)	Epistemology (nature of knowledge)	Academic organisation	Academic identity	Institutional strategies
Separatist	Autonomous actors Defined boundaries	Distinct domains Mode 1: Specialist, mono-disciplinary, basic	Segregated Traditional	Independent Unitary/Rational Collegial values	Collegia
Integrationist	Semi-autonomous actors Semi-permeable boundaries	Interacting domains Mode 2: Broad, trans-disciplinary, basic and applied	Contextualised Traditional and entrepreneurial	Conflicting Disintegrated Fragmented values	Cultural Political Stakeholder Garbage can
Hegemonist	Dominant actors Permeable boundaries	Hegemonic domains Conflictual, socially biased	Socially subsumed Co-opted	Dependent Hegemonic Subsumed values	Managerial Radical Postmodern

In relation to leadership, Middlehurst[88] saw this as partly associated with change but also with interpretation of values that had a role in assisting the process of change. Her investigations showed that the most desirable leadership characteristics were: decisiveness, sensitivity, willingness to listen, the ability to command respect and honesty[89]. In relation to academic values she gave a full account, first in absolute terms, of how academic leaders are likely to reflect the values of their followers, and then the influences these followers have on the actions of those leaders[90], but argues that the boundaries and values here are 'no longer clear or certain'[91]. The work of Lewicki and colleagues[92] may also be useful here with its suggestion that a factor that determines the trust levels operating between parties can be related to the extent that the parties identify with each others values.

Some studies have been carried out that show positive findings about transformational styles of leadership. For example, a study in Australia[93] looked at different styles of leadership (transformational, transactional, consultative, and corrective) in relation to the trust that professionals in a research and development organisation felt for their leader. This trust was measured in relation to cognitive measures (competence, integrity, fairness etc.), affective measures (relationship bonds), behavioural measures (reliance on leader's skill) and lastly in terms of overall trust. The questionnaires set these against nine different leadership dimensions to measure satisfaction against each. The three variables that together explained 68 per cent of the variance in results for 'trust in leaders' were; common values; consultative leadership; and communicating a collective vision. Results suggest that, together, the instigation of these values might work to reduce uncertainty about the leader's behaviour in the long term and thus make followers more willing to make themselves vulnerable, rely on their leader's judgements and confide in them. Also found to be important were reciprocal trust, and 'open communication of ideas and delegation of power'[94]. The study concluded that trust in leadership was positively associated with transformational and consultative leadership styles. Further, transactional styles were seen as vital too, especially in relation to contingent rewards and the consistent honouring of promises when expectations are met in relation to set goals. A further Australian study on fire teams[95] found that transformational leadership styles lessened the negative impacts on motivation that high levels of bureaucracy were inducing.

This interplay between various styles of leadership is something with which Middlehurst[96] was also concerned. She described the work of Bensimon *et al*.[97] who pointed out that the dual authority (both administrative and professional) existing in universities worked against the effectiveness of a transformational approach alone. Middlehurst felt that this was partly because loyalty often lay with one's department[98] and so motivation was intrinsic to

88 Middlehurst, R. (1993)
89 Middlehurst ,R. (1993) p149
90 Middlehurst, R. (1993) p10 and p149-50
91 Middlehurst, R. (1993) p85
92 Lewicki, R. *et al*. (1998)
93 Gillespie, N. and Mann, L. (2004)
94 Gillespie, N. and Mann, L. (2004) p10
95 Sarros J, *et al*. (2002)
96 Middlehurst, R. *et al*. (1993)
97 Bensimon, E. *et al*. (1989)
98 Middlehurst, R. (1993) p36

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the work itself. Rather like the Gillespie and Mann[99] findings she saw the need for transactional styles to address the day to day work needs, combined with a transformational style to supply the vision needed to cope with new demands and resource issues. She also concluded that leadership needed to take people forward with consent and commitment in the 'interpretation of values, [and] in the representation of collective purposes and interests'[100]. This idea resonates with Shattock's[101] view that universities should be run on a consensual rather than consensus basis[102]. However, Bryman in his review of the literature on leadership states that little research has been done *directly* examining which approaches to leadership in higher education are effective[103]. From interviews that he carried out he found resonance with much of the literature on the need for leaders to create and maintain trust and to convey a clear sense of their values. He also found that ignoring problems was considered to be a trait of ineffective leaders, although this issue did not appear in any of the literature he reviewed.

Middlehurst's view that different leadership styles are appropriate in different circumstances seems also to be in accord with the views of Schein[104] in this matter. He felt the style required was dependent on the nature of the task, the context and the subordinates involved. More generally he saw both leadership orientation (for example task or relationship) and style to be contingent on context. This has been studied in relation to vice-chancellors[105] where it was found that different styles of leadership did not correlate with different university types; for example, the new universities were not necessarily more managerial than the old ones as might have been suspected[106]. Rather, their study suggested that the different domains of leadership (academic and managerial) required different styles at different times. Like Schein, they felt that this involved a translation of vision into goals and the means to accomplish them.

Kennie[107] also noted the complexity of higher education institutions, with their wide-ranging professional and academic subcultures, and complex control mechanisms through which leadership and management must operate. He went on to argue that management and leadership is changing within these establishments, responding to both internal complexity and the external context. There is a need to move from senior academics determining policy to an increased sharing of this function with 'strategic level professional managers'[108] in order to close the gap between university policy and its local implementation. He argues that such work might assist perceptions about managerialism through appeal to more positive values, such as fairness.

The importance of leadership styles and strategies has been demonstrated through the studies discussed above. In relation to the allocation of staff time the actual implementation of policy often falls to the HoDs. This makes it necessary to look more specifically at the devolved leadership at HoD level, looking at areas such as communication and trust that have implications for resource allocation. As many commentators have noted[109] this role may suffer from problems of the dual identity of being both manager and academic colleague. Further, as Middlehurst noted, the actual power or leverage of the HoD is both dynamic in nature and fairly limited. The level of credibility or trust that they inspire might, in fact, determine their degree of influence. It relies, in Argyris'[110] terms, on the idea of a 'psychological contract' a reciprocal relationship of exchange between the parties. The importance of this was exemplified in some of the survey findings where the need for trust between parties was shown to be an important predictor of job satisfaction[111].

However, one aspect that many studies have noted is that the role of HoD is often seen as temporary, and many feel that management training to support these leaders is narrow in outlook[112]. A Higher Education Policy report[113] into modernising Human Resource Management, interviewed human resource and institution heads at 44 universities. The biggest challenge seen to face them in this respect was the need to persuade managers at all levels of their role and responsibilities in managing staff. Debate within interviews often focused on issues such as training or philosophical discussion on whether it was right to direct colleagues activities in this way. A recurring theme arising from these heads was that middle managers were often surprisingly anti-management and that their loyalties lay primarily with their teams. The report cited evidence of frustration by human resource heads at this, one member describing it as 'a thick layer of cloud below'[114]. The report acknowledged that

99 Gillespie, N. and Mann, L. (2004)
100 Middlehurst, R. (1993) p86
101 Shattock, M. (2003)
102 Shattock, M. (2003) p88
103 Bryman, A. (2007)
104 Schein, E. (1988)
105 Bargh, C. *et al*. (2000)
106 Bargh, C. *et al*. (2000) p129
107 Kennie, T. (2007)
108 Kennie, T. (2007) p65
109 Middlehurst, R. (1993)
110 Argyris, C. (1960)
111 Winefield, A. (2002) p93
112 Davies, J. (1995)
113 Archer, W. (2005)
114 Archer, W. (2005) p22

the perception of this barrier by the majority of staff related to 'what sits above'[115], i.e. the institutional management. Such an issue relates to findings from the two large union surveys, in the Australian survey from 2002[116], only 19 per cent saw senior management as trustworthy, and in the Kinman and Jones UK survey[117] only 21 per cent felt that they were supported by this senior management team. Another issue that the policy report described was the problem of aligning individual performance with institutional goals, although the Hefce *Rewarding and Developing Staff* initiative had brought with it some rapid change. They also noted that concerns about suboptimal performance of some staff had a negative impact on performance-team morale. The work of Taris et al[118] discussed above, on the interpersonal reasons for cynicism and withdrawal of staff, might be illuminating here.

In an earlier period, looking at the level of HoD, Jackson[119] was able to distinguish the roots of some of the problems. He felt it was potentially problematic that increased pressure within universities, such as from the vast amount of new employment legislation, was being devolved to these HoDs. He found their role was changing as a response to these pressures rather than through strategic intervention, and he stated that there was a need at university level to consider their strategy in relation to training of this group of individuals. Another aspect considered in this study was the issue of workload allocation. He described some of the measures used in the newer universities, such as with a formula based on annual hours, or other systems based on needs and abilities, and also how in certain cases poor performance in research was used as a basis to increase teaching hours. However, Jackson agreed with Middlehurst's view that the HoD has limited scope to affect performance[120]. He concluded that 'persuasion and encouragement are likely to be the mainstay of the HoD's armoury'[121].

There are strong, albeit evolving, academic values within higher education and these must be taken into account by leaders, who should choose their approaches appropriately to meet the needs of their staff. Specifically, the HoD role appears to be pivotal, but has distinctive characteristics driven by its (typically) temporary nature and "boundary spanning" demands. In all of this activity soft factors such as trust are built but can easily be lost.

2.4 Communication and Trust

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Such a conclusion calls for a greater awareness of issues concerning trust and communication. Kets de Vries[122] noted the importance of this issue and suggested that the world's most admired companies had common features in their leadership styles and practices. These included treating people fairly with trust at the centre of corporate values. He described how the best managers paid attention to the motivational needs of their workers and worked to ensure that these personal needs were congruent with organisational ones. In relation to the higher education sector, Thornhill and his colleagues[123] looked at how employee commitment could be affected by communication strategies. They found that resource constraints and demands for higher quality of outcomes necessitated high levels of commitment from all staff. The study described how different factors influenced commitment but specifically for academics these included: personal characteristics - tenure, need for achievement, sense of competence and professionalism; role and job characteristics including role conflict, role strain, job scope, autonomy and feedback; structural characteristics that might affect commitment levels in terms of the degrees of formalisation and centralisation; and finally expectations in terms of fairness over decisions and leadership styles[124]. As can be seen, there is a large overlap in this list with the stressor factors reviewed in other studies. The study described how individuals may be committed to different focuses, for example, on their career, on the intrinsic value of the work, to the organisation itself or to a union. They argued that to achieve organisational goals, the nature of this commitment must be recognised and addressed, and their study then used both interviews and questionnaires to evaluate the role effective communication could contribute.

The categories of communication used within the study were information flows down the organisation, flows up it and also management or leadership styles. Questions centred on issues such as how well informed staff felt management kept them and on aspects such as giving explanations for decisions. Questions were also included about perceptions of 'us and them' barriers[125]. Results showed that a high degree of commitment (84 per cent) was felt by those staff who felt that their institution cared for them; however, it was perhaps surprising that of staff who did not feel cared for 36 per cent still felt part of the organisation.

115 Archer, W. (2005) p24
116 Winefield *et al*. (2002)
117 Kinman, G. and Jones, F. (2004)
118 Taris, T. *et al*. (2001)
119 Jackson, M. (2001)
120 Jackson, M. (1999) p3-4
121 Jackson, M. (1999) p7
122 Kets de Vries, M. (2000)
123 Thornhill, A. *et al*. (1996)
124 Thornhill, A. *et al*. (1996) p3
125 Thornhill, A. *et al*. (1996) p5

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Although the results cannot claim a causal relationship, there was a significant relationship between the ways an organisation communicated with its staff and their levels of commitment. Further, the nature of that communication was reviewed, distinguishing between directive approaches and open types, where there were uninhibited flows of communication and with decision-making power being widely dispersed. The other factor the study found needed to be addressed was the issue of the different commitment focuses described above (career, profession, work etc.) and the issue of dual commitment focus. They concluded that employee perceptions were important in this area, and that communication needed to address their different needs. Further, the importance of the nature and style of that communication was stressed in regard to its design and delivery.

Much of this work on communication relies on an understanding of the issue of trust that lies at its roots. A synthesis of cross-disciplinary conceptions of trust by Rousseau *et al*.[126] suggested its definition as 'a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another'[127]. The conditions they saw as necessary for trust to exist were the perception of a risk (psychological, sociological and economic conceptions) and also interdependence between parties - this might vary along the course of the relationship[128]. Gillespie and Mann[129] discussed the importance of trust within organisations, both in terms of competitiveness and effectiveness. They saw it at as an essential part of a reciprocal relationship within teams and with leaders. Trust was seen as multidimensional with bases in cognitive, affective, and behavioural elements. The first two bases related to beliefs and emotions respectively, whilst in terms of behaviour, important elements could be seen in relation to both relying on others and disclosing information to them[130].

Mayer and Davis[131] developed an integrative model of trust within organisations. They clarified confusion that existed between the various situations associated with trust such as co-operation and confidence, for example noting that in a trust situation, as opposed to one of confidence, there would be an explicit recognition of risk. This paper also looked at the characteristics of both the trustor and the trustee. They found that the innate propensity of the trustor to trust might vary in level depending on the trustee. They made a proposition based on other research about factors that can influence perceptions of trustworthiness of the trustee, namely, ability, benevolence and integrity. These could vary independently of each other and they also proposed that the effect of these factors would vary throughout a relationship. For example, integrity might be most salient early on whilst benevolence would increase in importance through time. Context was also seen as a contributory factor in the development or inhibition of trust. They suggested that the integrating trust model would now benefit from being put into operation, however one factor that they saw as problematic lies at the very heart of this issue. Trust, as has been defined, relies on a willingness to be vulnerable, and it was seen as difficult to distinguish this 'willingness' from being vulnerable *per se*.

Dirks and Ferrin[132] explored the issue of the context for trust. They looked at two different models on how trust might affect attitudes, perceptions and behaviour. The first, the 'main effect model', has been extensively researched. Trust according to this model operates in a straightforward way with high levels of it resulting in better performance, co-operation and behaviour. It affects how we assess future behaviour of another and how we interpret their past actions[133]. They looked critically at the empirical evidence for these predicted outcomes and also compared it with a second model, the 'moderation model'. This suggests that trust may facilitate, or moderate, other determinants of work attitudes, performance, and behaviours[134] and their research set out various propositions about how this might work. Their hypothesis was that although both models were valid in any given context, one model would better describe the effects of trust than the other[135]. Research led them to situational 'strength' as the concept used to decide which model would be appropriate. 'Strong' situations were considered those in which there was a high level of guidance or incentive given to behave in a certain way, and 'weak' situations were seen as those where such guidance on outcomes was not provided. They argued that in 'weak' situations the main effect model would be most applicable, as this relies on the idea that trust is a positive psychological state so that when no other factors are at play it may have a direct effect. However in 'stronger' situations the mediating aspect of trust might work to facilitate or hinder the effects of the other constructs. They recognised that the situations of strong/weak are ranged along a continuum, so that in certain situations both models would operate.

126 Rousseau, D. *et al*. (1998)
127 Rousseau, D. *et al*. (1998) p395
128 Rousseau, D. *et al*. (1998) p395
129 Gillespie, N. and Mann, L. (2004)
130 Gillespie, N. and Mann, L. (2004) p2
131 Mayer, R. and Davis, J. (1995)
132 Dirks, K. and Ferrin, D. (2001)
133 Dirks, K. and Ferrin, D. (2001) p456
134 Dirks, K. and Ferrin, D. (2001) p455
135 Dirks, K. and Ferrin, D. (2001) p461

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Saunders and Thornhill[136] captured ideas about mistrust as well as trust. Their case study analysed local authority workers' emotional responses to organisational change. The main task of the study was to discover whether, for employees, trust and mistrust were two ends of a continuum as Lewicki *et al*. suggested[137], or whether they were instead separate entities that might both be experienced in a given organisation. They devised a framework to explore the findings about trust from their interviews, in relation to: 'distributive justice' concerning perceptions about outcomes of decisions, and 'interactional justice', which is more concerned with the implementation of decisions[138]. The findings of this study showed that both mistrust and trust could co- exist, and another state of '*absence*' of either of these emotions was also found. Further, the majority of respondents explained their trust in relation to informational and interpersonal types of justice[139], hence having to do with the treatment they receive and the explanations they are given. However, those experiencing mistrust explained it in terms of distributive and procedural justice, i.e. in relation to their perceptions of fairness of the procedures used to make decisions. Although this study was relatively small and not focused on higher education, it may be seen to have implications that are generally applicable. For example, it shows the importance of managers giving information about decisions beyond just an initial justification and being considerate and sensitive in relation to the needs of staff.

The studies here show that communication offers the chance to create high commitment to the organisation, but it has to be two-way and genuine or the opposite effect can result. Hence it is not only what a manager does, but how he or she does it that is important, in that this drives staff perceptions.

2.5 Resource Allocation

From the studies looking at leadership qualities and trust issues, some recurring themes are visible. Qualities looked for in a leader include decisiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to command respect and honesty. There is some overlap here with the qualities of those to be trusted, which depend on an individual's ability, benevolence and integrity. For leadership and trust, there seems to be a sharing of competence measures and integrity and the organisational context has an important bearing on both these factors. These qualities become tremendously important when the issue of resource allocation is raised. Conflicts of interest and competition for resources, can challenge perceptions of equity in organisations as Engwall and Jerbrant's study[140] showed. They studied two multi-project organisations, a loose analogy for universities, in which there was a common pool of resources integrated and managed by the 'pool owner'. Allocation of resources in this context was pivotal as project interdependencies meant that resource problems in one project could have negative implications on another. However, conflicts of interest and tough competition resulted in reactive short-term problem solving, and problems often occurred through failing projects impacting on other work, and through over-commitment where new work was taken on without due regard for other commitments. (This was found to occur commonly in multi-project environments, irrespective of the size or type of project, industrial context or industrial participants).

Looking at similar issues in another multi-project organisation, Hendriks *et al*.[141] looked at how two factors, namely the number of people needed to do a given task and the type of resources needed to complete it (such as service employees, all round project members or experts) could affect allocation methods by ensuring the right people were allocated to the project. They described the problems of planning in these types of organisation where there was often uncertainty on time scales and where any accurate picture in the planning models could only be gained if they were comprehensive and updated frequently – a time consuming process. The researchers tested a different method called 'rough cut project and portfolio planning'. This entailed a quarterly processing of the resource data spreadsheets, and planning incorporated five different elements: long, medium and short-term resource allocation, and additional links and feedback information. This helped to ensure that the right people were allocated to the task. It also helped to establish the need for changes in the profile of the resources available, to maximise efficiencies. For example, they increased flexibility by differentiating the levels of expertise required in relation to project profiles. Specialists become either experts in a particular field, all-round project members or service employees[142]. They admitted that changing these 'resources' was not easy but concluded that it gave better control and made resource allocation much easier to execute.

In relation to higher education, there have also been some interesting studies. Cyert[143], writing about the management

136 Saunders, M. and Thornhill, A. (2004)
137 Lewicki, R. *et al*. (1998)
138 Lewicki, R. *et al*. (1998) p497
139 Lewicki, R. *et al*. (1998) p512
140 Engwall, M. and Jerbrant, A. (2002)
141 Hendriks, M. *et al*. (1999)
142 Hendriks, M. *et al*. (1999) p9
143 Cyert, R. (1975)

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of not-for-profit organisations, warned of the danger for universities of basing resource allocation on historical precedents. To address this, he felt there was a need for effective planning at department level, to ensure that agreed individual goals were analysed in relation to organisational goals. He saw that conflict surrounding resource allocation was harder to resolve in these contexts than in business, where objective profit criteria could be called upon. However, approaches such as those of *Caballero et al*.[144] have made progress in this area. This study developed a model for new resource allocation decision making, by linking two quantitative techniques. This model used a combination of the number and categories of staff and students, and credit ratings[145] to work out efficiency levels and to determine the link between the allocation of new resources and their average improvement. Such a system was found to lead to greater transparency in the allocation of resources and guarantee equal treatment between teaching and research units.

This issue of transparency was also discussed by Winton[146]. He described how costing and pricing models could be used to allow informed decisions on how academic staff spend their time, and also help with decisions on course viability where there are charges fixed externally. This system could take into account teaching, research and administrative commitments, as well as postgraduate supervision and industry/ enterprise activities. Tann[147] discussed the need for a model of this sort and drew from various studies across departments. She noted how some universities had clear resource allocation models that allowed for strategic planning and a clearer knowledge of outcomes. Strategic change was often seen to be the driver for these models and Tann noted that often when looking to improve some measure, such as RAE scores, institutions had found it tempting to ask a busy, but effective, person to take on even more duties. However, she found a point when perceptions of equity among staff caused problems and this was where a clear model could ensure the different loading levels were placed in the public domain and were transparent. Although such a transparent model might lead to initial problems with negotiation and implementation, it was shown to reap rewards in the slightly longer term. Peer pressure among colleagues was, in fact, found to be a more effective means to gain equity than pressure from a HoD.

Burgess[148] looked at workload planning in three case studies: two from business schools (Leeds and Loughborough) and the other in an 'old' university (Leeds). The paper covered areas such as planning methods, institutional context and computerised decision support. A later paper[149] extended this work looking further at systems, but also identifying the role of individual academics as 'co-developers' of the system[150] . The later study found that work planning systems could be viewed as a 'tool of management oppression'[151]. More positively though, work planning systems were also felt to play a part in identifying high workloads and thus helping with work-related stress. The paper went on to define work planning systems as: 'A human activity system at the level of the higher education department that carries out aggregate planning to reconcile requirements and capacity in line with the strategic goals and in particular promotes equitable workload allocation to individuals'[152]. So equity and strategy, which might at times be in conflict, were encapsulated by this definition.

Another interesting aspect of Burgess' paper was its description of the variables involved within the work planning process. These included how comprehensive the system was, the extent to which its components were integrated, the degree of formality of the system and whether the planning involved was based on forward projection or retrospective calculation. Other issues included were the actual units used, the level of transparency, the degree of assistance from computers, the level of detail involved, the relationship to other departmental planning systems and how autocratic or democratic the system seemed.

The results of the case studies from the University of Leeds showed that a wide variety of systems were in use, but also that 38 per cent of resource centres had no formal system at all. In those that had systems, teaching was a basic component, but some included other work elements with varying levels of integration. The culture and the history of the department had an effect on how the system was managed, and some evidence was found to support the view that the natural sciences and engineering were more autocratic in their management style. Generally the level of detail and accuracy seemed to work to accommodate the balance between accuracy and the effort this required. Questions were raised about whether the variety of systems

144 Caballero, R. *et al*. (2002)
145 Caballero, R. *et al*. (2002) p4
146 Winton, M. (2002)
147 Tann, J. (1995)
148 Burgess, T.F. (1996)
149 Burgess, T.F *et al*. (2003)
150 Burgess, T.F *et al*. (2003) p219
151 Burgess, T.F *et al*. (2003) p218
152 Burgess, T.F *et al*. (2003) p219

involved across the institution was dysfunctional at the organisational level. The managers and the professionals were identified as having different stances on this particular question[153] although their roles were also felt to have overlap, preventing a simplification of the dynamics. Organisational politics were felt to be influential in 'determining the nature and effectiveness of Work Planning Systems'[154].

Looking positively, such diversity of systems could be seen to indicate innovative approaches and a democratic environment that could accommodate them, although it was recognised that from an organisational perspective there might be 'utility' in commonality of such systems[155]. However, where systems where rudimentary there was a danger that lack of planning would result in ineffectiveness, although this would again depend upon perspective. The paper did find some agreement on three key criteria for effective systems. These were: equity in workloads; transparency of planning systems; and the alignment of staff to strategic goals. The difficulties in achieving these ideal states were noted, for example agreeing on what constitutes equity, and in relation to transparency the potential for friction between staff when workloads are made transparent. Despite these problems, the paper concluded that there was a need to stop 'over-reliance' on informal systems, so that resources could be reviewed and planned to meet challenges that departments had to face.

Clarke[156] looked at the resource planning aspect of this issue of diversity. She argued for a planning and allocation model that stressed key competencies, and their fit with strategy and the environment. Clarke asserted that normally, in relation to resources, 'allocative mechanisms have always been derived from the overriding strategic paradigm'[157], but her approach could indicate the value instead of distinguishing between different types of higher education structures (collegiate, bureaucratic and functional), even within a given organisation. The implication of a resource based assessment of core competencies was that it allowed for an assessment of the appropriateness of resources. This could then be followed by a prioritisation of the distinctive strengths revealed[158].

Another approach to this problem of the flexibility of the resource base, was explored by McAleer and McHugh through examining the similarities between professional service firms (PSFs) and university departments[159]. The researchers decided that of Mintzberg's[160] five organisation types, professional bureaucracy was the one that most resembled a university. In this model there was a high reliance on highly skilled professionals to work closely with clients in complex work. They have control over work that is stable, leading to standard products in a process Mintzberg described as 'pigeonholing'[161]. This might describe the undergraduate programmes; however, other more customised work also exists in the form of doctoral studies, research, and other initiatives. So there might be an accumulation of diverse activities built up by these relatively autonomous individuals and this might come into conflict with managerialist demands to meet corporate strategies. They saw these strategies as informed by the values and goals of the organisation that in turn influenced the allocation of key resources. The key resources in a university are the academic staff who are active in various markets, namely undergraduate and post graduate, research and consultancy.

McAleer and McHugh used Maister's[162] model of the PSF to explore the professional service firm types: 'Brains', 'Grey Hair' and 'Procedure', each of which targets a different market. For example 'Brains' work on complex problems requiring novel solutions, 'Grey Hair' provides a customised service requiring experience of a certain problem. 'Procedure' on the other hand requires fairly standard solutions. They went on to describe how these could relate to university work. For example, first year undergraduate work could be seen as 'Procedure', and doctoral work as 'Brains'. The PSF's model suggested that success in maximising human capital was determined by the project mix, the allocation of projects to individuals and a consensus on the definition of excellence. The researchers went on to relate this to how this could be used to the benefit of both the individual and the organisation. They concluded that there was a need to balance workloads and to match staff to the different levels of task complexity. However they saw that although this might give efficiencies it might not be stimulating or motivating, nor would it allow for staff development. To address this problem they went on to develop a grid with service types ('Brains' etc.) on one axis and work types on the other. In this way the allocation process could move newer staff across from the more procedural work gradually into wider fields such as the 'Brain' area. This would then enhance

153 Burgess, T.F *et al*. (2003) p226
154 Burgess, T.F *et al*. (2003) p227
155 Burgess, T.F *et al*. (2003) p230
156 Clarke, G. (1997)
157 Clarke, G. (1997) p2
158 Clarke, G. (1997) p4
159 McAleer, E. and McHugh, M. (1994)
160 Mintzberg, H. (1979)
161 Mintzberg, H. (1979) p2
162 Maister, D. (1982)

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the numbers who could work in other fields. This could provide extra stimulation and interest to the individual whist assisting the university to become both more efficient and effective.

Workload allocation is a complex issue where driving for ever more detail can become counter-productive; the aim perhaps should be to remain at a rough, dynamic level. Unless the model used is co-owned with the staff in question, problems are likely to occur and efforts should be made to link the exercise beyond simple coping to take an organisational assets view of staff and to accommodate developmental aspects.

2.6 Summary

The earlier parts of the synthesis looked at stress and many sources showed the relationship between it and the degree of fit between a person and his/her environment, or work context. Many of these aspects seem relatively fixed, for example the total amount of work required to be done, or the person's characteristics that make them respond to it in certain ways. Yet there are aspects that might be practically influenced by actions at a university and departmental level. The later sections reviewed aspects such as leadership styles, communication processes, models on trust and lastly resource planning models. These interpersonal elements have been shown to positively influence job satisfaction and motivation levels and the sort of coping responses adopted. Thus, the synthesis helped to clarify, on the one hand, the likely impacts of a range of environmental factors and, on the other hand, the scope for action by universities using variables more fully within their scope of direct influence.

The literature synthesis has revealed that although many aspects surrounding workloads had been researched intensively the actual specific issue of the management of academic work loads as a process was a more neglected area. Overall there is *not* a clear proposition to test, but the literature has served to sensitise the researchers to a wide range of issues that might emerge from the fieldwork.

3 METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK

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3.1 Overview

Grounded Theory[163] was ultimately chosen as a useful way to build up theory through comparisons of the same event or process in different situations. In this approach the data on the phenomenon, which might come from sources such as observation and interviews, are systematically collected, then analysed under a coding system. Case studies were chosen to get a fuller picture of the dynamic relationships involved in the allocation process[164]. To maximise the robustness of the findings, the research design stressed achieving triangulation from a rich variety of sources[165]. For a more thorough discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of the methodology for this study please see Appendix 1.

Thus the universities themselves were not selected randomly; rather they were chosen to give a broad picture across the sector, so that size, geographical location and type of university grouping were taken into account. The sample encompassed six universities from the UK, two from Australia, and two knowledge intensive organisations for comparison purposes. Using the same principle a cross-section of staff were interviewed, in each two heads of academic units, two lecturers, a senior staff member (dean or pro-vice-chancellor), a union representative and someone from Personnel. Fifty-nine detailed interviews were carried out. Ethical procedures were adhered to throughout the fieldwork, for example informed consent was gained prior to the interviews. After transcription of the digitally recorded interviews, coding was done using NVivo software. This coding of the documents was based on the general procedures set out by Strauss and Corbin[166].

After completion of the coding, individual case analyses were written. An analytical framework for the cases was drawn from the open coding categories and properties,(see Table 4 below) which were progressively reviewed and simplified through the practical process of writing up the first two cases (see Table 5 below). This was based on an assessment of which categories/properties, in practice, were heavily populated or felt by interviewees to be important. Following on from this a cross-case analysis (axial coding) was carried out looking at these individual categories, such as policy, in all of the cases. Then, building from the key categories/properties, a framework table was developed of the contexts, actions and consequences (C/A/C) that related to each of these categories (see Appendix 2).From this, cognitive maps of the dynamic interrelationships between the phenomena could be explored leading to the final phase of selective coding, in which narratives are constructed about the central phenomenon.

3.2 Selection of Sample

As this study was theory building in nature and to maximise the robustness of the findings, the research design stressed achieving triangulation from a rich variety of sources. Thus the universities themselves were not selected randomly, rather they were chosen to give a broad picture across the sector, so that size, geographical location and type of university grouping were taken into account. For the last, the groupings are as set out in the UUK report, *Patterns of Higher Education Institutions in the UK: Third report*[167]. Care was also taken to avoid selecting those universities heavily involved with other external research projects. Some universities that were approached initially declined to be involved owing to heavy commitments resulting from issues such as restructuring. In addition to six UK universities, two non-higher education knowledge-intensive establishments and two Australian universities were selected to add richness to the perspectives captured in line with Denzin's[168] theories on triangulation.

This sampling frame of ten organisations is partly summarised in Table 2, but full details cannot be given in order to preserve the anonymity of the case study organisations.

3.3 Case Study Interviews

In order to get a broad view of the process, interviews were designed to cover a range of staff at each university. In each, two lecturers and their heads of department were interviewed as well as a senior staff member, and representatives from the personnel department and the union body. Through the paired interviews with lecturer and HoD, detailed insights about both these departments were gained. From the other interviews, such as those with a senior member of staff and union representative, the insights and information gleaned ranged over a wider number of departments. Staff members interviewed were

163 Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. (1967)
164 Yin, R. (1989)
165 Denzin, N. (1970)
166 Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990)
167 UUK (2003)
168 Denzin, N. (1970)

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TABLE 2

DIVERSE SELECTION OF SAMPLE ORGANISATIONS

CASE	NO. STUDENTS	UK UNIVERSITY GROUPING				OVERSEAS UNIVERSITIES	NON-EDUCATION
		1994	CMU	RUSSELL	NON-ALIGNED		
1	10,000	●					
2	19,500				●		
3	10,000		●				
4	47,000					●	
5	40,000					●	
6	31,500			●			
7	8,000				●		
8	14,000		●				
9	–						●
10	–						●

usually selected through the university; usually the personnel office approached a department who then selected someone or asked for volunteers. Obviously this process was not ideal in terms of a representative sample, because of the self-selecting element involved in some cases, and the potential for staff to be chosen due to their compliant nature. Consequentially, a full range of issues and practices relevant to the research question might not have been covered. However, the diversity of responses and their forthrightness indicates that, in practice, this method was not as problematic as might have been expected. Further a wide range of disciplines were covered. See Table 3.

Prior to the interviews each member of staff was sent information about confidentiality and on how the information would be stored and used[169]. They were informed that the interview would be taped, the interviewee coded to maintain confidentiality and the computer files codeword guarded. They were also informed that they could stop the interview at any point and decline to answer if they so wished, and that after the interview the transcriptions would be sent to them so that they could see that the account reflected what transpired. If there was agreement, the ethical consent form was signed by both the researcher and the interviewee.

3.4 Semi-structured Questionnaire

An initial draft of issues, stimulated both from the literature and personal experience of the researchers was compiled. Broadly, it covered generic areas such as codes of practice within the university, departmental context, and the normal allocation process that the interviewee experienced along with its transparency. Other sections dealt with the interviewees' own workloads, their work relationships (specifically in relation to the process and consequences of the allocation) and their perceptions of the organisational culture. It was expected that this broad set of questions would become more focused during the interview process. It needs to be stressed that although there was a checklist of issues that could be covered, care was taken neither to direct nor bias the interviews. In practice this meant that a question might be answered in a way that also involved a lot of other areas of interest. So, the approach in these cases was then personalised to

169 Moustakas, C. (1994)

TABLE 3

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RANGE OF DEPARTMENTS / SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN CASE STUDIES	
Arts and Humanities	Law x 2
Biological Sciences	Languages
Built Environment	Life Sciences
Chemistry	Medical and Radiation Sciences
Engineering x 2	Psychological Sciences
Geography	Sociology
Health Care	Specialist History department
History	Transport Studies
IT and Informatics	–

accommodate these sorts of responses, with the questionnaire in the background as a checklist in case major areas were overlooked.

Within the above four main areas, more detailed questions (see Appendix 2) were asked. Examples from the 'generic' section would be: perceptions of the effectiveness of the process and the benefits and problems that had resulted from it. From the section on 'own work allocation' questions ranged over: how representative their workloads were within their department; the ways that staff managed competing demands at work, for example as teacher and researcher; the degree of autonomy they had within their work; their feelings of competence; and the satisfaction they gained in their work. In relation to 'work relationships' the literature opened out a wealth of options that were relevant to the research question such as: the degree of consultation involved; how decisions were communicated and opportunities for feedback in this process; perceptions of fairness in the system and also issues such as trust between the parties involved. The section on 'organisational culture' elicited views on issues such as the sharing of information and communication between all the university levels, and aspects such as mergers, restructuring or other initiatives, for example centralised timetabling. At the end of the interview, time was given for the interviewees to raise any other issues that had not already been covered that they felt were pertinent to the issue.

This broad initial framework was adapted to fit each specific university, role and individual. For example, questions might relate to individuals' roles as recipients of an allocation. Or heads of department might have been asked about how they developed or acquired their resource allocation system and whether they had any training or support from the university in this area. Some were asked about systems that they used to monitor and review the process to maintain equity. Senior, union and Personnel staff were asked more generally about different mechanisms operating across the university and about the different outcomes resulting from them. Further, a huge range of issues were found to result from the different university contexts and this had a profound effect on the activities and preoccupations of staff. So although there was an initial range of issues that seemed pertinent, the interviews themselves generated a number of new avenues of enquiry and importantly the interviewers had to remain open and responsive to the interviewee's thoughts throughout.

New issues which were uncovered in the initial fieldwork stage related to both general and specific areas. The general areas that these responses opened up were issues such as how the process worked strategically, for example directing work in certain areas, and also how adaptable the allocation model was to incorporate the demands of new modules, new staff and sabbatical leave. Other more specific contextual areas also arose, for example out of a

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university's origins and out of its plans for change. This opened up issues such as relationships with union representatives and their impact on working practices, and the relationship between strategic plans by the university to invest in research to improve their RAE status, their recruitment plans and the way this affected work allocations to members of staff.

Once again it needs to be stressed that few of these actual questions were posed, as usually a general question elicited a wide-ranging response that covered many of the more specific angles. At the end of each set of university interviews a short summary was made of the general findings about that institution as an *aide memoire*. The interviews were recorded digitally and then downloaded as voice files before being finally transcribed into word documents. Once checked these records were sent to the participants for their confirmation as being a good record of the interview.

Some areas of particular interest which were picked up from the early fieldwork stages, which were not directly related to any questions asked are included in Appendix 3 (page 132).

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4 THE OPEN CODING PROCESS

Coding of the documents was carried out following a simplification of the general procedures set out by Strauss and Corbin[170] as described in section 3 above. This involved the comparing of phenomena leading to groupings of similar issues under a general category name. So, for example, one such grouping was "work allocation practices", this had attributes, called properties, such as transparency and consistency which in turn had dimensions along a continuum. As the interviews proceeded these categories were added to and, on occasions, merged where similarities and overlaps were found and additionally the appropriate level of detail was tuned through experience. The final form of the categories is given in Table 4. Appendix 3 clarifies the criteria used to place coded items in one category or another and this proved vital to consistent coding.

TABLE 4

CODING CATEGORIES

CATEGORIES-NODES	PROPERTIES	DIMENSIONS
Allocation Process	Consistency	Common or diverse
	Equity/Fairness	Ranging in degree. HoD/S role
	Model development/ history	
	Timings	
	Disputes/Conflict	Degree experienced
	Problems	
	Transparency	Open or non-open process
	Methods	Hour unit/ FTE/Other Accuracy/Allowances
	Staffing-balancing roles or loads, including recruitment	
	Flexibility (including sabbaticals)	Range of flexibility
	New staff	Allowance made or not made in allocation
	HOD/S role	Leadership strategy/trust
	Consultation	Range in degree
	Department / faculty strategies	
	Department / faculty environment	Including size, subject, RAE and existing methods
	Home working	Extensive or limited
University Code of Practice / Policy		Code known/operational or unknown
Teaching	Courses	New or stable
	Qualitative	Specialisms/Core Courses Expertise issues Input of professional bodies Modes of delivery Online courses Audit issues

170 Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990)

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TABLE 4

CODING CATEGORIES (CONTINUED)

CATEGORIES-NODES	PROPERTIES	DIMENSIONS
Teaching	Students	Issues relating to students
	Assessment and marking	
	Quantative	Range of class size Number of modules involved Hours**
	Scholarship activity	
	Other teaching staff/students.	Part timers (and research students)
Research	RAE	
	Qualitative	Empirical/ Non empirical
	Bidding / Grants	Time allocated or not Grant implications
	Research Students	
	Dedication	Allocated/Residual
Administration	Types	Quality audits Finance Marketing
	Specialist staff	
Workload	Fit	Degree of fit of work to individual
	Quantity	Hours** etc Over burdening and effects on creative space
	Support factors	I.T. mechanisms Library Staff aspects
	Gender	
	Distribution patterns	Spread and work combinations Holidays/research days/evening work
	Roles	Specific tasks undertaken and open-endedness Part-time staff
	Timesheets	
Other Activities/ Influences	Consultancy work	
	Professional associations	
Employment Contracts	Part-time or sessional	
	Limited –research or teach only contract	
Individual Response	Service length / Age profiles	New/Experienced staff
	Performance	Efficiency and quality Student assessment of teaching Extra activities

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TABLE 4

CODING CATEGORIES (CONTINUED)

CATEGORIES-NODES	PROPERTIES	DIMENSIONS
Individual Response	Behaviour/Relationships	Responses to the allocation system such as changing teaching methods or even social Interactions. Home-work balance Motivation
	Coping	Prioritise Slog Lower standards
	Satisfaction	Role Research/Teaching
	Frustrations	Areas that in T,R, or A[171] irritated staff
	Autonomy	Autonomous/Interference
Organisation	Environment	Internal and external factors Stable/Turbulent Niche
	Union	Degree of influence EB agreements
	Resources	
	Management style	Collegial / Managerial
	Leadership	
	Strategies	
	Communication and shared values/goals	Good / Poor communication and sharing
	Trust	High / Low trust – in department or organisation
	Head of department	Degree of involvement with organisation
University Systems	Surveys	
	Full economic costing	
	Review / Appraisal	Linked to process or not linked to process
	Training	Availability of schemes
	Promotion	Degree related to work types
	Framework agreement	
	Centralised Timetabling	

* Noted potential overlap between these two nodes on hours in teaching and workload area.

** This table was modified through use to incorporate new categories as more cases were done and also as coding was carried out the appropriate level of detail was tuned through experience. See Appendix 4 for the initial coding categories established.

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NVivo software was then used to plot and explore the findings as an aid to uncover relationships and to help to develop theory from the findings[172] .To do this transcripts were analysed and coded, this might be at the level of paragraph sentence or even word. This then allowed the researchers to call up all the references to a given category or property from wherever they chose: from one interview, from all interviews, or from a particular set of interviews. Further, different categories could be placed in sets together to allow for different sorts of comparison to be made.

After completion of the coding of the interviews for each university, individual case analyses were written. The analytical framework for the cases was drawn from the open coding categories and properties, which were progressively reviewed and simplified through the practical process of writing up the first two cases. This was based on an assessment of which categories/properties, in practice, were heavily populated or felt by interviewees to be important.

All of the major categories were used with the exceptions of: "employment contract" (which was incorporated, as appropriate, in "teaching", "research" or "organisation") and "other activities" for which the few issues arising were covered elsewhere. Not surprisingly given the focus of the study, it was found that several of the "properties" under the "allocation process" category figured very heavily in the transcripts. To allow a clear analysis these were either grouped under "allocation methods" or made separate categories individually, or in natural combinations. Thus, the classification structure used for the individual case and cross-case analyses in the Sections 6 and 7 below is as shown in Table 5.

This allowed data on each framework category, such as transparency and equity, to be looked at across one university. Following the analysis of all these categories an initial summary report was made of each university set. This report described the range of methods, issues, experiences and feelings about the process. Through doing this various problems and also the positive aspects were highlighted. The summary reports for each case study university are given in Section 6 below.

TABLE 5

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK USED AND LINK TO OPEN CODING

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK	LINK TO OPEN CODING CATEGORIES/PROPERTIES
Policy	Existing category
Allocation Methods	Comprising of the following properties of "allocation process": methods, consistency, model development, timings, staffing – balancing roles, new staff
Transparency and Equity	These two properties of "allocation process"
Flexibility	This property of "allocation process", plus home working
Head of Department Role and Consultation Process	These properties of "allocation process", plus department strategies and department environment
Workloads	Existing category
Teaching	Existing category
Research	Existing category
Administration	Existing category
Problems	This property of "allocation process", plus disputes / conflicts Individual Response
Individual Response	Existing category
Organisation	Existing category
University Systems	Existing category

172 Gibbs, G. (2002)

5 CASE STUDY REPORTS

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5.1 Case Study 1

Policy

In relation to workload allocation the Code of Practice within the university was that each department developed its own scheme; however certain guidelines were issued that covered various principles to be considered so that it was 'equitable, transparent and defensible'. Departments were also advised to map workload assessments onto student Full Time Equivalent (FTE) data, so that the institution could assess whether workloads were commensurate with funding and also to allow for interdepartmental comparisons. The Code of Practice also addressed the essential elements to be included such as the list of duties, the values attached to each and how each unit was measured; an explanation of how research was calibrated; how debits and credits were handled; how shared or part-time posts were accounted; and information on audit schemes to ensure the scheme was discriminatory free. The Code of Practice then listed the various advantages of such a workload allocation scheme. These included issues relating to staff, such as protecting junior staff, and the creation of norms so that imbalances could be rectified and discussion based on principles rather than personalities - thus helping to provide fairer systems which could help to improve morale. In relation to resources, the Code might be used to identify uneconomic activities and to monitor changes in workloads and rectify imbalances. Further it might be used to protect research time from other pressures.

Allocation Methods

The study found that there were lots of different methods used and this was often a reflection of the particular culture of the department, historical precedent and the individual style of the HoD. It was generally felt that the university had stable work patterns and relatively few problems or disputes in relation to workload. However, it was felt that large organisational changes, such as reducing the number of faculties from five to three, and greater pressure from external sources, such as the RAE exercise and 'Top Up' fees could dramatically affect that culture, especially in relation to the teaching/research balance. Generally throughout the university, there was an acceptance that the allocation system relied on equity, trust, and transparency in the process, and in all the cases seen this seemed to be working.

At an operational level some members of staff expressed an opinion that the various methods used for allocating workloads relied upon a 'gut feeling about what was comparable' rather than any exact science. They suggested that this might be 'fuzzy', in terms of accounting for aspects such as preparation and marking, and was really only best at pinpointing the extreme positions of staff workload that were either heavily or lightly loaded. Generally there was an abhorrence of the idea of any system that relied upon tight time accounting mechanisms, with the feeling that this would prove counter-productive as staff discovered the actual number of hours that they were working and then choose to limit them. One of the methods used was a points system that reflected the hours teaching that needed to be covered; this then was given a scoring out of a hundred. However there was recognition that what these points reflected might increase as workloads went up over the years. The system also needed refinement to take into account the extra preparation and marking time for larger classes. The use of FTE student numbers went some way to accommodate this problem. In this case the load was calibrated on how much proportionately of the yearly student teaching was done. The advantage of this method was that it allowed staff the flexibility to divide their work up, in terms of the size of class they teach, as they felt most appropriate. Another advantage was that it also reflected the marking load that was involved, so that units with high student numbers were fairly measured.

Transparency and Equity

Potential friction between research and teaching areas was felt to be reduced through the transparency of the systems. Prior to having transparent systems, one member of staff talked of 'the good-natured ill feeling' that occurred where staff were suspicious of each other's workloads. Transparent processes were felt to increase appreciation of the contribution of each side, for example in terms of research grants won or huge classes taught. The departments visited had open systems of accounting with some negotiation available within the process and publication of all staff workloads. However, anecdotally some areas of the university had systems of allocation that were less transparent in their operations. Generally problems seemed to have occurred when a department moved from a relatively transparent approach to one that was less so. Transparent systems were also felt by staff to have advantages at times of appraisal and in relation to promotion as they allowed hard work to be quantified and evidenced. However, the appraisal process was seen to vary across the university, dependent very much on the stance of the HoD. Where workload allocation processes were transparent it worked well for staff planning; however, there was a feeling in some quarters that it was an irrelevance and not actively performed despite university efforts to promote it. Promotion was reviewed in relation to all the different work

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areas but there was still a feeling that research was the 'stronger currency', the 'added spin', especially in relation to research grants. There was some unease that this might become a problem adversely affecting other work areas, 'through lack of joined-up-ness'.

Head of Department Role and Consultation Process

The role of the HoD was seen as a pivotal link within the university. Lecturers felt that their HoD/S were good at representing their views to the university but had concerns that these heads were not always listened to especially in relation to the competition existing on campus between departments. The changes that were taking place within the university where small departments were being amalgamated was seen by some as potentially beneficial in terms of opening up links between areas of research and teaching. However some areas, described by one as 'loosely linked cottage industries really rather than, [. . .] a big industrial model of academic production', were seen also to have worked quite productively in research terms. There were a few concerns about the centralisation of management and the erosion of departmental autonomy. There was some feeling that traditional collegiate structures were being eroded and areas such as the reduced academic representation at Council were seen as a worrying concentration of power. On the other hand there was an acceptance by staff of the need for the university to be economically focused and to respond to government targets and directives. Departments were working with their faculty to develop business plans that would then form the basis of resource allocation.

Uncertainty was an issue. The right level of involvement and information were seen by some as the key to confidence, and trust in organisational decisions. There also remained a desire for greater 'recognition of the human issues' involved.

Workloads

Workloads were felt to be high especially in those departments with high undergraduate numbers. This had led to unacceptable practices such as relatively new members of staff being given big administration jobs such as admissions. This then led to problems with new staff not being able to establish their research. However, in other departments, early retirements had led to recruitment of new staff who were given reduced teaching workloads, which had also increased the load for other staff. Many did acknowledge that work overload was 'partly [a] personality' issue. Further there was a feeling that staff needed to match the job allocated and that when a mismatch occurred, problems and work could rebound on to other members of staff.

There was quite a lot of feeling surrounding the level of administrative work, the 'huge infrastructure of support staff purely to effectively support external audit pressures', rather than supporting 'people on the ground'. Staff also talked about the pressures to 'become more and more efficient' in their work, in both teaching and administration. Some felt that they had to be quite 'ruthless' to protect any time for research. The problem of maintaining standards in all these areas made some staff feel fraught, 'being pulled in every direction'.

Teaching

The demands and expectations of students on top of all the other work tasks had led some to feel that they had not had 'the extra bit of energy that you need for teaching'. Staff were looking into different teaching modes to optimise the situation. Capping of class sizes did not usually occur and with the relatively small size of the departments along with the specialisms being offered, this had caused problems. Despite this, staff seemed very committed and attached to their teaching, as one said they 'sort of own their courses'. There was a strong belief in the importance of personal interaction with students and strategies were in place to assist with this, such as the distribution of students' photographs. Another factor that had made planning difficult in relation to student numbers was the first year for students which was divided into three parts, so that students took two subjects other than their main choice.

Administration

Administrative tasks within the FTE method of allocation were worked out through consultation between staff and the HoD to equate comparables between a given role, such as being a 'part-one director' equating to so many FTEs. This task once again involved considerable tweaking and renegotiation as certain roles proved to be more time-consuming than might have been expected. For example pastoral care roles were seen as time-consuming with many 'knock on' activities because of the relationships involved. On a few occasions there were suggestions that these sorts of roles fell more often to female staff members. Generally the pivotal role of HoD as arbitrator was apparent. As one head also suggested this was exacerbated by the case that they have, 'all the responsibility and none of the power', especially in financial terms. Another issue in relation to the distribution of administrative roles was that certain roles required particular personal qualities and 'the safe pair of hands' option could often lead to 'willing horses' being overburdened. Personality issues were frequently referred to in the discussion as an unquantifiable aspect.

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Other issues that fell to the discretion of the HoD were aspects such as the development of new courses and whether this should be reflected in the model. University-wide surveys revealed a feeling of overload especially in relation to administrative tasks. This would appear to be a vexed issue. Attempts had been made to strip some of the administrative work out of the departments, but a lot of what was felt to be administrative work was actually teaching-related. Further, extra capacity brought in from more general staff was felt mainly to be meeting the ever-increasing demands from external bodies.

Research

The research element of workloads was taken into account, but often not actually weighted as such in the same way as teaching and administration. The supervision of research students and grant income were often used as drivers in the assessment. However certain areas were seen as problematic. Research, especially in relation to RAE, was seen as important yet when teaching and administrative loads were high very little time was actually left for research. This was a problem for both lecturing staff and more senior figures. Effort had been made to provide a day clear of teaching for research, however problems of timetabling and the growth in postgraduate numbers had made this provision more vulnerable. Work with postgraduates who were on campus all year round had also affected space to work on research in the summer vacation.

Problems

Potential problems were flagged up with issues such as the use of teaching assistants, who might teach in seminars, but could not mark work such as final exam scripts. This could cause huge surges in work volume that might not be reflected in the apparent work volume of the staff member responsible for the unit. However in the cases seen these issues were satisfactorily resolved through consultation with the HoD who was able to adjust the weighting to reflect the work involved. A practical aspect that caused problems for staff in planning out their own work was the encouragement given to first-year students to flexibly choose from a wide range of module options, which had increased problems in allocating work. To smooth workloads, it was often necessary to balance over a period longer than a year. For example, periods of between three to five years were sometimes used to smooth over discrepancies between loads such as when a staff member had to pick up a larger load to cover sickness or sabbaticals of other colleagues. Such problems were exacerbated by the fact that many of the departments were relatively small in size, with fifteen or fewer academic staff. This reduced the flexibility for the HoD to accommodate disturbances in patterns of work. Another aspect that resulted from this, was that in some departments the small numbers of staff meant that they were all specialist in their areas, so reducing the options to move staff between the teaching of the different units. Retirements and new staff had also greater impact on the model in these departments. However despite this, in all the models seen, provision was made for new staff to have a reduced allocation. Allocating a 40-50 per cent teaching load to new staff in their first year and stepping this up to a full load over the following two years achieved this.

Individual Response

In relation to workloads generally, there was a feeling that compromises were being made due to high workloads and the open-endedness of the work. There was a mixture of responses to these problems, and teaching was seen as a priority where needs were met first; however, staff did feel that they were not giving the students the time or energy that they would wish. Expectations of students were also seen as part of the problem. One member of staff described 'the fairly high degree of spoon feeding' that was expected from lecture material. The goodwill of staff was seen as a pivotal means to 'maintain quality despite quantity'. The strain was felt though, often shown in small ways such as 'tetchiness at the photocopier'. Weekend and evening working were a common response, as was reducing involvement in certain fields such as conferences. The feelings of staff about this were complex. There seemed to be both a sense of pride in the accomplishment of a difficult task and also a degree of self-questioning that they ought to be able to work more efficiently to somehow reduce the sheer volume of work. At university level concern was obviously felt over workloads with various surveys covering aspects of it. One finding was that 'the majority of the people feel that their workload was excessive'. Another finding from the survey reported that 'teaching times are fine, administration is excessive, research time is too little'. One HoD felt that 'most of [my] colleagues work 60, 70 hours a week' and expressed frustration at the university's 'unrealistic view' of the work involved. He felt high work levels were dealt with by staff 'sneaking away' to quietly plough through the work. There was also a feeling that having to work longer than the suggested allocation created feelings of inadequacy in some staff. The other aspects that staff felt unhappy about in relation to high workloads were the loss of any space to think creatively and explore new areas or lines of enquiry.

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Organisation

This university had experienced a relatively stable environment, but this was changing and there was some anxiety about these changes from staff. There were also worries that the new student fee system would have a negative impact on the university. Senior staff felt it was important for the university to be flexible so that it could respond to these external pressures, but acknowledged that this could be expensive in terms of resources, such as in drives to widen participation. Along with faculty restructuring there was a large building programme running. Changes were being made on the use of rooms, so that teaching rooms were all separate from staff rooms, and that the latter would all be single rooms. Some staff were disappointed that they had lost both a personal teaching space, its learning facilities and the timetabling flexibility this system offered to the department.

Senior management were concerned about high workloads and Codes of Practice reflected this. Many of the problems in relation to high workloads were exacerbated by the fact that a lot of the departments were relatively small in size, an aspect which restructuring may change. However despite this, care was taken and provision made for new members of staff in relation to their teaching provision. Research, although viewed as vitally important, was not always adequately accommodated in the models. Within the departments there was a feeling that their autonomy was being eroded, some spoke of the departments as 'fiefdoms' and felt that there was 'a lot of competition on campus'. However levels of transparency and trust did also seem high within the organisation.

In relation to the management of the university apart from the changes at pro-vice-chancellor level, proposals had been suggested to change the Council's makeup, reducing it from 31 to 15. There were also moves to change committee structures with a desire to ensure in both these areas that representatives 'were A, interested, and B, individuals who can make a positive contribution'. As one noted in relation to this issue, 'there is a huge dichotomy in the University between, the one sort of view of life is that it's a community of scholars and the other is basically a managerialist group'. This remark did capture the feel of the place, with a balance of both views and emphases evident. In relation to the new vice-chancellor there was an appreciation by some for his leadership and work as an ambassador for the university.

University Systems

Various staff surveys had been done looking at workload and aspects such as communication. Benchmarking against earlier results showed both the volume and the balance of work as broadly the same as before, but some improvements were seen in the area of communications. Some did feel, however, that communications from their journal and from emails lacked the open, and sometimes controversial, comment of previous publications.

Other systems such as staff training were believed to have been a little neglected in the past; where there had been radical restructuring it was felt that training provision had not kept pace with staff needs. However, this had changed and new programmes such as on leadership were being offered. In relation to the appraisal system there was a range of practices; in some departments it was used to discuss workloads and plans for sabbaticals; in others the system was not a very active process and not at all 'embedded'.

TABLE 6

SUMMARY DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 1

DEPARTMENT 1	DEPARTMENT 2
Department Context • Department of History • 26 academics • Large teaching programme • Use of some teaching assistants • Specialisms and 'ownership' of courses • New course being developed to overcome problems of oversubscription in some courses Care not to distinguish between 'teachers' and 'researchers'	**Department Context** • Department of Engineering • 15 academics • Mix of lab and lecture-based teaching • Mix of specialist and general modules, courses tended to 'stick' with individuals • Courses being renewed or revamped at the time • Some older teaching staff retired recently and new staff employed were given space to become research active

SUMMARY DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 1 (CONTINUED)

DEPARTMENT 1

HoD/S Context

- Enjoyed knowing what was going on across the university, as well as in the department
- Enjoyed not having to do so much teaching
- Research squeezed
- Anxieties about faculty restructuring and University's new strategies on rooms

Allocation Methods

- Inherited system using FTE's as unit of measure looking at teaching and administration only
- Teaching money comes in through FTE so look at who is producing it (e.g. second year students do four courses, so if teaching one of them staff would get a quarter of an FTE per student)
- Loads were then weighted to reflect things like new appointments (50% load), HoD/S role (40%), leave (0%), most people however were on100% load
- Advantage of FTE model meant lecturer could teach the students in however big a group that they wished and the marking would also be reflected in the numbers
- Revealed who was overloaded and under-loaded
- Evolved by agreement
- Equity levels good. Balance might average out over five years period
- Admin jobs had agreed FTE
- Suspicion of the model by new members of staff
- Research not explicitly weighted
- Transparent
- New staff given extra space. Problem of numbers may inflate over the years

Staff Consequences/Outcomes

- Believed system to be fair and transparent.
- Worked long hours, held belief that to maintain high standards goodwill of staff is much needed
- Certain roles with students were time intensive such as pastoral care
- No space left (after done all the tasks) for research
- 'Safe pair of hands' overload problem
- Feeling of irritability due to workloads, but also pride in job
- Sad to lose personal teaching space
- Had some sympathy with the economic decisions that needed to be made centrally, but desire for recognition of human issues from the centre

DEPARTMENT 2

HoD/S Context

- Fairly new member of staff, 'trouble shooter' from industry used to managing larger groups of staff
- Enjoyed the challenge of the work
- Believed university had unrealistic view of workloads and that it was unrealistic to say research was also important when just doing teaching and admin took at least forty hours

Allocation Methods

- Had an allocation model where teaching hours were put into the model allowing three hours per lecture for established courses and up to six hours for a completely new course
- Weightings of the different work types under review and constant refinement
- Problem in that the model could not sort out the practicalities of who could teach certain specialisms
- Teaching aspect sorted out in round table discussions
- Research not included in model
- Transparent

Staff Consequences/Outcomes

- Transparency good for promotion and at appraisal
- Model could only expose who is over/under-loaded, practical difficulties of who can teach what prevent improvements
- Teaching load high, belief in the importance of this subject despite some opposition to it
- Difficulty in maintaining momentum in research so securing income had become pivotal
- Problem of venturing into areas without the time to fully get to grips with the subject
- Believes standards have slipped a little in teaching areas
- Prioritises
- Conferences viewed more sceptically
- Problem of giving research students sufficient time
- Felt unsure of the HoD/S's plans

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5.2 Case Study 2

Policy

This institution had a broad statement of principle governing the allocation of staff workloads. In general it suggested that this was the responsibility of heads of department and that it was not feasible to recommend a standard model for this practice. It noted that this required a large judgemental element taking into account all the different duties involved. It also suggested that it might be desirable for heads of department to disclose the range of contact hours assigned to teaching duties so that staff members could see how they fitted into the continuum. The guidance also recognised as best practice, systems of allocation that were the 'result of openness and transparency'. However one informed member of staff felt that in terms of improvements little progress had been made: 'there have been rumblings, but no systematic pressure to get it sorted out'. Generally there seemed to be a feeling that there were a whole 'mishmash of systems, some of which work, some of which don't'.

Allocation Methods

There were quite a few different methods used across the departments; in some there was no formal system operating with the HoD using judgement on the balance, although as one suggested this balance could operate on a basis of 'who complains the most'. As another also noted: 'it depends on how good at management and at how good, how fair the HoD is'. Other systems seen in operation were sophisticated mechanisms that took into account all the different roles and even different types of marking. Here consideration was given to new staff members and extra time given to the preparation and delivery of new courses. Emphasis was placed on consultation to get the relative weighting right between the various activities; the document remained 'live', constantly being updated.

There was evidence that some debate was occurring between heads of departments so that sharing information about the various schemes was occurring. Recurring problems were evident however. Even in the schemes that seemed to be managed most actively there were some problems, such as the allocation being set to accommodate a 37 hour working week, which was seen to be inadequate to fulfil all the work demands. Another more minor issue was that in some cases the allocation was done retrospectively, that is, this year's work determined next year's allocation, and there was a feeling that this might need updating more frequently to accommodate changes in circumstances.

Problems resulting from high workloads were especially troublesome in small departments. Despite mechanisms such as 'buddying schemes' to smooth work between pairs of staff, aspects such as sickness and maternity leave in small departments had a large impact. This was also an issue in relation to study leave. Whilst larger departments were often able to distribute work unequally between semesters in order to facilitate periods of study leave in the lighter semester, the small size of some departments precluded this approach. In these instances, financial support from the university could be applied for from those small departments. Administration was also a problem in smaller departments, as there were so few members with whom to share out the large numbers of roles. More generally, certain roles within departments such as 'graduate tutor', 'examinations officer' and 'welfare officer' were seen as particularly heavy with bureaucracy. The added problem here was that it took a long while for staff to become fully conversant with all the intricacies of the role and by the time they had they were unwilling to relinquish the role, even though the load might be prejudicial to their career advancement. A related issue to this was that those staff who were most capable and willing were being loaded more heavily than others.

The case of new staff uncovered many issues related to workload allocation. In some departments, where attempts were made to give new staff space in order to get started on research, there was a resulting problem of overloading more senior staff, from whom there were also higher expectations of research outputs and funding. Another issue was the work involved in doing higher education teaching qualifications. Both staff and heads of department found these courses a large burden in relation to workloads.

Transparency and Equity

In terms of transparency of the model used this also varied between the departments. In some, there was some awareness by staff of the general responsibilities of others, and other departments published detailed summary documents of the model. Generally there were feelings that work was allocated in a fair and equitable way, although views on this were hazier in areas with less open approaches. In some places, confidentiality between the HoD and staff

member was seen as paramount; it was viewed as essential to stop divisive situations where 'comparing and doing deals' occurred. However, taken to extremes such an approach in the past had caused problems in some areas with difficulties in countering claims of unfair treatment and discrimination. Lack of transparency then sometimes caused problems in terms of comparability; however, the personnel department was working with departments on these issues to prevent escalation of problems and as a way to disseminate good practice.

Flexibility

Sabbaticals were a reality for many of the staff, with applications being made for a semester every three years; this had stretched departments in some areas, especially at times when other staff were absent, for example on maternity leave. Staff had to apply to the university committee to get permission for this study leave and a report at its completion had to be carried out to check on the outputs from the period. Benefits had been felt in research as a result of the scheme. Staff from human resources reported that some departments did not offer sabbatical schemes, this was often in small departments where teaching programmes were not organised in such a way to facilitate them.

Head of Department Role and Consultation Process

Generally, heads of department were seen to be working hard to balance the needs of students whilst accommodating the very pressing demands of the next RAE. As one noted, this created tensions 'to deliver a quality curriculum to our undergraduates, which we see as a priority and the time needed to be our RAE grade five equivalent which is a priority'. A response to this pressure from heads of department was to look for efficiencies: 'my advice to them was always to try and reduce your workload'. A measure taken to facilitate this was the employment of administrators to undertake some of the duties. Another response was to look for consolidation in their courses, delivering a high quality service, even a 'Rolls Royce' service in some departments, with a focus on improving and updating what was on offer rather than more speculative ventures, such as new courses.

Workloads and Individual Response

Despite these strategies there was a fairly universal perception that many problems with workloads could be related to individual characteristics. Various dimensions were seen to be at the root of this. Firstly, problems were found in relation to staff being unwilling to compromise their high standards, and secondly, others related to individuals with a high degree of enthusiasm and motivation working within a context of endless possibilities: 'the willing and hopeful souls, there is a danger of them being overloaded'. Lastly came the notion that some staff were just inefficient in their approaches. Younger members of staff, who felt that they were coping, interestingly cited efficiency as their answer. Having said that there was also a recognition that, 'if you want career progression, well work a bit harder'. There was a belief that pressure had increased within the university with certain times of year, such as early May, being especially stressful. Again individual responses to this were seen as pivotal. There was a feeling by some that 'a grieving for a way of life' was the basis of some of the disquiet. University surveys found that expressions of dissatisfaction tended to come from people that had been at the university for twenty or thirty years, rather than from newer staff.

Various responses to this situation were found. Some heads of department found that in order to respond to immediate pressures they let their own research slip and there was a feeling that with the high demands of working 50 or 60 hours week, 'any research I generate is a bonus'. Another told of how 'I've had quite a few members of staff suffering from migraines'. Other members of staff also had sleeping difficulties as working evenings and weekends took their toll. Again in relation to workloads, staff counsellors were reported to be seeing 'quite a lot of business, particularly from female academic staff'. Personal demands were often the trigger in these issues, but there was also an awareness that certain time- intensive roles, were picked up by women. Roles involving welfare-type work with students, for example, was seen as difficult as the demands of students were hard to control or limit in these areas.

Teaching

Some suggested that the university worked on the presumption that all staff did some level of teaching. Staff reported some problems as a result of workloads and research expectations in developing and updating their material. Staff who had gone on teaching courses felt that students could benefit from new teaching and assessment methods, but were a little frustrated, as they had not had time to implement their ideas. There was discussion from

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various members of staff about the need for efficiency in teaching. Some remedies were cited such as increasing tutorial size and that of lecture groups; however, in the latter case room size was often a limiting factor.

Research

Within the university as whole research and improving its RAE profile was seen as a main focus. There was a general view that the university had become increasingly strategic in its approach and was an 'aspiring university' determined to improve its position in the rankings.

Fulfilling the university's strategic aims had required generation of surpluses to allow reinvestment and this had led to a determination to reduce the overall organisational pay bill by streamlining measures. Departments were targeted and reviewed with strategic decisions being made about voluntary severance. For the union involved, the negotiations had not proved too problematic. However, there was a perception that for these departments the process had created a 'siege mentality'; while for other departments it acted as a further spur to research activities, although there was a feeling that there was 'a sense of humour failure about research grant income'.

Internally the university had had mini RAE exercises yearly, so that staff and departments were aware of their position. Through this, staff were clear on their objectives and mentoring schemes also helped with tasks such as grant applications. There was a feeling among some that the targets and the pressures in relation to this had changed the atmosphere of their departments. Further, there was some frustration with demands and monitoring processes and 'league table culture'. An issue that also caused some concern was that of retention of good research active staff who were 'constantly being approached'. One department, for example, had made a strategic decision to employ specialist teaching staff in order to free up and develop a strong research team. However these 'research stars' had 'now walked out the door and gone two hundred miles up the M*'. The idea was to 'grow your own not grow them for other people' and there was a feeling that it had been a significant waste of investment.

The sense of research as a priority was evident in many areas. It was generally perceived to be a pivotal aspect for promotion; staff were also told to try and allocate two days a week for research activities, although the difficulty of this actually being achieved was widely recognised. The previously mentioned timetabling of alternate light and heavy semesters was seen as a means to boost research activity, so that a semester of study leave might be offered every three and a half years, once all the necessary requirements were fulfilled.

In summary the university seemed to be aspiring in relation to research and, in terms of workload allocation, this had created strategies to ensure that study leave was planned to facilitate it. Heads of departments were seen as pivotal in the process, but appeared to have little financial power to implement changes. Where there was extra capacity available it appeared to be directed towards the research area, whereas in relation to teaching and administration the focus was on efficiency and consolidation.

Administration

The level of support was variable between departments, some had given up a lecturer post in order to employ a departmental administrator, whilst others were managing with low support levels. There was a general feeling about the high levels of administrative work.

Problems

Where problems had occurred, these seemed to be as a result of a poor consultation process. For new staff this was especially problematic, as one reported, 'so many things you were not told, you just had to find out as you went along'. Further there was no specific guidance in relation to the loads given to new staff and although some heads of department attempted to reduce the teaching loads this did not occur in all cases. As one staff member reported 'the initial meeting was sort of playing down the workload', however later they found 'altogether I did fifty-two hours rather than thirteen in terms of teaching and practicals…. The workloads came from different people'. Anecdotally there was another recent case of a probationary member of staff being given a full workload from each of the departments that they were working in, effectively maintaining a double allocation. This problem did not surface until the interim probationary report meeting.

Organisation

In terms of the staff perceptions on this strategic leadership there was a feeling that the university was responsive to challenges and uncertainties and that there was support and empathy for departments who fell in line

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with the thinking of the 'centre'. Surveys across all university staff (33% response rate) found 85 per cent of staff were happy working at the university. However the group least satisfied were the academic staff who felt that they had least flexibility in their work. Through the interviews there was also a feeling that the vice-chancellor desired a relationship of trust with staff; however, the management of the university was seen as having become more centralised and although there was transparency in the organisational systems and data on funding, the discretionary, non-staff budget for departments was seen as very small. As one noted a little cynically, 'the best thing is to actually dress up managerialism in collegiality'. The Budgets and Resources Committee was seen as a powerful and central mechanism making decisions on aspects such as new posts. Decisions in relation to this were based on total income contribution to the 'centre' from the department involved, but also took into account strategic factors around departmental profiles. Because of this there was a sense that heads of department had very little control, but 'seem to be responsible for everything'. Furthermore, senior staff acknowledged that these heads had no escape from the daily dealings with 'fully paid up members of the awkward squad'.

In relation to communication between the university and themselves, staff felt the information coming from the 'centre' tended to be a little too general so that it created difficulties in interpreting to whom it was directed. Some of the problems with communications were seen to be a result of the university being rather centralised. Further, some felt that their heads of department were not good communicators and a survey revealed this to be a problem area. At university levels, systems were being investigated which could diversify the ways in which information was presented. New leadership development programmes were being implemented and there was a belief by some at the 'centre' that there was a 'strong correlation between successful departments and the capabilities of heads'

University Systems

The departments seen shared out the task of appraising between senior members of the department. The HoD usually took on the responsibility of appraising staff on probation and the professors. There was some concern over this system of non-heads as appraisers though, as it was felt that it limited the possibility of things being acted upon. Also there was a feeling that the appraisal process often 'happened in a box' and that if it linked more firmly and actively with the allocation of work, then the process would be taken more seriously by staff. Further, in the past there had been a perception that 'nothing ever changes' as a result of the process, although the staff interviewed felt a bit more positive about outcomes more recently. Discussions had been centred around problems, training possibilities and support. Human Resource staff felt that in the better-managed departments, discussions in the appraisal linked in to workload aspects, and in other areas staff often broached the area informally, often in relation to high workloads.

In relation to the promotion process there was some discussion about the criteria used. Most staff cited excellence in performance in two out of the three areas of teaching, research and administration as the measure. However a union representative reported that a few years ago this had been changed, so that the criteria now required excellence at research and excellence in one of either teaching or administration. Staff themselves also felt that increment and bonus points were an incentive, whereas some felt that achievement at the RAE was not in itself a motivational tool.

Various surveys had been carried out in the university, covering aspects such as attitudes and stress. The results from these suggested that a major problem was in the area of communications, with many feeling that their line manager needed to develop their 'people management and their communication skills'. Human Resource staff felt that this was an area that they wanted to develop in order to diversify the means of communication; however, other demands meant that 'it just keeps getting squeezed'.

Various training initiatives had been run in the university, such as senior management training and leadership development programmes with intensive training provided at the start of the academic year. Heads who had been on the course reported that it was informative, mostly in relation to common issues and departmental management practices.

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TABLE 7

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 2

DEPARTMENT 1	DEPARTMENT 2
Department Context • 12 academics • Specialist history department • No undergraduates just postgraduates • Lots of distance learning and summer schools • Teaching a mixture of lectures and practical classes • Some programmes being rewritten, as department is run like a business income-wise • Could project income streams and bid for funding from 'university centre'	**Department Context** • 24 staff • Geography department • Big turnaround of staff recently, lot of retirements and new staff being employed • Lots of time commitment to PG Cert. • Decisions to update rather than change what they taught as high workloads are recognised • Core business is teaching – problem if wished to increase research income
HoD/S Context • Had employed administrator to help with workload - saw the work as being heavy on admin and student support and light on teaching • Complicated structure so hard for all to be aware of all that was happening • Had a research centre as well where staff did no teaching • Advised staff to reduce workload and be efficient, 'family type' character of department in the past – RAE pressure and targets changed this • Methods to reduce marking loads, such as associate tutors • Transparency limited to knowledge of roles • Believed enthusiasm and motivation of staff and inefficiencies contributed to high workload • Aware of problems relating to work stress - migraines etc. • Believed in reward of giving staff titles (such as deputy head and programme director) - but no more pay • Saw HoD as key manager	**HoD/S Context** • Recognition that there were high workloads, but that if they wanted career progression staff needed to work hard – at the same time believed this decision should be up to individual staff and should not impose pressure • Believed individual effectiveness pivotal factor in loads - problem of retaining high quality research active staff • Believed staff were treated fairly • More senior staff in the department were more heavily loaded at present due to lots of new staff and the need to give them relief • Commitment to gain a five in the RAE • Believed that staff were performing well
Allocation Methods • Work carved up into three areas; campus-based work, distance learning and research centre - People had responsibilities in one of those areas as a means to consolidate work • Administrator taking up many tasks • Research not allocated • Teaching element worked out and then divided equally between staff • Issues of specialist teachers and small groups making balancing more difficult • Marking, rather than teaching, a large part of workload, so quota worked out with different weightings given to different markers (first or second, campus or distance learning) then balanced across the department	**Allocation Methods** • Inherited model with 'sets of rules' on contact hours, preparation, marking • Data entered onto Excel spreadsheet (3 hours allowed overall to cover each hour lecturing on repeating courses, and 5 hours for new courses); staff entered the data on all work done in the year onto the spreadsheet, on teaching, admin, research and outside duties, so balance work on retrospective data - 'It's a live document, it's constantly being revised' • Some aspects capped • Table then gives staff hours per year for each activity type • Only problem - model relied on 37 ? hours a week • Identified balance supposedly 40% for research • In terms of transparency staff saw a summary printout and their own workloads only • Sabbaticals planned for every seventh semester • Lighter load to new staff

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SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 2 (CONTINUED)

DEPARTMENT 1	DEPARTMENT 2
Staff Consequences/Outcomes • New staff member found the work confusing in terms of the actual work and 'knock on' aspects of it • Work seemed to come from different quarters - unaware of what other members of staff were doing • Had appealed to HoD/S because of overload –working long hours, evenings and weekends, after this given some relief	**Staff Consequences/Outcomes** • All the work undertaken was recorded and put in to the model and it was used retrospectively (Although this relied on low fixed hours the advantage was that it allowed staff to show what they had done, so that hard work was recognised and rewarded at times such as appraisal and promotion) • Consultation with HoD/S worked • Not interested in knowing others workloads • Believed own efficiencies had eased his work situation • PG Cert had created some pressures. Need for more admin support, as had to take minutes for all meetings

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5.3 Case study 3

Policy

In relation to workload allocation there was a general view that departments should administer their own schemes working around the spread of academic activities. This process was informed by the contract of employment where formal scheduled teaching should not exceed eighteen hours a week with five weeks 'self-managed' time in the summer. However the union involved, NATFHE, had concerns about issues of transparency and equity in the process. This had led to the formation of a Workload Review Committee in the university. A form had been developed for staff to list all their duties, but the union was unhappy that duties were being totalled across a year in a way that might be used to undermine the professional decisions of staff about their work. It was a widely held belief that there was a problem in producing a model that could encompass all the different types of work across the university. Things were felt to work, generally because 'heads and their staff reach some sort of mutual understanding'.

Allocation Methods

A variety of approaches were being used, but the main unit seemed to be based around contact and target hours with other activities such as administration being divided up as decided by the HoD. Research activities were then fitted in, and on some occasions, such as in order to complete work for the RAE, some remission from activities might be given. Significant roles, such as Course Leader, and new courses might also lead to remission from teaching for an hour or two. Other more innovative approaches had been experimented with, such as accounting in hours for all the activities and duties in a year. Again this approach had run into difficulties with the union as although figures might average out over the year, staff could be exceeding the weekly limit. Problems had occurred in some departments because of deterioration in staff student ratios. This had led to adaptations in teaching methods such as moves from seminars to larger workshops supported by research students. The problem of marking for large lecture groups had been tackled through efficiency in approaches to assessment and to weighting of the marking load. The aim with these measures had been to try to free up some time for research. However as one HoD put it, 'Academic time is like closet space, however much there is you will always fill it'.

Issues of Transparency and Equity

In relation to transparency there was a belief that levels varied over the university, but all the systems actually seen were transparent and published. However, there was a feeling that, although at this level things were transparent, in other areas, such as how certain decisions were actually made, there was less transparency. There was also a feeling in relation to equity that things were worked out fairly by heads of department. However, there was recognition that in most departments there were one or two staff who did the minimum, and that problems arose from the extra-curricular activities where, 'if you get a reputation for doing things, you will be asked to do things!'

Flexibility

There was a feeling by some that because of the constraints, both in terms of staff numbers and contract conditions, practices such as study leave were unavailable in the university. There was also a belief by some senior staff that the limit of eighteen hours of teaching contact a week was problematic in relation to innovation in courses, such as intensive Masters courses, where a module could be taught in a week or might run through the summer period. However, there was evidence in many places of new staff being given relief from a full teaching load. There were also issues surrounding the fact that, although there had been a relocation of many of the departments, some staff had not moved house and were reluctant to travel the forty or so miles, unless they had something specific timetabled in.

Head of Department Role and Consultation Process

Generally there was a feeling that heads acted as advocates for their department, negotiated for it within the faculty and were doing their best to 'juggle limited resources'. The heads interviewed were relatively new appointments and were actively managing their departments in order to increase their research profile, in line with university objectives. In this they felt empowered from the university to develop and innovate fairly freely, yet staff had been more cautious. At one 'away day' in relation to the research agenda one individual had 'ranted and stamped out of the room' and 'fairly robust negotiations' followed. The head involved believed that it 'wasn't democratic, that I would lay down what we did, but that I would consult'. The research agenda seemed to be a pressing issue and heads felt that the 'passive resistance' to change could be helped by new staff that would change the climate 'through a dilution effect'. Senior staff recognised the need for management training of these heads of department and also for more administrative support.

Workloads

Many of the issues discussed in relation to workloads revolved around the issues of peaks and troughs that made life stressful. Heads of department were using innovative approaches in

delivery methods to reduce the volume from seminars and assessment, however many of the staff reported having to work at weekends and in the evenings. Marking was an often-cited issue, being unpopular as it was copious, mundane and tightly scheduled. In relation to administrative work there was a realisation by many that these areas were time consuming and required strict discipline to limit them. Personnel had perceived that problems had been caused by the increase in bureaucracy and staff shortages, with a hundred job vacancies at any one time. This had resulted in staff being, 'more fragile and vulnerable than they would be in the private sector'. Because so many of the staff were, 'working at the margin' responses to mechanisms such as the appraisal process were mixed. As one suggested, 'bullying and harassment in this university is much more systemic than it is personal', in that fraught reactions or bad temper were misinterpreted as bullying. In relation to workloads, Personnel were finding more female staff presenting with problems, but there was a perception that this was related to less developed support mechanisms at home.

Teaching

Efforts were being made on various fronts to smooth out the problems caused by fluctuations in teaching work resulting from areas such as marking and differences in class sizes. Small departments and specialisms were a problem owing to reduced flexibility to adjust teaching loads. Although generally some account was taken for the preparation of new modules or units it was felt that it was more efficient to simply enhance existing courses and this was in tension with the desire to innovate and compete on course provision. Although staff-student ratios had deteriorated, innovation was occurring in areas such as teaching delivery and in assessment, with information technology being used to reduce workloads. In many areas requirements by professional organisations had also had an impact on the teaching load in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

Research

Although there had been 'no standing tradition of research' within the current contract of employment there was an expectation surrounding it, which the new vice-chancellor and Senior Management Team had pushed. Within departments, practices varied in relation to research, some giving relief to work on specific tasks related to the RAE submission. There were also some suggestions that cliques were forming between new research active staff. Heads of department were also aware that some inequities were occurring where some staff used their vacations to work on research beneficial to the department whereas others did little work during that period. However there was a perception by many research-active staff that research, despite the lack of a promotion policy, was the route for personal progression.

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Problems

In relation to workload allocation, problems seemed to occur not so much in relation to quantity, but rather to do with particular subjects and being asked to take on new units. However, there was an issue that people 'do mutter about somebody else having less'. Particular problems in relation to overload appeared to have resulted from changes in university timetabling that removed semester breaks that had allowed for assignment marking. Departments were working to accommodate such peaks in demand by staggering hand in dates.

Most of the problems seemed to result from the dynamic interaction between the change of the university to a 'mixed mission', promoting research, and the contracts of employment, that limited flexibility to accommodate this aspect within the working week. There was a feeling that relations were improving, although there was some concern about accountability of staff time especially over the summer period, and comments were also made that over the years there had also been a worsening in staff-student ratios. Conversely, one individual was of the view that, 'In this institution academic freedom is almost anarchic because it comes with, 'I'm free to do what I want, when I want'. One senior staff member expressed the opinion that such problems surrounding contract terms would not be sorted out within universities and the necessary flexibility required to compete with other institutions on different contracts would need to be sorted out nationally. Other 'damaging practices' cited were that limitations on weekly hours reduced flexibility to accommodate aspects such as staff sickness and that the incentive to work efficiently had been removed by the use of paid overtime in some departments.

Individual Response

Many of the responses and coping mechanisms in relation to workloads seemed to be affected by the quality of the communication involved. Problems were exacerbated when staff felt that they had been dealt with in high-handed or 'autocratic ways'. When staff did talk to their HoD and express concern that they were not managing their work adequately, reassurance from the Head helped both to relieve feelings of guilt and to reduce the stress of the situation. Although individuals made efforts to prioritise in their work, that work was intensely important to them. As one said 'my personality is tied up with this job'. Again, when asked about coping with

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workloads one staff member stated that he would be, 'better off speaking to my wife as I go home and the first thing I do is to go into the office … there is no boundary'. One experienced Personnel worker said about this reaction to work from academics, 'I think they stress themselves as much as anybody stresses them'. She felt that this was because they were 'a cross between actors and NHS consultant', that is vulnerable as they were acting a role in front of large numbers, but also having the 'arrogance of expertise'. On the positive side staff felt that they had plenty of autonomy to innovate within their work and research gave a great deal of personal satisfaction, although some felt some reserve in stating this as it felt for them contrary to the traditionally accepted teaching ethos of the university.

Organisation

Many issues that were discussed related to the relocation of departments to new sites or to the changes from a polytechnic culture towards new university practices and customs. As one senior member of staff said, 'we have skirted over the day-to-day nitty gritty stuff' and these issues were only recently starting to be addressed. There was also a feeling that the university had rather too many committees operating with an 'antiquated' national framework agreement. In relation to the new research thrust there was feelings in some quarters that this could lead to an 'imbalance of aspiration and practical reality'.

In terms of management decisions there was a feeling that decisions and changes in policy were often made quickly, with communication of changes happening rather more slowly. Others felt that management was 'quite ruthless in terms of its decision making' in relation to issues such as closures and restructuring and that there was a general feeling of mistrust of management, although this was not at all personal. Countering this, management felt that the information went out, but that there was little feedback from staff. The vice-chancellor made the effort to have a twice yearly lecture with a question session for all staff, which was repeated at different time spots. In terms of strategic vision this appears to have been effective, as staff did seem conversant with the strategic vision for the university.

University Systems

As a result of the recent changes implemented across the university some of the systems in place were rather patchy, for example an appraisal system that was still being negotiated with the unions. The system at present centred more on development rather than evaluation. The university was also working on the Framework Agreement and this had meant that promotions policy had been rather 'left hanging' in relation to clear criteria. As a result of this uncertainty, staff tended to work on their own intuition about career development. This was a sensitive issue, as there was lots of competition, and a limited number of 'principal lecturer' posts that were allocated centrally, not from faculty or school. Another system that seemed to cause repeated problems was that of timetabling, especially surrounding aspects such as appropriate room size. Many of these issues were a result of the changes within the university and highlighted the question of priorities, as issues such as fees, student recruitment and retention were now the main focus.

TABLE 8

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 3

DEPARTMENT 1	DEPARTMENT 2
Department Context • Law department • 10 staff and some part-time staff paid on hourly basis • Over 300 full-time undergraduates • Most modules ran for the whole length of the year • One departmental administrator • Sabbaticals not really available	**Department Context** • Department of IT and Informatics • 17 academics • Small and specialist • Had moved from another site • Some unease about new HoD/S's experiments with WLA model • Huge changes to department on courses and teaching methods • Staff student ratios had increased a lot • Quite a lot of new staff who were research active at slight odds with old culture and staff

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 3 (CONTINUED)

DEPARTMENT 1

HoD/S Context

- Experienced HoD/S, but two years at present university
- No P.A.
- Works closely with department timetabler using inherited WLA system
- Active researcher, but organised and felt less pressure than in larger departments
- Managed previously
- Problems he saw for staff were the bureaucratic procedures and the lack of promotions criteria
- Marking period too short as set by the University
- HoD/S argued successfully over this

Allocation Methods

- Allocation starts with overall target contact hours for the year, e.g. about 410 over 30 weeks, so usually around 13-14 per week
- Weekly contact hours as set in employment contract not to be exceeded
- Marking attached to seminar groups of 18 in number each member of staff gets 3 (i.e. 54 to mark) Admin loads spread out evenly - extra relief perhaps for new or large role, although time not specifically allocated against admin duties.
- Research is expected to fit into hours remaining, faculty expectation that all should research, but feeling that this was the area that had the most uneven distribution
- May get extra relief to finish larger projects for RAE
- System of bidding for research time attempted, but not a success
- Size of department and expertise make flexibility difficult
- Process transparent, but some feeling that decisions behind the process less open

Staff Consequences/Outcomes

- Seemed to find the system fair overall
- Lists of allocations appeared without a real rationale, but they fall in line
- The outcomes were transparent, but the decision making process less so
- No remission on research, but seen as the way to progress, so out of work hours used
- Quantity of work, due to research etc., caused some anxiety over quality delivered, but HoD reassuring on this
- Feeling of the need to be efficient through stable courses - new courses seem to be a bit of a threat in terms of the work they result in
- Lines of communication from the university rather weak much picked up from gossip and the union
- Much of the summer vacation disappears with courses and re-sit exams in August

DEPARTMENT 2

HoD/S Context

- Experimented with different WLA methods causing some unrest - had problems with contact hours; Looked to a yearly balance of times and all duties, thought he had union rep acceptance of it, but appeared not to be the case
- Changed curriculum, introduced new Masters courses and mainly a new research culture Problems with some staff working as paid overtime in evenings to run courses
- Ensuring work now in daytime with economically viable class sizes
- Belief that new staff would 'dilute" old attitudes, eg. over research and contracts

Allocation Methods

- Had experimented with various methods looking at all activities over a year - union objected as against professional ethos of judgement etc.
- Had replaced seminars with larger workshops staffed by research students to reduce contact hours . This had actually been problematic as still got the marking without the seminar time accounted for
- So had now made preliminary timetable of lecturing duties allocating units to spread the load more evenly and given staff flexibility in how they are delivered and supported them
- Also using student 2nd year projects to fine tune the balance
- Transparent process

Staff Consequences/Outcomes

- View that some staff had concerns over their contract and how the new model would affect their hours
- View also that some staff were willing to work long hours and to accommodate the needs of department, others do the minimum and this latter group had concerns about the transparency of the model
- Research was a real issue within the model for many keen researchers and amongst the newer staff as not enough time to do it
- The need to compete, be dynamic and promote the university also taken seriously

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5.4 Case Study 4 (Australian)

Policy

The university had developed a general policy in accord with their Enterprise Bargaining agreement that workloads would be proportioned in to a 40:40:20 split between teaching, research and administration respectively. The actual model for allocation was then left to the discretion of departments, as was the quantum and nature of the work. The general principles set by the university were that workload allocation involved the management of 'a finite resource in priority areas' and that this process should be both transparent and equitable. This should take place in a constructive, challenging, supportive and rewarding work environment that facilitated the university's aspirations. Further, where possible, the allocation should also take into account the goals of the individual and not exceed a normal working week. The work should involve a balance of activities as set and agreed with the Head of School (HoS). The responsibilities of the head for setting, in discussion with the staff member, achievable strategic goals, and for monitoring, supporting and reviewing progress were also set out. Within this process of workload allocation members of staff were also responsible for discussing difficulties and reporting variation. There were three college workload committees set up to monitor implementation generally.

As a guide, work was supposed to cover a 48-week period with around the level of 37 hours per week. In relation to how the 40:40:20 division worked, it was recognised that this was spread over the full year period, so that the research quota, for example, would not be fitted into the intensive teaching period. There had been some disquiet especially from the unions about precision in relation to accounting for hours. There was also a feeling in some schools that the workload allocation policy was too vague and did not give enough direction for heads of school. There was also a sense that it did not really accommodate research, which tended to have the greatest variation between individuals and was often carried out in the time left over when all other duties had been accomplished.

Allocation Methods

In general the methods used were very sophisticated, with a focus on giving the student a good experience and wide choice. The other aspect that their models focused on was maximising research potential, but differences in research funding had a big impact on how 'tight' these systems needed to be. On the whole the processes were very consultative with discussion occurring about the best ways of sharing the teaching units and also on equivalence between various areas in research, teaching and administration. Points or units, rather than hours, were often used to express workload and some schools had more than one model running that allowed different weightings to reflect the varying load determined by the programme. For example, a lecture to a group of 60, compared to the running of the practical sessions for that same group. Another refinement, when looking at the balance between the work types, was to cap various aspects. So, for example, research funding and papers published would be capped at a certain level, so that the very successful researchers could not build up so many points that they did not need to teach. This sort of practice was seen to occur in both arts and science faculties.

The main problems that it was felt needed to be addressed were around the varying amount of research undertaken and the resultant inequalities in workload. There was a strong feeling in many quarters that all staff should teach. In fact in some of the most research-active schools this belief was the most widespread, so that all staff taught, even those with Research Fellowship grants. In other faculties the desire to keep the best scholars in front of students meant that funding was often pooled to buy in new academics rather than casual relief.

Transparency and Equity

Generally, levels of transparency were good with lists of duties and committees available for all to see. As a result of this in some faculties there was a feeling that they were 'moving towards the middle' as staff became aware of their own workloads compared to others'. Heads of school also felt that transparency was a helpful instrument for persuasion, even 'coercion', of those who were relatively unproductive. One issue arising when sharing such details was the need to ensure exactness before publication, as staff were also quick to use it to argue that they were overloaded.

In relation to equity, the models were often used to reveal inequalities in loads, often owing to research work. The schools involved had good systems for ensuring that teaching and administrative duties were shared out fairly equally amongst all staff. Sometimes this was just through a simple principle with all having to teach and, for example, having some input into the large first-year group. Others

had sophisticated mechanisms that ensured that even when allocation had occurred weightings were included to allow for class sizes and for the type of delivery involved.

Flexibility

Sabbaticals were an entitlement, not a right in the university and strangely had proven to be slightly problematic on both sides of the research issue. Highly successful research units found researchers were reluctant to leave their research groups as they needed to be present to manage projects. Other schools covering areas where research was less developed within the discipline found that they did not have spare capacity to allow their staff to take this time away. At one time a scheme had operated for staff in departments which were new to the university to allow them go on sabbatical to encourage study at a higher level. In some areas a sabbatical points formula operated, where a certain degree of productivity, in terms of research or teaching, was needed to reach a threshold level to be considered for sabbatical.

In some faculties, problems had also arisen when staff worked themselves very hard just before going on sabbatical and consequently, due to exhaustion, were not as productive as they might have been.

Head of School Role and Consultation Process

Heads of school tended to carry a significant teaching, as well as heavy research, workload. Those interviewed took care to be consultative. Some had mechanisms in place to moderate their style, such as by having one 'associate head' for teaching, and another for research, so that they did not become too dominant. They were also aware of the importance of having the confidence not to micromanage, and of delegating to others. Having said that, they also felt the need to challenge those members of staff who were shirking their responsibilities. Generally, this was done at review sessions and this was more possible in recent times as under new terms staff were no longer able to choose their reviewer. Heads were also aware of their duties to mentor and encourage staff, and all those interviewed seemed very aware of which of their staff were taking on large roles and were monitoring this.

The main problem reported was that of 'just not knowing' about the various organisational procedures. There was a feeling that, although many of the training sessions were excellent they needed to be timed to start earlier in the head's term. A new website for senior staff had been developed as a sort of 'operations manual'.

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Where complex changes had occurred and new workload models had been introduced, there had been intensive periods of consultation, pilot studies before the transition period, and more consultations and readjustments after it. During this initial period, people were asked to describe what they did at work in particular roles, and this helped give a fuller understanding, so that estimates of the actual work involved were more realistic. In general it was felt that through this, people were better informed of the complexities involved and were more supportive of the solutions. Through the process, staff also became aware of the problem of the endless exceptions that could endanger any relatively simple, equitable system.

Workload

In general, staff felt their workloads were high, even 'horrendous'. The origins of this were wide and various. Bureaucracy was generally agreed to be problematic, 'eating heavily into the creative hours', but research becoming the main focus in the university was also having a big impact on workloads. This was especially evident in those areas with less experience in the field and less funding to support them. What the models had made clear was that there were inequalities between staff in relation to their research work. Responses to this were varied. In the successful research areas the response to staff who were not bringing in grants, but who were still bidding, was to encourage them further and not to give them a greater load - it was felt that this would be 'the worst thing you could do'. Other schools had less scope to be sympathetic to these 'research non- productives' and felt it equitable to balance their load with more teaching.

There was serious concern about 'burnout' by some heads and a realisation that 'often the best researchers are also the most popular teachers' and that such intensity of work might be sustained for only three to four years. Generally, to safeguard research, a day at least was left with no face-to-face teaching allocated. As one noted though 'academics are masochists by nature and many of them tend to think 'oh no I should be doing something' and therefore over-teach'. There was a feeling that staff needed to allocate their time more creatively, for example by alternating light and heavy semesters to create periods of research focus.

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There were some good mechanisms to support staff, however, such as a 'duty tutor scheme' where 'casual' staff were employed as the first port of call for students with problems. Another scheme employed administrators qualified up to the level of PhD in a particular subject, so that they could use their skills across a wide area, such as the preparation of exam papers and assignments. Such staff had made a huge impact on academics' workloads. The amount of administration work was a problem and one head said that this was the biggest complaint he got from academics, with the mundane nature of tasks such as photocopying causing annoyance.

In some areas the model had also revealed that staff employed on a fractional basis were actually far exceeding their allotted time, even when aspects such as freedom from administrative tasks were considered. Such an area might have gender implications, as one head described how their 'casual' staff were often women on maternity leave or with children. Another head described how at the present their school had no women in tenured positions, although they were in the process of recruiting one. This was causing concern and the faculty was reviewing the situation.

Research

Research was a major driver in the university strategy and was felt to be 'top down and you hear it at every level'. It was also felt that the idea of the split of work 40:40:20 was unrealistic and that for many 'whatever you have got left before you go to bed is research'. There was a long-term view of research evident in many of the strategies taken. For example, in one school even the most successful researchers, with Research Fellowships, carried on teaching to enthuse students through their expertise. Also there was an eye to the future as students graduating with a first class honours degree could get Federal Government Scholarships where they could choose their own supervisor, so that there was 'an element of people having an eye on recruiting future research students'.

For heads in other research-intensive schools there was a problem in keeping their research going, so they had adopted strategies, often used in Science, of teams working on research projects. This also worked to develop and encourage new staff. A more general problem in the area of 'the Arts' was that it was hard to justify large bids, because time was often the main requisite for 'thinking' rather than expensive equipment. Funding being earmarked for teaching relief had accommodated this. Again the issue of wanting to maintain the quality of teaching for students was addressed by a pooling of funding monies to buy in a full post rather than 'casual' cover.

A school that had a weaker track record in research was taking quite an assertive stance on it. They felt that the university strategy meant that despite being less well resourced, to survive in the long term they had to invest in research. So they used the university base line level of three publications in three years as a measure to reward some or 'punish' others with more teaching. The problem that they had was that being a relatively new discipline in relation to research they had so few staff with doctorates that there was limited capacity to take on and supervise students. To accommodate this, those staff that had a PhD were encouraged to bid strategically for funds, including a stipend for a PhD student. This person would then be a member of staff, who could cut back their 40 per cent load, still work twenty hours a week and their salary would be freed up for someone else. Their active policy was that all staff would be engaged in higher degree study. The problem remained that with no tradition of research funding it was hard, without that rolling programme of funding, to actually plan investment.

Administration

There was a belief that work from administration had 'gone right through the roof'. A response to this by some was to try to limit the number of committees operating. However, there was also recognition that these administrative roles were the route for promotion in many cases and heads could persuade staff to take on this load through the 'carrot' of promotion from lecturer level to senior lecturer.

Generally, devolution of administrative responsibility was seen as the root of a lot of the work, where the new budget units and funding constraints actually hit the academic with a lot of extra work. There was a feeling that there were lot of new tasks and 'old tasks now made infinitely more complex'. The dilemma for heads was the choice of employing 'general staff' to try to shoulder this burden, set against academic staff unwilling to lose a post in order to create the resources for such support.

Yet the 'university centre' felt that their approach was that of a 'trust culture' rather than a 'multi-layered approval culture' and that procedures were being standardised to

help matters. It seemed that the university was actually in the process of change in this respect and felt things were working more efficiently. However one member of staff said, 'every admin facility we have gone on to, the university has suffered badly because our old system has been better'.

Teaching

In relation to teaching there was a belief in the importance of the best people being in front of the students. However generally, in order to support research, teaching was the area where it was felt economies and efficiencies could be gained through adapting teaching methods. There was also a belief in the need for stability in teaching, where changes had been made to a syllabus the move had been to share out the work evenly.

Staff in many schools often agreed together in consultation who should take which subjects and year groups. However, there were widely differing practices in relation to class sizes across the schools. In one science school lecture, sizes for first-year student were at the level of 350, but were now around 220. Tutorials that followed were around the 80 mark, although in reality only a keen 30 or so turned up. So in these schools, class size was not factored into workload. In others, schools such as in Languages, the class size had to be small and such resource intensive conditions did place a strain on schools, especially as these were often the areas where research funding was not generous. Other factors that affected teaching included requirements from professional bodies on the syllabus and aspects such as work clinical placements that were necessary for accredited courses.

To accommodate resource issues, solutions were found such as PhD students taking laboratory demonstrations, and part-time teaching support for tutorial groups. Other means of balancing the budgets included distance-learning programmes that proved popular with foreign students.

Problems

The success of Research Fellowships in some schools had caused a dearth of senior staff available to take on management roles such as HoS; as a result, relatively junior staff were taking them on. Apart from loss of staff in certain key areas, issues arose either from certain groups becoming 'precious' about their work or more rarely from individuals being difficult. One HoS was in dispute with a member of staff, who was involved in areas outside of the university, and so the errors and problems resulting were both far-reaching and embarrassing. There was a feeling in this instance that the university was not giving much help and direction.

Other problems could be seen in both extremes of the professional experience. In some areas in the Arts Faculty there were issues of senior staff not being very computer literate and in other areas there were feelings that new staff were not getting sufficient mentoring.

Individual Response

The issue arose of how the same task could be reported to take such widely differing amounts of time. There was an acceptance that efficiency levels varied greatly between individuals and, even that within individuals, time management got better with experience. There was a perception that many staff worked evenings and weekends and that certain periods in the year were more intensive than others. Keeping their research profile going was hard for more senior managers and the emotional tiredness, often related to trips abroad, did have an impact on family life. Administration and the burden of funding were central to many of the discussions, such as the problem of competing for international students. As one senior member of staff said there was a 'huge number of financial and administrative responsibilities imposed on the university and filtered down through the system, and [these] have hit the ordinary academics'.

In terms of satisfaction, staff at all levels enjoyed the buzz and excitement of research success and of working towards long-term goals. Even the most jaded member of staff felt pride in the way their new discipline was leading the way in research in that area in Australia.

Organisation

In general there was a feeling of optimism about research and ambitious plans were evident. However there were worries over budgets in those quarters where research was not attracting large funds. As government funding of the university was so partial some felt 'prey to the market' of student fees. Yet there was also a belief that the government saw the sector as important especially in relation to the lucrative international student market. Fears, though, led to a belief in the vulnerability of areas such as, 'Medieval Music, or whatever, because there is no

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market interest in them, but that doesn't mean they are not worth studying'. Others at the 'university centre' felt that although some 'tough decisions' had to be made where class sizes were small, that in relation to areas such as the Classics it was 'just inconceivable that we couldn't continue to support them'.

In relation to the budget, the 'university centre' was working at inefficiencies in administrative processes. There was a feeling that these were, 'eating heavily into their [academics] creative time'. However some academics felt that although these measures might be saving the 'centre' time and money, the burden was falling back on academics. For example, in relation to purchasing, a 'trust culture' had been introduced, so that invoices did not go through lengthy checking processes, but rather were filled in online. However, staff found the forms complex, exacerbated by the fact that they 'timed out'. The view of the vice-chancellor was that they 'see the need to improve their business processes, whilst being true to the 'fundamental moral commitment to intellectual discovery and development, responsible social commentary and the promotion of cultural and economic wellbeing'. The appointment of the chief financial officer, from industry, was felt to have brought a good deal of change to the university management. He had taken on many of the roles usually fulfilled by senior academics and was powerfully advocating strategic direction. The response to this by some was 'a feeling of jaundice' that they had little power in decision making; however, others gave examples of how at consultation meetings the views of more junior staff could overwhelm the feelings of, for example, selection panels. Also in relation to the university five-year research plan, this had not been developed by the Senior Executive Group, but rather from the inputs of a conference group of over 150 people. Certainly it appeared that even in its initial stages this strategy was well known throughout the university. The emphasis was that despite a businesslike approach the core business of the university was paramount.

One view from the 'centre' was the need to try to direct deans to work 'like chief executives of major subsidiaries', with an understanding of the dynamics of the student market. To do this real measures of student satisfaction, through interviews, needed to be gained, as well as the more objective financial indicators of success. Through this decision making, choices could be made in a more total context. Interestingly some staff did echo this and found it useful not just to have data, but have that data explained. Throughout the university it was interesting to see how the student perspective was central, for example issues of timetabling revolved around maximising the opportunities for the student to have the best possible experience, rather than accommodating academic preference. It might have just been a difference in emphasis, but it was different from the UK, and one could speculate whether this emphasis would change as the fees there increased.

In relation to communication, there was a feeling that within schools, meetings were often too large for useful discussion and became instead reporting sessions. Some schools had solved this problem by breaking down into smaller discussion streams. There was a feeling that although the university might be more managerialist, the schools were still working in a collegial way.

University Systems

The university operated an appraisal type system called Performance, Management and Development. This was a new system that had been changed to incorporate aspects such as the probationary period and confirmation of tenure. The achievement levels of 'credit', 'superior' and 'outstanding' had also been aligned to fit the promotion categories. Another aspect that had changed was to put a little more onus on staff in the process to account for their level of achievement. Further, whereas in the past staff could choose their reviewer, it was now the decision of the head who undertook that task. Often it was delegated amongst the more senior members of staff with the heads themselves only taking the difficult or threshold cases.

Administrative roles, such as committees, were often advocated as a route to promotion; this was especially so in areas where nearly all staff were successful researchers. Promotion criteria demanded different levels of achievement in teaching, research and service to the community or university depending on the position.

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 4

DEPARTMENT 1

Department Context

- Chemistry department.
- 40 staff, young age profile.
- 2,500 undergrads.
- Very successful in research - allocated over 25% of chemistry funding across the country.
- Nearly all staff had external funding. 'Golden List' Post-Docs had their own Fellowship money. Undergrad courses streamed e.g. 4 levels in the 1st year.
- Sabbatical scheme operating although hard for researchers to leave their group work.
- Aimed for flexibility in teaching provision. Undergrad lectures large numbers e.g. over 200 in 1st year, tutorials 80, but only 'needy' 30 might attend.
- Aimed to keep teaching stable, although syllabus overhauled recently

HoD/S Context

- Still actively teaching alongside his research. Belief in the importance of teaching as good for students and it feeds back as research investment – so little teaching 'buy-out'.
- Even research Fellows might continue to teach. Students with 1st class degrees got scholarships for postgraduate study but they chose their supervisor hence kept staff competitive.
- HoD active policy of recruiting highly trained administrators - extended the scope of their work to relieve academics.
- Some admin roles suggested as good for promotion.
- Discouraged proliferation of committees.
- Use of part-time 'duty tutors' for student problems.

Allocation Methods

- Method involved equal weighting of points between teaching, research and admin.
- Although research was capped in the number of points that could be gained, in practice research was a residual.
- Those few staff who had no research funding etc might take on a little extra admin, but no more teaching, as the aim was to maximise their chance of getting funding.
- Teaching was not capped and a point was gained for each hour, tutorials were not formally counted they just followed the lectures.
- Typical teaching was a unit per semester that included a 2 hour lecture, 1 tutorial and 3-4 hours in labs.

DEPARTMENT 2

Department Context

- School of Medical Sciences.
- 400 students and 3 undergraduate programmes plus post graduate.
- Specialisms, MSc and PhD.
- 25 academics, also some part time staff used.
- Previous use of 'casual staff' hit budgets badly.
- No sabbatical scheme operating really.
- Clinical Education courses operated with a placement system and this entailed a lot of extra work as students had to be visited etc.
- 'Some leniency' for new staff.
- Campus for them not on main site, situated some miles away.

HoD/S Context

- Very aware of the need/expectation to 'produce' in research, use of WLA model to highlight those staff not performing - who would then be given more teaching.
- Appraisal put more onus on staff – although no real guidance from university or union on a model.
- Adamant that hours were a bad measure as did not encourage efficiency in teaching methods etc.
- Area was new in research terms, so problems of supervision of PhDs, but pride also that they were leading the way in Australia.
- Administration a big problem as 4 different professions involved plus clinical placements.
- Getting an administration assistant now.
- Salary budget a problem as no increases and so rises absorbed from main budget.
- Also problem of poor budget info from university
- Training for HoD/S also needed to be provided more upfront. 6 weekly faculty lunch for HoD/S good for support.

Allocation Methods

- Lots of consultation involved in creating the models - basically points on the teaching aspects. Different models were used with different weightings for the different types of study e.g. undergraduate/ postgraduate/ course work/ PhD and Masters.
- Teaching was divided into three areas: co-ordination, facilitation and assessment, then looking at the co-ordination and facilitation aspects negotiated how much of these aspects were student dependent and how much independent (e.g. a lecture to 40 as opposed to 120, not much difference).

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TABLE 9

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 4 (CONTINUED)

DEPARTMENT 1	DEPARTMENT 2
Allocation Methods (Continued) • Equitable workload – (less than 50% variation) everyone had the same teaching load, only exception was new money specifically given for teaching relief. • No account taken for class sizes as all did the large 1st yr groups. • 50% Reduction of work loads for new staff. • Loads reviewed yearly. • No extra time given to refresh courses. • Process transparent.	**Allocation Methods (Continued)** • Models took student numbers and credit points for a unit as the constants, with student numbers weighted dependent on the degree of dependence. Staff entered own data onto database. • Admin tasks were shared out equally and left outside the model, the only exception to this was undergraduate course coordination. • Assumed all research active, with a minimum 3 publications in 3 years. • Rewarded or punished if differed from this base. Research weighted, through comparables to teaching load, this was to encourage staff to move the balance between the two areas (Analysed work of 100% teachers and 100% researchers to get comparables). • Some attempts to adjust light /heavy semesters to encourage research work. • Process transparent and consultative, but union not officially involved in the process.
Staff Consequences/Outcomes • Belief that the process was open and fair. • People took their administration and committee roles seriously. • Only real problem areas seemed to be the need for more extensive mentoring of new staff. • And also some concerns about communication and lack of influence in decision making	**Staff Consequences/Outcomes** • Saw the process as consultative with the impetus behind the model to drive behaviour in a way that enhanced the student experience. • In terms of the workload student placements were seen as a little problematic in terms of time inefficiencies. • Research seen as important, both personally for promotion and for the school. • Teaching and admin work volume meant that research often done in unsocial hours e.g. early mornings - some stress felt over coping with this.

5.5 Case Study 5 (Australian)

Policy

At the time the university was working through a new policy document. The EB process with the unions had involved the listing of approximately 20 work types that fell into the three areas of teaching, research and the more generic category of service. Negotiations had led to an agreement of a reasonable five-day week across 46 weeks a year. However the university had resisted union pressure for a cap on hours and a quantifying of a weekly hour limit. In the background of this process there was the 'notion' of 37 hours a week as a guideline If a staff member was consistently working beyond this general amount then a test of unreasonableness would be triggered. This process would involve the supervisor checking that the work involved was that which was actually *allocated*, rather than that *chosen* to be done by the individual. The University's guidelines for schools in the task of allocation of work stated that it should occur in a stimulating, safe and supportive environment and allow equitable distribution of work amongst staff. Additionally resources should be allocated to 'ensure both the maintenance of workloads at a reasonable level and the delivery of a high quality service'. However, the actual model used fell to the discretion of schools to choose their method to fit their discipline. Workshops were run for senior staff on alternative workload models and in the Performance, Planning and Review process; further guidelines were set for both supervisor and staff on strategies and aspects needing consideration.

The EB agreement stated that academic work embraces: academic leadership, teaching performance and leadership, research, scholarship and other creative activity, and professional leadership. Staff should have 'adequate and appropriate opportunity to perform' in all these areas and opportunity to demonstrate performance that might lead to promotion. The EB agreement again talked about fair, reasonable loads, that took into consideration changing circumstances and work-life balance, but hours themselves were not prescribed.

Allocation Method

A variety of methods were used, including hours and point systems, but within all the systems seen, negotiation and consultation between the parties seemed to be central to their operation, and their aim was to identify those falling outside of a 'broadish band'. This often involved staff initially rating their own workloads across all the main areas, against a set scale. They then might set their preferences before entering into discussions with their HoS about adjustments, qualitative or quantitative. Research was widely felt to be the trigger for workload systems, owing to the large range in the amount of it undertaken. However, there was a general feeling that, despite the thrust for research, teaching was a central and vital part of the university; diversity of staff was recognised through research or teaching only positions; and mechanisms were in place to promote these through such schemes as the Teaching Fellowship Scheme. 'Sessional' staff were used extensively to pick up on areas where there was overload, such as in marking.

Generally, a reduced allocation was given to new staff, although it was not a university requirement. Time was also often given for their personal development and unofficial mentoring assistance was provided. The probation period for new staff was three years, and some expressed the belief that they could be 'hopelessly exploited' during this time; however, none of the staff interviewed had actually experienced this.

Transparency and Equity

Levels of transparency were good and many felt that this had helped staff relations, as those with heavy teaching loads could actually see what researchers were doing, and it cut out the 'suggestion of sweetheart deals or favouritism'. Another aspect that some liked was the way it promoted diversity, with staff able to find their niche and the flexibility this brought in terms of the make-up of workload.

In relation to the issue of equity there was a feeling that the issue of research had brought this aspect into focus. Consequently, how equity was perceived was dependent on the nature of the individual's work and there were some niggles about the adjustments. Although some with high teaching loads felt aggrieved by more active researchers' lighter load, there was also a feeling among heads that actually researchers might not get 'as low [a] load as they might deserve, because we simply don't have the numbers'. Further, some felt that a detailed workload allocation method encouraged staff to argue over the detail, and that it worked best when used to distinguish those outside the middle performance band. Some heads felt that the system allowed and encouraged staff choice in the make-up of their work, although they did recognise that some would

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describe it as a 'forced choice' in that if they chose not to do research they would get more teaching.

Flexibility

Sabbatical schemes were in operation, with a semester leave possible every three years for approved work. However, take-up varied across faculties and schools, often because of the difficulties in organising cover when teaching across a wide range of units although Teaching Fellowships were available to support scholarship in this area. Many staff had also accumulated many days of Long Service Leave entitlement which they had failed to take and the university saw this as a potential long-term liability for the organisation. Generally there was a feeling that the university provided a flexible work environment, not just on the work areas, but also in terms of fitting in home demands.

Head of School Role and Consultation Process

There was recognition by heads that the actual loads for individuals were high, but that workload allocation methods were necessary for equity and to help implement the university's research strategy. To help, a 'forum' for heads of school was in place to share details about approaches. Often strategies were set at faculty level, in line with university principles, and these were then fine tuned at school level. Further, heads saw the need to balance accountability with their own discretion so that they were allowed the flexibility to adapt the model to circumstances. They saw the need to develop and mentor their staff, especially junior staff, whilst at the same time working strategically with the deans to move strategies forward. Although processes surrounding workload allocation were highly consultative, there was a feeling among some that it would be impossible for heads to know exactly what all their staff were doing and that really the responsibility should fall to individual academics to assess their own priorities and time allocation. Generally the heads felt that their methods could be refined and improved, but they were resistant to systems that took away flexibility to act. In relation to this they felt that small problems and disputes needed to be dealt with promptly to avoid escalation of the issue.

Workloads

There had been discussion between the university and the union about what was a reasonable workload, but no figure, in terms of hours, had formally been adopted. Generally, the staff felt that, 'everybody thinks they are overworked' and that 'the more you do, the more you are asked to do'. Many academics talked of the need to prioritise and 'work smarter' and heads of school talked of the struggle to hire new full-time positions within their schools. There were some recurring features of the discussions, for example the open-endedness of research, the rise in bureaucracy and the new work created through factors such as email. Other issues cited in relation to workloads included that of the jobs that no one wanted to do, such as co-ordinator of large courses and in relation to this the unions had pointed out to the university that it was inappropriate for junior staff to pick up these roles. The other issue that figured was staff working on things that fell outside of their allocation, perhaps because of interest or enthusiasm. This was an area that heads felt needed to be carefully monitored.

Although many staff felt the quantity of work was high, they did appreciate the flexibility offered by balancing work across the three areas of research, teaching and administration to build a portfolio. The importance of the HoS in the balancing process was felt mainly to lie in smoothing out small inequalities and changes of circumstance. On the other hand, heads of school felt that the solving of these small problems, whilst essential, was very time consuming, and meant that a great deal of their other work had to be done in the evenings.

Research

The university had decided that research should be placed high on the agenda and had invested heavily in this area, advertising around 30 'research only', professorial appointments. However, there were some concerns about the creation of this new 'elite' group and the problem of integrating them with other staff. Further, as the university had not performed as well in the teaching assessment as it had hoped there were feelings that, in relation to teaching and research, 'we'd better be careful that we don't fall somewhere in the middle, we'd better be good at something'. There was a feeling from some that investing in research might be a risk, which it was worth '[taking] a shot at … but not to the detriment of other staff'. In order to make some assessment of the research strength of the university, schools were engaging in the Research Quality Framework exercise, in a trial of the new guidelines from the government. The university had also developed new Research Institutes and some staff imagined potential problems here if these became separate from faculty

research activity. Another issue that had cropped up in schools was that to meet research targets staff had been encouraged to work within 'centres of interest' to strengthen their teams. It was felt this could become problematic in terms of supporting individuals, if their research interests lay outside of the work of these centres.

For individuals, a key problem in relation to research was that it was always last on the list to be tackled, after all one's other commitments. Further, because it was open-ended it filled, 'the rest of your time and the evenings and weekends' and hence the summer 'break' could be a very busy period, writing research bids etc. Another aspect of this was the persistent perception that research was central to promotion prospects, despite university schemes to promote the importance of teaching. Individuals thought that the research imperative needed to be managed fairly to ensure that staff with higher teaching commitments felt they were being treated equitably.

Administration

There was a feeling that work in this area had increased dramatically in terms of accountability and recording. The work created through, for instance, government directives, was passed down the line from the 'university centre' through to the schools and then on to the academic staff. Specialist staff in the schools were assisting with this burden, but they themselves had high workloads with, for example, the management of budgets for teaching and research. Generally, these staff and academics worked smoothly together, although small problems did occur when responsibilities fell into grey areas. New areas of work such as online provision also created extra work in terms of its audit, and in the area of assessment, marking criteria and performance standards had to be addressed.

Teaching

Teaching was felt to be centrally important to the university, but there was a feeling that it was being placed under some pressure because of the increasing focus on research. Active researchers often wanted to retain some teaching duties – in part to help to recruit the best students as postgraduates. Moves to prevent a divide had been made through the use of Teaching Fellowships to promote scholarship in Teaching and Learning. As one academic said 'we don't really want to produce teaching drones'. Further, in terms of workload models, there was a belief that it was dangerous to use teaching as the ultimate balancing item, as it could then be thought of as 'the least valued piece of workload', that which people 'get dumped with'.

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To cope with high teaching loads a variety of techniques had been deployed. One interviewee typified the issue as a need to be 'smarter with how we allocate teaching time'. For some, to reduce the problem of large class sizes, lectures were interspersed with online provision, so that teaching resources could be freed up to support smaller tutorial groups. Students were said to be happy with the flexibility afforded by online work, but staff were divided. Many were aware of the huge initial time investment required when going down this route, and for many it would also require a big cultural shift. Another response to teaching pressures had been the employment of a relatively large number of sessional or casual staff, often because there was insufficient funding to employ full time staff and because numbers of casual staff were not capped. These sessional workers cut down the load for full-time staff and provided flexibility in the teaching provision. Over the last ten years, while student numbers had increased by 30 per cent and full-time staff had remained relatively constant at 950, these sessional staff had increased from 280 to 380 FTEs. These individuals lectured, run practical classes and tutorials and some also did marking. They were made up of research students, individuals with professional 'experience from up town' and others with experience of teaching in the area. There had been some problems reported about inexperienced sessional staff, as students had complained that full-time staff spent much time mentoring them and moderating their marking. However, there was also recognition that for many their work was the starting point of an academic career and investment in this area was vital in relation to issues of quality and mentoring. With the new research focus there was also a problem in that these staff could not contribute in this area and so a full cost-benefit analysis was being done. The university had a programme to replace sessional staff vacancies with full time posts for new career individuals, and they were currently recruiting a cohort of around 25.

Student expectations and demands, such as for extensive assessment feedback and lengthy emails, had contributed to increased workloads. It was felt that timetables were set to suit students and their jobs with repeats of many lectures being offered in the evening. In relation to new

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courses and large marking groups, provision and adjustment were usually made in the allocation, and sometimes sessional staff 'mopped up' excess marking. Some academics suggested that units that had a large marking element, rather than say multiple choice, were unpopular and that this workload dimension needed to be more explicitly acknowledged.

Problems

In general there were few disputes to report and any that arose were dealt with by the HoS, with a 'nip it in the bud' strategy. Staff were felt to be generally quite acquiescent and prone only to minor grumbling. More general problems arose out of workload issues related to semester timings, online provision and students emails. In relation to semesters the close proximity of the first and second semesters meant that staff felt overworked with little time to catch up on aspects such as marking or research. Further, there was a feeling that the long summer break and short third semester squashed the available time for teaching programmes. Another mildly problematic aspect was the expectations of students, in terms of comprehensive feedback on assignments and exams with, in the background, feelings of concern about the threat of litigation (in fact a case had occurred already over PhD supervision). Lastly, there was some disquiet over equity regarding staff that provided their teaching online. Although many students seemed to prefer this, it was not, despite the high initial preparation time, felt to justify its hourly allocation. Even so, there was a feeling that for many staff it would require a huge cultural shift to move in this direction.

Individual Response

In relation to satisfaction, many staff cited their research and actually dealing with people as the most satisfying aspects. A university "climate" survey of staff had found that there was not a significant negative correlation between workload levels and job satisfaction, in other words a high workload alone was not a determinant in causing job dissatisfaction, a finding that echoed sector-wide surveys in the UK. Commitment levels to the university were found to be high. However workload itself had the highest negative score indicating that most staff put in more hours than were expected and this had created problems with work-life balance. Yet for many it seemed that certain aspects of the work were seen as 'a hobby as much as a job', as a 'vocation' even. Because of this it was felt that 'you won't get them [staff] to put pencils down at 5pm'. However there was an appreciation that 'workload is all about the onerous task', and that there was 'a personality element' in how efficiently things were accomplished, as 'some take a very long route'. For some, workload levels created the need to work at weekends or in the evenings. However, more experienced staff generally seemed to 'know the ropes', whereas some felt that junior staff were more vulnerable. There was, however, a fairly widespread belief that to get promotion and advance there was a need to work quite long hours and bring in funding.

The aspect of autonomy that was appealing for staff at all levels was the facility to 'find your niche'. They enjoyed the flexibility to prioritise their work and had the freedom in many areas to choose where and when they did it. Some of the women members of staff found this particularly useful when balancing the demands of a family.

Organisation

There was a general feeling within the university that they were experiencing a great deal of change. The origin of some of this could be seen in Federal Government initiatives, such as the Nelson Review with its reforms on research funding and training, and the Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements discussed below. The university had its own strategy for areas such as teaching, learning and research and the plans of faculties and divisions then had to link to this institutional strategy. The emphasis within the institution was felt by many to be on research and some felt that this had drifted away from the teaching focus that had traditionally been a product of its origins as a technical institute. Some voiced sentiments that revenue streams seemed to be all important and that in relation to aspects such as pastoral care of students there were 'the martyrs in the organisation who do those jobs and [then] there's the people who get ahead'. Further trends that affected the higher education sector generally in Australia, the growing casualisation of the workforce and the ageing of academics, had had their impact too in this institution. However, organisational surveys also showed that, despite the complaints on workload levels, people felt that, overall, it was a good place to work.

In relation to management style there was a general feeling that the university had become more bureaucratic, with many referring to its documentation on policies and

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procedures. However, there were a wide range of responses to this. Some felt that they were 'royal edicts by email' with exhortations to 'work smarter', and that the downside of being accountable was that to be 'done by the book, everything is written down'. Conversely others felt that bureaucracy had benefits and in fact meant the university was 'very well run and highly respected as a university' and was a factor in why it 'never runs into money problems, doesn't have any debt'. In relation to leadership, some felt that operations at senior levels were friendly, co-operative and open to new ideas from other sectors. Others thought that senior managers were 'flying below the radar', that is, operating to avoid drawing attention to the institution. Generally people felt that they were well informed on what was happening and on what direction the university was taking. However, the other side of this was a feeling that communication was not working so well in the other direction, so that views from below were not heard and there was a belief that their problems were not understood. Some did feel that their autonomy compensated for this to a degree. At a more informal level some wished that there could be a 'board of professors' to meet regularly and discuss strategy. Some staff members also lamented the lack of people in the communal lunch room, that was now 'like a morgue'. As one said, 'I could die in my office and not be noticed, the only way we would notice was when students complain'. There was a general feeling that, although staff were 'committed and pretty compliant', this sort of communal facility was helpful because 'its good, to some extent, to let people let off steam', especially in relation to discussing new issues such as workload allocation models. The large size of many of the faculties was a factor in the discussions around communication.

University Systems

The university offered guidelines for both supervisors and staff members in relation to the Performance, Planning and Review system. So, for example, for the supervisor these included aspects such as the consultation process, regulation of workloads, monitoring and recognition of pressure points and reviewing progress, all set within a focus of development and progression. Practically, this might include defining duties and clarifying time frames, help with prioritising work, and proposing training. Such a system naturally fed into the promotion process. In order to achieve promotion, academics needed to perform in the three areas of research, teaching and service but they were able to choose their own weighting on each of these, before the Promotions Board rated them. This meant that, in theory, staff could now be promoted to higher levels through their teaching work, but many felt that research was still the deciding factor as it was easier to measure and provide evidence of relevant activity. There were some staff interviewed who had gained promotion via the teaching route.

Union representatives described their anxiety about 'teaching only' appointments. It was felt that these were 'regarded as being the death of an academic, in that there was no chance for promotion'. Further, it made it difficult for these staff to gain positions in other universities. This area, and the employment of sessional staff, had led to extensive union involvement. Further, there had been extensive activity in the higher education sector generally that had impinged on the union, for example Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements, that facilitated flexible employment of casual rather than full-time staff, and the Nelson Review, which many felt had weakened the union position in relation to the conciliation and arbitration system. With regard to workload, the main focus of the union had been in relation to definitions of a reasonable workload.

The centralised timetabling system was felt to have caused some problems for staff. As one said, 'it drives me nuts because every semester they start from scratch and throw everything up in the air across the university'. It was felt that this was done in the name of equity, so that no class was at the same time, but it caused a lot of disruption to staff especially when practical classes were involved that had to be timetabled very specifically to fit with technical staff.

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TABLE 10

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 5

DEPARTMENT 1

Department Context

- Law School
- About 40 academics and a lot of 'casual' staff and about 2,500 students, with a large distance-learning programme.
- Numbers had fluctuated widely.
- A sabbatical system operated and a Teaching Fellowship scheme for teaching and learning research.
- External reviewers saw problems of critical mass in terms of research interests and now pressure was there to fit into 4-5 centres.
- Advertising for research only professor, but at present just about all do some teaching

HoD/S Context

- Belief that HoS needed some discretion to make adjustments to WLA.
- Work-wise admin had become a big issue-devolved down.
- Research also a big priority, so needed to make WLA fairer and more flexible to encourage it.
- Needed to experiment with delivery mixing lectures with on line lectures to make space.
- One big problem for workloads was that semester 1 and 2 had no gap between them for marking, preparation.
- Changes in funding from Federal Government, after the Nelson report, meant students now paid more for Law (up to 25% top up).
- Hope to fund more full time staff to lower staff student ratios.

Allocation Methods

- New system to accommodate the research thrust of the university.
- Staff volunteered to HoS the units that they wished to lecture, tutorial etc. HoS then 'jiggles' the preferences, (using sessional staff too) and comes up with a draft list and negotiates - say for those with large research grants.
- Standard loads set for all the areas, e.g. for teaching base line 12 hours contact and the co-ordination of a least two units a year.
- Variations in student numbers were balanced out by spreading say, a large core module with a smaller elective.
- Adjustments were also made to the standard load owing to aspects such as research student supervision and unit co-ordination, which also had a scale determined by the load involved.
- Those wishing to elect a teaching focus might, through consultation with HoS, undertake an additional 2 hours a week contact, because their research load was below the set standard research workload.

DEPARTMENT 2

Department Context

- School of Life Sciences with three specialist sections - little cross teaching between them, but team teaching within.
- About 1,200 students taught, including service teaching to other schools.
- 40 academic staff, plus casual and PhD demonstrators.
- Strong in both teaching and research, although about a third of staff not actively researching. Flexible environment.
- Committed staff.
- Scope for consultancy/research overlap. Timetabling problematic due to specialist requirements and system approaches.
- Sabbaticals difficult to take as inputs into other courses.
- Staff student ratios seemed stable.

HoD/S Context

- Acting role as Dean at present.
- Believed that staff worked hard and were committed, few at appraisal wished to give up tasks even if overloaded.
- Problems of overload - mainly from research active as they taught too and wished to keep in contact with best students - 'no it's not equitable, but I don't think you can do anything about it'.
- Belief that although their system was not detailed, or prescriptive, it was broadly right and avoided points that could be argued over.

Allocation Methods

- Broad-based model aiming to fit staff into reasonable band and not have outliers.
- Basic number of teaching hours worked out.
- Using broad guidelines staff ranked their loads using a scale for each of the three areas (from 0-5).
- These were used, through negotiation with the head of section, to adjust loads against a notional 'teach only' allocation of 21 hrs - however this 21 hrs was a weighted workload e.g. 2.5 hours per lecture. The ethos was that teaching hours were not the balancing mechanism, i.e. 'a dumping ground', and although those doing well in research might have a lower teaching load it was not prescribed how much lower.
- Staff had 'pretty much the same total teaching workload' and so belief that the strongest researchers worked hardest overall.
- Account was also taken of new staff, or units, and large classes (over 150) using weightings and multipliers.

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 5 (CONTINUED)

DEPARTMENT 1	DEPARTMENT 2
Allocation Methods (Continued) • Student numbers taken in to account for co-ordination not the delivery of large units. • New courses got 50% mark-up. • Marking groups divided up proportionately the assessment load, excess went to 'casual' staff. Problems here if they were not experienced as other staff had to mentor them. • Aspects seen as unfair were assessment aspects and high allowance given to PhD supervision (1.5 hours a week), but in the past university sued over this. • Transparent in that all see everybody's average allocation. • At present 'haven't got glowing approval' of the method but would review it again soon.	**Allocation Methods (Continued)** • Could use demonstrators for practical work, sessional tutors, or negotiate with section head. • Transparent in terms of the overall out put, not names. This has helped staff to see equity in the system. • Fine tuning of system.
Staff Consequences/Outcomes • Some staff reluctant to teach units with lot of marking. • Some feelings of unhappiness about the new system. • Issue of equity about online teaching - not all staff comfortable with new modes of delivery. • Students had high expectations on feedback mechanisms. • Flexibility good in the school, - good for women with families. • During teaching period hours in excess of what suggested, but claw back at other periods. Research was what was shelved, but also seen as central, especially for promotion. • Research time was what differentiated people's load. • Feel fairly well informed of the direction of the university.	**Staff Consequences/Outcomes** • Believed that needed to think hard about priorities to work efficiently and get promotion - research viewed as central. • Needed to be 'savvy' - 'the more you do the more you are asked to do'. • Staff more aware now of how work balanced and could see equity operating generally. • However, problem of equity in online lectures needed to be addressed. • Feeling that the university. was becoming more managerialist. • Student expectations were rising - lecture notes on line, emails, etc. • Had worked a lot at evenings and weekends but now reduced (as pay to park at weekends) but work still did 'creep' in. • Split site for work in the future might be problematic.

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5.6 Case Study 6

Policy

A review group had been working to develop principles to underpin faculty models. The group's findings, endorsed by Senate, Council and the union, stated that all faculties should operate workload activity models. These should be clear, account for all the principal activities, and be agreed by all parties. The main areas covered should be teaching (including scholarship), research, and administration. Further external activities and knowledge transfer should be accounted for in one of these areas. The main requirements were that the models should be fair, and transparent. The degree of transparency might vary between knowledge of an individual's position relative to others to a more comprehensive view with all workloads being published. Additionally it stated that the model should be simple to implement, both for ease and to avoid dispute in interpretation. Staff might have different balances in their activities, but overall the workloads should reflect the strategic plan of the faculty concerned.

The review group aimed to provide commonality across the faculties and to assist this it wanted models to be convertible to notional hours (a FTE suggested at 1,650 hours a year) in order that comparisons might be made. Although it was left up to the faculties to define how each was measured, no matter what unit was used in the models it was stated that they should provide an indication of the time an activity could reasonably take. It was hoped then that the relationship between workloads and funding could be better understood to help with the Transparency Review process and to feed into Activity Costing and ultimately Full Economic Costing processes.

Allocation Methods.

Methods varied across the schools depending on factors such as the complexity of the situation, also on staff profile, where some staff were employed on academic-related contracts and were not required to research. So, for some smaller schools, where staff were also nearly all on academic contracts, the situation was deemed simple enough for the HoS, through consultation, to informally work out a model that relied on a simple balancing of modules. In other larger schools databases were used to calibrate loads before balancing could be finalised. In these models, contact hours and multipliers for class size were used, and modes of delivery accounted for. One school even operated models using both points and hours, in order to check them against each other to ensure that the system was fair. Another had a series of template models where staff could choose the pattern with the nearest fit to their own range of activities. There was some agreement that ten credit modules made the task of allocation and balance harder because of the need to run so many modules concurrently. Practices also varied between departments on the treatment of new staff and their workloads, some making more allowance than others. Generally, there was an expectation that new staff undertook a teaching qualification and accommodation was made for this.

In relation to administrative work this was often shared out as equally as possible; however, some roles were seen as very large, although there was recognition that these might be beneficial to the individual in relation to promotion. For research, some schools actively allocated time against it dependent on research activity, papers and funding; one even decided how much according to the research 'grade' of the individual. Others expected all staff to research and to accommodate it in their own timetable.

From the workload allocation models, various issues were revealed to heads. For example, in some areas activities were exposed that were not actually deemed necessary. In other cases the amount of time staff judged to be necessary for a particular role varied considerably, and to get some consensus on this required quite wide sampling. Developing a comprehensive model was seen to have certain benefits, particularly as it helped staff to appreciate the wide range of work needed within a school to keep all aspects working efficiently, and to ensure the welfare of both students and staff.

Size was a common feature of many discussions. For example, there was a feeling that problems in relation to workload allocation occurred when sizes of class grew rapidly - thus raising issues of equity in relation to marking. It was also felt that informal systems of work allocation became inappropriate when considering large staff groupings because it was impossible for everyone to be aware of each other's workloads. Another issue raised was the problem of staff working across schools, or even faculties, as there had been some problems balancing two different model inputs. This had also highlighted that schools often gave different allowances to the same sort of work which had created some disquiet.

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Transparency and Equity

Levels of transparency varied quite considerably across the university. Some heads felt that workloads should be confidential between the individual and their head, others were transparent, so that the workload of every individual was open. More often though, a sort of semi-transparent system operated where staff were informed about their own work and the ranges in load of other staff, or where certain aspects were published, such as administrative roles and modules taught, but how these and the weightings involved were decided upon was undisclosed.

Some suggested that transparency and knowledge of average weightings had made some 'hungry to pick up tasks'. In general the university view was that openness and transparency was better than 'secretiveness', and that the closed 'black box' system used by some heads was problematic. It was also felt that models needed to be comprehensive in their listing of individuals' duties or they might not fairly represent their work levels. Additional factors mentioned by staff in relation to transparency included the ethos of the department and its physical environment, which were both felt to affect staff awareness of the situation and their trust in institutional operations.

In relation to the issue of equity, some heads acknowledged the impossibility of bringing all workloads to within 10 per cent of the average, simply because some staff had the capacity to 'thrive on significant workloads'. Other staff members did feel that within their department there were always one or two staff that had lighter loads and levels of responsibility, and that this might be because they were 'more vociferous in their complaints'. They also noted that it was hard to address the issue of staff slightly lightly loaded. Another issue raised was that ambitious staff perhaps 'need to be quite selfish' and avoid the large administrative roles. This was felt to be an area of inequality, but it was generally felt that workload models were a positive thing, as they avoided the 'grace and favour' distribution of workloads.

Flexibility

There was not an explicit university policy on sabbaticals, but many faculties had a facility to offer them through application, after completion of a certain number of years' service. The application usually needed to fit in with the strategic plans of the faculty involved. Some faculties felt that a sabbatical could be offered after staff had finished a major administrative job so that research work could be revitalised. In other areas, large amounts of external funding facilitated the sabbatical application. Heads were receptive to the strategic management of work so that its distribution could assist research activity.

Head of School's Role and the Consultation Process.

In relation to the head's own work there was some feeling that they had not in the past had adequate preparation for the demands placed upon them. One described their first term as 'pretty agonising', working long hours as they tried to balance various demands from staff, students, budgets and administrative tasks. It had taken many individuals a long while to learn how to manage and control the work. Some mentioned the variety of small problems that were time-consuming to resolve and noted how input into problems early on helped avoid the formal route that 'kills everybody' and where 'nobody wins'. Other heads talked of the time spent representing the needs of their department and how within the university there had been a 'certain sniffiness' about their discipline, suggesting that there was no equity within certain practices, such as award ceremonies.

New schemes were to be implemented in the university in relation to the appointment of heads. Previously staff had elected them, but the new vice-chancellor had introduced a process where candidates were required to apply for a post, and provide a vision statement, so that staff might comment on to the high-level selection committee. Another new system relating to heads was a new training programme for those reviewing other staff. In the past training had been patchy across the university and it was hoped that this programme would bring more consistency.

The levels of consultation offered by heads were greatly variable. Some consulted widely about the weightings to be given to certain roles, even looking to other schools for comparability. Consultations about the work to be done was often quite fulsome with discussions of a 'wish list' starting around February; however, in some departments the heads were a little more dictatorial. There was also a feeling that the process of workload allocation could be more problematic than the model itself, if, for example, things were imposed and not consulted on widely. Staff felt happier when models were introduced as a first approximation with a view to review and consult further later.

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Workloads

A survey of staff had revealed that workloads were a major issue, although it did not identify which particular roles were the problem. From the interview evidence, staff felt that administration was a major area of work and many tried to find support staff to help them with the larger roles. It had also emerged that there were 'peaks and troughs' in the workloads through the year.

Those managing workloads seemed to be using the allocation models to see how individuals were loaded in relation to the school average or even how schools were loaded in relation to the rest of the faculty. This gave heads and deans useful information to use in response to resource requests.

Teaching

Staff seemed happy with their teaching and there was a feeling that professors should continue to lecture, even if on a limited basis, in order that students benefit from their expertise. However, there were a few less positive comments, and one of the areas flagged up repeatedly in relation to teaching was that of assessment, for which workloads were exacerbated by the relative popularity of certain modules which made it hard to balance the loads involved. Student numbers had also increased dramatically in some schools. A variety of approaches were used to tackle the issue. Some schools were using second marking as a means to balance loads and others treated the marking loads independently of lecturing to determine the overall time allocation needed. The issue surrounding exam marking was made worse by the exam timetable coming out too late to manage any problems, and exam board timings squeezed the available space further.

Course validations were also mentioned, both internal and from professional bodies. Although these inputs were welcomed in that they monitored aspects such as staff student ratios, it was acknowledged that they were time-consuming.

Some staff, often those from institutions that had merged with the university, were on different forms of contract such as 'Academic Related' or 'Teaching only Fellows'. These staff had no contractual obligation to research, however there was a move to bring them into academic contracts, although it was acknowledged that this might have had implications for the RAE exercise.

Research

The university strategy suggested there should be a drive to improve staff-student ratios and decrease teaching time, and that this could then help to shift resources into research. The university was felt to be 'more hands on' now in its approach to the RAE exercise. Regular reviews of staff in relation to their research activity were being undertaken, with 'ratings and gradings' applied. Objections in certain quarters had been raised to 'secret meetings deciding that x is a one star researcher', there were feelings also that the criteria about RAE submission were meant to be based on outputs not on people as the 'currency'. How this approach was interpreted depended on the context of the school and the approach of the head. In those schools with less of a tradition of research, although there were aspirations, it was generally less of a 'driver' to activity. In other schools the heads had interviewed staff to record their activity and to suggest objectives, although it was felt that there was a limit to how much could be achieved in the time available. Some said they were hoping to 'recruit a star person, if we can find one'. One head admitted that in carrying out the 'grading' process some anxiety had been caused to staff and some had been hurt to find themselves not figuring in the RAE process. Other more research active staff thought that the process 'hadn't been heavy or daunting', although there was a feeling that the specific area of research involved could determine the ease both of gaining funding and of publishing in 'top journals', where applied research findings were not usually seen as appropriate.

In terms of time allocated to research, approaches again varied; some gave a blanket 40 per cent time allocation to new staff that was then reviewed to take into account research outputs and awards. Another approach, in response to 'diminishing resources' from research funding, was to give 'differentiated allocations' through research grading of staff. Schools were also increasingly focusing their research into given areas and most of the resources were felt to be limited to these teams.

Administration

Generally, administrative loads were felt to be heavy although some schools had employed more support staff in an attempt to ease them. In relation to the loads involved, some consultation had taken place in order to set weightings for roles and generally there was a consensus that these were pretty accurate, although

certain roles such as director of undergraduate or postgraduate studies were felt to be very time-consuming. Some heads suggested that such roles were a lever in the promotion process and this had helped with staff reluctance to take them on. Generally, there was a feeling that although the workload allocation model needed to be simple, there did need to be recognition for work done at university level, on committees and so on, as it could be very time-consuming.

Problems

There had been no formal grievances over workloads; the approach of heads had been to sort any problems out quickly. Where problems had occurred they had been related to a poor consultation process over the workload allocation model, meaning there was no 'buy in' by staff. Another issue which had arisen was that of staff working across schools or faculties where heads had not worked together to co-ordinate an individual's workload. Increases in student numbers and large marking loads had also been problematic. There was an overall feeling that the increase in size of the university (it had tripled over the last couple of decades) had caused a lot of extra work, mainly administrative activity to facilitate mergers, but also because staff-student ratios had deteriorated in that time.

Individual Response

Following on from the above section on problems, in relation to coping, union representatives had recorded an increase in complaints over the last three years from 40, to 120 cases last year. These cases required a fairly substantial amount of input and were based around issues of pressure, which might not necessarily be workload-related; they could be to do with problems with a staff manger for example. The problems noted in relation to work often revolved around marking issues and 'pinch points' where the time available to accomplish the necessary tasks was wholly insufficient. As one noted, it would take '24 hours a day basically to get that marking done within time'. Most heads found ways to compromise on this point, but if they did not, staff felt they could 'go stir crazy' trying to cope.

Senior staff reported working long hours into the weekends and evenings, but felt that a high degree of autonomy helped to compensate for this. They described how they managed through being selective and delegating. Some heads with little previous management experience described how it was hard to cope at first. They found that thinking strategically under pressure was quite stressful and told how it took quite a time before they actively managed to control their work. Lecturing staff felt that at times their personal life could suffer, especially at peak workload times in the year. However, the staff interviewed also reported that they enjoyed a busy work environment, and the autonomy to structure and manage their portfolio of work. The issue of 'thinking time' again emerged as an area that was often compromised, and one said of tasks, 'I would rather get them done and not be 100 per cent right than leave them undone'. In relation to performance it was widely agreed that staff varied enormously in their capacity to produce good work quickly, and in their perceptions of how long a given task would take.

Human resources ran a 'wellbeing' survey every year so that they could monitor trends. One of their findings was that academic staff had significantly higher stress levels than other staff groups. Another interesting finding was that these levels varied between faculties, so that some faculties had double the average rating of others. The survey's authors concluded that there was a need to look more closely at how staff were managed. Another issue revealed in the survey was a perceived lack of support from other academic colleagues. As one reported, 'the academic culture that relied on collegiality and mutual support - there are cracks in that'. However a university-wide survey that asked questions relating to trust in one's immediate manager, found that over 70 per cent of staff gave positive scorings.

In relation to satisfaction, staff seemed to enjoy the variety of work and their autonomy in managing it. Senior staff cited research and mentoring colleagues as rewarding, as well as problem solving and working on university initiatives. Lecturers also found research and interaction with students satisfying.

Organisation

The structure of the university had changed recently with the number of schools being reduced and faculty deans managing budgets and negotiating with the 'university centre'. Because of this, there was a growing desire to get some consistency on workload allocation models between the faculties' and schools. The university operated a resource allocation model that had been stable and

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provided schools with information about the income they generated and about the charges that had been applied. The system was transparent with schools also able to see information on other schools. There was a desire to avoid 'short term fluctuations' and to smooth out finances. Although the university did not see itself as rich, it had reported quite a good surplus last year.

The university had a strategic plan and there had been requests for comments from the staff on its strategic propositions to inform the process. Feelings on this were mixed, some felt it had been a 'bottom-up approach', whilst others felt that not much had changed as a result of staff comment. 'away days' had also been held in relation to this, but in some areas attendance had not been high. There was a feeling that the allegiances of staff were centred mainly in their school, with the 'university centre' being seen as the 'seat of power'.

It was felt that one of the main aims of the university strategy was to indicate to staff where efforts should be placed, and to encourage them to engage with a collective process. Some staff felt that the sheer size of the university had led to a loss of collegiality; others reported that in the past, competition between departments for income from student electives had created a situation where staff were 'at each other's throats'. Some felt that the new leadership wanted to change this atmosphere and to 'strengthen the core' of the university, with a common set of principles and practices. Various changes had been made: Council size had been reduced and committees had been 'streamlined'. Some, such as the Academic Development Committee had been abolished altogether, and others simply reduced in number. Some of the reasons cited for these changes were that the new, smaller committees made staff feel more committed and influential and that the old, large, hierarchical decision making structures were unwieldy and inefficient. However, some felt that there were negative effects of this streamlining, with less opportunity for staff to engage and shape the university. It was also now felt to be even more vital that Senate provided a forum for full discussion on these issues.

A desire to for staff who actively want to lead, rather than take the job on sufferance, had led to initiatives such as 'Tomorrow's Leaders', where those identified at review as having potential could go to workshops to help develop these leadership qualities. Further, a 'Leaders Forum' of heads from all areas met monthly to discuss strategic plans. In relation to the vice-chancellor, staff felt that he had been very visible, actively striving to meet all staff over the last year, and they were aware of his plans. Some felt pleased with moves to encourage diversity, but were less sure about the research targets and the criteria used to assess this activity.

University Systems

The university carried out a biannual review and development scheme for staff, but some staff felt that it was 'fairly haphazard' in its operation, with some not wanting to make use of it. A new process of appraisal and performance review was under development. It was proposed that this would run yearly and a new programme was being developed to train reviewers.

In relation to promotion schemes the criteria for moving to senior lecturer level were usually a presumptive level at research, teaching and administration, although a new route allowed for higher-level performance in just the two latter areas. Despite this official stance there was a feeling that 'to get on you probably need to be quite selfish' and not take on any of the big administrative roles.

The university had provided an extensive training programme to support teaching and learning, research, and knowledge transfer and many of the new staff were undertaking teaching certificates. For heads there were new courses on offer covering financial, leadership, legal, disciplinary and appraisal issues.

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SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 6

DEPARTMENT 1

Department Context

- School of Healthcare.
- 160 staff academics of which only approx. 25 were on academic contracts, the rest were academic related.
- School covered 6 different professional groups. Care taken to avoid group boundaries being problematic.
- Team teaching and teaching across modules coordinated by group leaders.
- All staff taught, but only academic staff required to research.
- Research focused around 4 key areas.
- Sabbaticals infrequent.
- Professional revalidation of course time a consuming element.

HoD/S Context

- Still did some teaching, but unable to find time to research.
- Strong wish to bring school academic leadership rather than previous management control.
- Worked on WLA model, desire to keep it simple and to help with school strategic decision making.
- Worked to stop divisions between various professions and academic and academic related staff.

Allocation Methods

- The model was being completed and the roles had not been collated together.
- Drive to ensure that model did not drive work, i.e. 'done the hours, so finished the work idea'.
- It included a workload database where information was collated with a fixed element (credit rating and module level) and a variable element (number of students).
- This gave a total tariff for that module that could then, on the database, be divided between the staff that taught on it.
- An algorithm was used to create a rating tariff for preparation, delivery and assessment.
- To avoid over-complication (and to encourage appropriate modes) all the mode of delivery carried the same credit rating (i.e. lectures or practicals).

DEPARTMENT 2

Department Context

- Institute of Psychological Sciences.
- 34 academic staff nearly all on academic contracts.
- Student numbers had grown rapidly in recent years and so new staff had been recruited partly through directives from the accrediting British Psychological Society.
- Feel fairly autonomous within the faculty. Research doing well.
- Teaching input also on Joint Honours programmes, but had reduced this because of high workloads.

HoD/S Context

- Experienced long-term head, senior management team met monthly to align with organisation's strategies.
- Inherited a WLA system that he had refined.
- In the past another staff member developed a complex model, but it never became operational, it did highlight though a comprehensive scope of work.
- Knew that still 'some rippling unrest' on student numbers and admin.
- Saw review process as useful, but not all staff saw it as so.
- Admin roles presented as a way to promotion.
- Had been interviewing staff regarding RAE submission.
- Devolved finances etc. brought large admin workload, but appreciated the clear principles and leadership from the new VC, for example on mechanisms for appointing new HoS.
- Saw the 10 credit module as inefficient.
- Felt personally had got better grip on work, but for a long while the volume and range of activities difficult, performed at 80%.
- Kept own research active, although had diminished.

Allocation Methods

- Faculty desire to have standardised model in place.
- Basic system now that staff delivered two modules, the subject of which was determined by the HoS, in consultation with staff, in relation to aspects such as specialisms and competence. Marking for modules could vary a lot as some units were more popular, so accommodated this inequality through varying the 2nd marking allocation.
- On top of this tutorials and project supervision were shared out evenly amongst staff.
- Admin roles worked through a SMT consultation process, this area had the most variability in terms of volume.
- All staff were expected to research.
- The actual workings of the process were not very transparent, but the results were and were all on the website.

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TABLE 11

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 6 (CONTINUED)

DEPARTMENT 1	DEPARTMENT 2
Allocation Methods (Continued) • Extra allowance was given for new modules. Individuals then get their report. • This would then be available to them and probably only the group leader. • The tariff for admin roles had been calibrated through consultation process, and would be tested. • For researching staff notional tariff would be determined for the various activities by the director of research, up to 40% of allocation envisaged. • Scholarship time and a 'catch all' category for other activities would also be included. • The workload results would be in hours relative to the whole workload. • Problems were that often up to 20 people input to a module, and some modules were complex with no immediate data base solutions. • Belief that most staff would be within normal distribution with just a few 'outliers'. • Staff and their group leader would see their profile, but not wholly transparent.	
Staff Consequences/Outcomes • New staff to have a reduced workload allocation, but as yet not factored in. • Group leaders saw their role in nurturing staff, and having an awareness of their workloads and pressures. • New review procedure to help with this aspect.	**Staff Consequences/Outcomes** • Appreciated flexibility to use a day a week on research. • General feeling of trust in the HoS. • View that although some admin roles were higher than others that generally there was a good level of equity. • Feeling that those who wanted to advance avoided these roles, this perhaps contrary to HoS's view on it in relation to promotion. • Some unhappiness last year on student numbers, but situation improved through new staff recruitment. • Well supported on research. • Some feeling that new university initiatives not appropriate to their unit, for example in relation to diversity of student intake, belief that cultural differences made 'psychology' unattractive to some nationalities.

5.7 Case Study 7

(Note: the name of the new faculty structure could be identifiable, so has been labelled here generically as the 'new university structure'.)

Policy

The general stance of the university in relation to workload allocation was to leave it to the discretion of heads of school to allocate work. Staff are required to perform such duties as are reasonable, as required by their line manager. However, the university was in the process of developing a new Human Resource strategy.

Allocation Methods

Although there were some schools that operated comprehensive workload allocation models, those that were involved in this study operated through informal consultation mechanisms, often based on historical precedent. In those instances, weightings for work had been agreed on for the various contact hours and then distributed. Even with such informal methods, some heads had databases that held information on work types, module level, assessment mechanism and student numbers in relation to teaching load and information also on research outputs and income. This allowed the head to make informed decisions on work allocation, but the data were not combined in any formal or numerical way to give an overall loading for staff. As one noted, it was relatively easy to quantify teaching work, but research was rather harder to assess. Another issue was that the research/teaching balance created a 'chicken and egg' situation where those individuals who were not giving research outputs got heavy teaching loads, thus making it more difficult for them to perform in the research sphere. Another aspect that had created problems was the input into external activities, which some felt had not been sufficiently recognised.

Administrative jobs were shared out as equally as possible and heads again reported the necessity for consultation on this process, as although some roles were universally unpopular, others were more subject to personal preference. Generally, attempts were made to give new staff lighter loads with incremental increases. Staff were also supported in working towards their teaching qualifications. It appeared that the university also monitored staff workloads during the probationary period.

Transparency and Equity

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The level of transparency seemed to vary and in some instances this was a function of department size. In the smaller departments, staff were often quite aware of the workloads of others and tasks such as administrative roles were often worked out in department meetings on a blackboard. Staff in these situations welcomed the openness and found it helpful. In other departments that relied more on the head's judgement, there was less openness and clarity about loads, although heads still felt that staff had a 'fair idea of what their colleagues are doing as well' and so 'keep a healthy eye on it'.

In relation to transparency and equity, there were feelings that the new changes to university structure would necessitate more open procedures. Staff from Human Resources felt that more transparency could be gained either through clearer guidelines or from more numerical systems. Another view from a senior member of staff was that heads of these new structures would need to be aware of all their departments' workings and that it would be difficult if there was a discrepancy between them. It was felt that if workloads were not seen to be equitable this could 'corrode morale'. Many also felt that in small groups, staff could have an intuitive feel for each other's loads, while in larger groups there was a need 'to create a structure rather than just depending on intuition'.

The feedback from staff themselves showed that some felt happy in relation to transparency and equity, whilst others felt that there were inequalities, especially in relation to the differentials between marking loads that resulted from widely varying class sizes. Another concern was that if one did feel overloaded it was hard to provide any evidence of this as there was no mutually agreed idea of reasonable load, so it could only be shown from a position relative to others. As one commented about workloads, they 'are seldom based on anything measurable'. Another recurring comment was that 'amenable people' got loaded more heavily, and an informed source also suggested that some felt that certain administrative roles tended to fall to women, as it was assumed that they were 'good communicators'.

Flexibility

The use of sabbaticals varied between schools. Some were making active use of them strategically in relation to RAE pressures. Others said that sabbaticals were 'few and far between'. In the latter cases this was often owing to staff pressures from early retirements. Some schools that took a full year sabbatical, rather than semester, spread them

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over two academic years, i.e. the last semester of one year followed by the first of the next. Other schools reported that they made use of the Arts and Humanities Research Council scheme that matched an institution investment to fund sabbaticals.

Head of Department's role and Consultation Process.
Heads of department were elected by the Board of Studies, usually for a term of three years. Some felt that as long as their finances and RAE submissions looked allright then they would be left alone to manage. However where this was not the case, meetings would be arranged with the relevant pro-vice-chancellor and difficult questions might be asked, such as why a certain non-research active member of staff was employed.

Heads themselves reported that they negotiated with staff, shifting jobs around if staff complained in an effort to find a compromise. Some staff felt that this system worked quite well; others felt that in these negotiations they always seemed to come away with rather more work than at the start.

Workloads
It seemed that a lot of staff were working long hours, with evening work being commonplace. Reactions to this varied; some felt that it was fine to work like this to cope with special projects, but that it was not a good long-term practice. Others felt working long hours was 'not a martyr complex', but often related to the satisfaction of doing the job well. Certain tasks were also difficult to fit into office hours, as one head noted, 'I think a lot of grant proposals get written in the middle of the night, because those things don't fit in easily during the day'. The open-endedness of the work was something which staff at all levels were conscious of.

Staff noted variation in the amount of work, both within and across years, for instance at exam times or in years where higher proportions of staff were taking sabbaticals. Staff said that they managed their research by shifting it into non-teaching periods. Further, most departments had managed to provide a day a week free from teaching responsibilities to support research work.

In terms of actual contact hours, these varied considerably depending on research activity. In one department the average was 90 hours contact teaching a year, but ranging up to 180 for those staff less involved with research. Marking, assessment and student projects were not included in this figure. Staff in other departments had contact hours of about ten or eleven hours a week, and one senior member of staff, with many other responsibilities, had five hours teaching a week timetabled for the coming year.

The doubling of the credit rating of modules had been carried out because it was felt that the 'multiplicity of small take-up modules' was inefficient in terms of staff time and timetabling. It had been suggested that this would reduce teaching loads, yet in the short term it had actually increased loads, as staff had to prepare new lectures to fit the larger module size. Another factor that staff felt affected their workloads was the size of their department, as small departments had fewer support staff to help and shared out administrative roles between a smaller group. Heads commonly used support staff to alleviate workloads in areas such as admissions and teaching administration. Technical staff in science departments were also felt to be in much demand.

Teaching
There was quite widespread comment on the disparities between teaching loads in relation to the running of poorly subscribed modules. Union and teaching staff commented that this could lead to inequalities that had repercussions beyond the actual teaching, to the space available for research and to the esteem that was subsequently granted. In relation to this issue, senior staff were also aware of the inefficiencies of operating these modules. There was a feeling that departments had to look beyond what they had always provided and consider modules that were feasible and viable. It was thought that the new university structures could possibly assist with this through integrating certain taught areas. For example, in relation to first year, generic modules could be provided, to an extent, across these units rather than from the department. This area was felt to need refreshing in recognition of the broader student intake.

In relation to this issue of students, some staff had heard suggestions that 'over-teaching' was taking place in some areas of the university. However, staff did not feel this was the case, in fact as one noted, 'the people that have been short changed at the moment are the students'. The 'wretched RAE' was felt to be responsible for a lot of this pressure. Staff felt that they were not providing the standard of teaching they had a few years ago, for example, some had not been updating their notes. Further, the 'open door' policy towards students was felt to

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have been eroded. Some felt more teaching assistants were needed. In some areas such as Science, PhD students were used as demonstrators, but the amount of work that they could do was obviously limited because of their own research work.

An area in which some departments had reduced pressures in relation to teaching was by not having an exam board meeting between the first and second semester. This meant that although they needed to get results back to the students, they could prioritise their marking with third-year work taking priority.

Research

The new strategy for the university had been to move from being a teaching-focused to a research-led, university. This had caused some pressures on staff because of tight RAE deadlines, and some felt that they were 'close to the wire' on publication deadlines. Heads of Departments were responding to this by making 'tactical judgements' and taking teaching responsibilities away from some people, such as major research players and 'borderline' staff, so that they could complete their research. Some departments, such as Languages, had responded by grouping together for joint submissions for research funding. The university's approach had been to enter a selective submission and set up a task group to organise this. The pro-vice-chancellors for research, and teaching and learning had together devised a strategic response, reinforcing the message that these two areas should be 'complementary activities' within the university.

Such a strong focus on research had caused some problems for heads when preparing their draft RAE submissions. It had meant that in certain departments some staff would not be entered for the RAE. Heads felt that this had to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, as some individuals would not be surprised or worried, while others might be hurt. The question that these managers thought would concern them next was, 'what is the role of these other staff in the department?'. Some felt that they might try in the longer term to engage them in larger, more successful research groups, but others felt that they would have to take on more teaching. Union representatives had noted that in some cases staff had been approached to take voluntary severance.

Staff responses to this situation varied considerably, obviously depending partly on their research record, but also importantly on the nature of their department. In some departments there was an expectation that all staff researched, in others there was no long tradition of research, and in still others there were successful researchers and other staff not attaining the same research outputs. Members of the Research Committee had carried out interviews with staff in this latter position to discuss how they could best manage their performance. As one staff member noted in relation to the pressures on staff, 'the RAE has got a lot to answer for', further suggesting that 'we need more research going on into the experience that people have at work'. Another noted that research needed quality time and with high teaching loads this left little time to spare, so that, 'at the weekends, I am so tired from everything else'.

Administration

Although this area had caused high workloads, efforts had been made to reduce these. Heads were using various tactics to reduce loads such as breaking roles down into smaller units and employing support staff to manage various elements. If certain roles were seen universally as unpleasant then they were allocated for a fixed term only. From the university stance the introduction of faculty-type units would, it was hoped, 'professionalise administration' and relieve departments of some of this work. However, staff within departments were unsure what this would mean and which roles would be retained, for example in the case of Admissions Tutor.

Problems

Generally, problems seemed to result from the tension between teaching and research workloads. Mainly this was in the way of 'niggles', but the union had found problems in one department where 'three people were targeted for voluntary severance' because of low research outputs, who were in other respects the 'workhorses of the department', with high teaching and administrative loads. Although this matter was resolved, the union felt that others in this position were probably unsettled by a similar threat. Human Resources acknowledged that in the restructuring areas, 'we are in severance deal mode', and reinforced the importance of knowing the criteria on which any such judgements were made.

Individual Response

How individuals responded to high workloads was felt to vary enormously, as one said, 'some people thrive on overwork'. This of course does not take into account the importance of work-life balance, and it was also felt that 'if you talk to their families they might not be very happy'.

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Heads of departments noted that it was difficult not to overload the 'competent' and that, 'some people make an art form of making themselves unsuitable for certain jobs'. What staff did agree on was the autonomy in the job and how this allowed them to work relatively when they wished, so this suited both 'the night owls' and 'the morning person'.

In terms of satisfaction heads often reported happiness at the way they were involved in managing things, the 'projects and schemes' and keeping the whole department, students, staff, teaching and research moving on. One stated, though, that managing academics was challenging, like 'managing 26 small companies', whereas support staff were usually 'a joy to work with'. Lecturers often felt that it was the variety of work, the teaching and the research, that they enjoyed.

In relation to coping, the university had run surveys on this topic from the Occupational Health Unit and generally it was felt that there were support mechanisms for staff with stress related problems. Both heads and staff recognised the need to prioritise work and not to exceed the quality requirements of any given job. To help managers with these challenges a new training scheme for heads had been recently started.

Organisation

The location of the university, without a large student catchment area to help support it, was felt to make the task of financially managing the university more difficult. To meet the challenges facing them the new vice-chancellor had brought a change in management style and had, with the Executive, produced a new strategic plan for the university. The new direction was focused on research, but also teaching excellence, with commitments to 'third mission' activities. To achieve this the institution felt it needed to recruit and retain the best staff and students, and a new structure of six units replacing the old faculties was going to be introduced. To further support this strategic approach, committees had been streamlined. In the past the university had operated with a lot of committees and a fairly cumbersome decision making structure, where apparently 'nothing happened'. So, executive management had been strengthened and smaller groups were now taking decisions, with less discussion and consultation. Despite anxieties over communication issues, most respondents acknowledged the need for change and felt some 'grudging respect' for the new approach. The old system, although friendly, was viewed as 'unrealistic in the current climate'.

The Executive Group felt that they were working coherently and collaboratively on projects and were working to disseminate information about strategy to various working groups within the university. The vice-chancellor himself was doing so at departmental and board of studies 'away days'. The Human Resource department were also working actively to unite their strategy with the institutional strategy, so that issues such as staff development could be linked into the plan. As noted above, communication of some of these changes was an issue for some members of staff. Some felt that heads worked hard to keep them informed of the developments, but still felt these were 'imposed' on them. Surveys had been done within the university that highlighted this problem. A new director of communication had been appointed and there was a belief among senior staff that once staff could see this strategy working, then perceptions would change and this would be motivating.

One HoD talked of his dilemma, in one sense wanting to inform more junior staff of the urgency of their financial predicament, on the other not wanting to worry them unnecessarily. He felt they perhaps needed to realise that 'radical change is essential, it is not an optional extra'. Such financial imperatives were found to be worrying some junior staff in those departments reporting problems with recruiting students. It was reported that the actual model for the department had been developed from a model designed by another very successful unit within the university. The general approach was felt to be that of concentrating resources by not operating small or widely ranging modules within departments. Shadow management boards had been set up to prepare for the changes in structure and to 'rationalise and improve and avoid overlaps'. There were suggestions that quite a few of the departments, set to move together into the new units, were not altogether happy about the proposed subject mix.

University Systems

A new system of academic performance reviews had been approved by Council and would soon be operational. The new system would ensure that staff were clear about their objectives and would allow managers to 'identify shortfalls in performance as well as achievement'. It was also felt that it would help to identify with more clarity, both over- and under-burdened staff. Individuals felt that the previous system of review was 'a bit hit and miss in the past' and too focused just on individual objectives.

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Another procedure that had recently been changed was the promotions policy. Here, to accommodate clinical professional staff, individuals could be promoted to at least senior lecturer level, based on distinctive performance in two out of three work types of teaching, research and administration. Staff originally from the Nursing College were on different types of contract without a research element included; there was differing views on whether they had all converted to the standard lecturer contract. The Human Resources department also acknowledged that there had been discussions about 'teaching only' contracts. Despite this change in the promotions policy, staff and heads still had a perception that one needed to 'work quite a lot harder to get promoted on excellence in teaching and administration'.

Work was also being carried out on the Framework Agreement. An initial model had been created and job evaluation interviews were being done for the generic groups.

TABLE 12

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 7

DEPARTMENT 1	DEPARTMENT 2
Department Context • School of Arts and Humanities with 8 departments and employing 100 academics altogether. • School was soon to become a new unit that would co-ordinate most admininstration, but academic units would stay in the department. • General feeling that this reorganisation would bring a drive for consistency/formality in allocation processes. • Also hopes that changes would bring awareness of synergies between departments. • Departments seen were Theology, Modern Languages, and English. In all pressures were felt over the RAE. • Sabbatical scheme in operation and being used actively to help staff finish projects for RAE. • Research was not in focused areas, but moves towards this. • Small departments meant little scope to share tasks. • In Theology extra work created through bilingual provision. • Modern Languages had anxieties about their future, as was hard to recruit students, so income poor, and needed to be very, 'careful with money'; input into some joint honours programmes; placements abroad also quite significant organisational tasks. • English arrived at agreed weightings for the various contact hours and then distributed across available staff.	**Department Context** • Biological Sciences, but under the new structure would be merged with two other schools from related fields with whom they had competed in the past. • Expected that management for this would be done centrally and were looking for overlap between courses for efficiency. • Present structure had 25 academic staff, numbers here had been on a downturn with early retirements, but student numbers (450) had increased. This had meant revisions in teaching provision to 'plug gaps'. • Decision made that they needed to be more strategic in teaching provision - subject too wide to teach all areas. • Felt to be operating in a 'state of flux'. Strategy group formed for the school to help with this. • Extra problems were felt to exist because of location split over two buildings. • RAE had created extra pressure. Draft submission had been done, problem seen of managing those few unsubmissable staff. • Support staff taking a lot of the admin burden, e.g. aspects of admissions. Demonstrators used for marking of first year practical work. Some work assessed by multiple-choice questions and computer assisted assessment. • Few sabbaticals because of workload pressures. • New staff did get reduced loads.
HoD/S Context • When first in the role found he worked late at the university three days a week, now settled a bit and not a 'crushing or onerous burden' as enjoyed it. RAE pressure had meant less time available for preparation of lectures. • Felt need for change, if not 'the financial implications are dire'. • Was still teaching and researching himself. • Said of the department 'we don't have shirkers'. • WLA mostly worked well, with just a few 'little niggles and tensions, because of the human condition'.	**HoD/S Context** • Still taught, and involved in student recruitment, at the time not research active. • Felt school not too big, so aware of staff loads, mixed a lot informally. • Felt that she knew who was light on their duties, but problem of personality aspect meant not easy to redress this. • Competent staff could get overloaded, and were sometimes unwilling to relinquish roles that they had invested in. • Kept an unallocated 'job in [her] pocket' ready for those sort of negotiations. • Felt that the HoS job could be lonely, as the next level up, the deans, had been abolished. • Believed that the RAE and new university structures would force changes in the WLA.

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TABLE 12

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 7 (CONTINUED)

DEPARTMENT 1

Allocation Methods

- All the departments seen allocated work through consultation.
- For teaching this was often on the 'basis of history' - who taught a module the last year.
- Administration tasks also worked out by HoD/S and in department meeting, split fairly evenly.
- Research done in the time left - usually a day a week timetabled for this.
- Balancing out on teaching tasks to accommodate fluctuations in class size.
- System seemed transparent with a good degree of trust present.

Staff Consequences/Outcomes

- Felt it to be a friendly and sociable department, students felt able to call in on staff, but controversial attempts had been made to control this by use of 'office hours'.
- Larger load at present owing to staff on sabbatical, also new staff taking a teaching qualification.
- No visible concessions for new staff.

DEPARTMENT 2

Allocation Methods

- Data base with information on teaching loads, research outputs and grant income. But it was felt that a lot of the research was 'nebulous' and hard to quantify, unlike the teaching where class size, assessment and module level were taken into account. However, this was not done through a formal model in numerical way, but rather through HoS judgement.
- Heavier loads were given to those not research active, despite a desire not to act punitively. Was aware of the danger that this would prevent these staff engaging in research in the future.
- Most staff taught across all years, and lectures and practicals were separate modules.
- Contact hours average 90 a year, but could be up to 180 if no research. On top of this staff had, on average, responsibilities for 4 undergraduate projects.
- Administration roles were allocated for a set period after consultation with HoS- aspects considered here not only ability, load, and promotion targets (eg director of teaching), but the need for fresh impetus to the task. Research in time left over. Attempts were being made to give more space for this, to meet RAE challenge and help staff to complete work.
- Not especially transparent system of WLA, but it was felt that most staff would know others' loads.

Staff Consequences/Outcomes

- Felt that there was a problem in WLA in relation to inequalities in marking loads.
- Exam time constraints could be difficult.
- Work felt to come in waves and research fitted around that.
- Pressure felt in relation to RAE to publish in 'high ranking journals'- had been 'hauled up' for consultations with heads over research outputs and alleviating teaching load to accommodate this, but really felt nothing had happened.
- Felt some uncertainty over the future of the school in relation to the new university structure.
- Felt that consultation not really working yet. Working groups had been formed, but were slow to start and felt that things 'appear from on high' and were 'imposed on us'.
- Felt that senior staff were 'beating the table and saying we must recruit more students, and be a research led university'.
- Open-endedness of work also problematic.
- Noted too that early retirements had led in some areas to large classes.
- Had seen in other universities teaching assistants used to good effect.

5.8 Case Study 8

Policy

At present no actual policy on workload allocation was in place, but a working party had been established to look at the various models used to find good practice, with the aim of establishing some norms and guidelines. In the past an attempt had been made to develop a university-wide model, but there had been problems in accommodating the needs of the different disciplines. There was a feeling that the approach would have benefited from higher-level leadership and the Vice Principal was now overseeing the current approach. Within one faculty there was a policy that each school had to operate a system or model for workload allocation, although the workings of these could vary.

Allocation Methods

The consistency of approaches across the university was described by one as 'bumpy'. This described a situation where some, such as in the Engineering and Computing Faculty, had 'sophisticated' models, while others had an 'ad hoc' system of basically dividing up the teaching and leadership roles that relied on a 'kind of traditional grandfatherly head of department'. Complications were often felt to arise because of complexity in the workloads and radically different approaches to allocation – which often precluded faculty-wide models. For example in the Health Faculty, for Nursing and Midwifery the allocations worked through the third summer trimester, whereas other models saw this as a non-teaching period. Further, within this faculty there were huge differences between schools in the nature of their work types; for example the emphasis on research between the Life Sciences and Nursing departments, and the need for differences in weightings to reflect this.

Within the models seen, the allocation of teaching duties was often worked out by a Subject Group Leader, with the heads of school then balancing out the other elements in the model such as administration and research. Weightings were often given for the size of the teaching task, in terms of assessment, preparation of new material, and the type and level of delivery, although not all models differentiated between lectures and tutorial work. In the administrative work, similar type weightings were used to reflect the size of the task, and for research, funded research was given full weighting whereas non-funded work was capped. The models used often ran on notional units that did not correspond to hours.

One of the problems faced by heads was that staff within a school were often employed on different forms of contract, some on the older FE64, others on HE2000. The main issue here was that the former had a slightly lower number of contact hours a year and longer holidays. Some heads coped with this by applying the lower contract hours to all staff, whilst acknowledging that all staff worked over their contract and allocated hours. Others kept the contracts in mind when allocating, but a lot depended upon how tolerant the group of staff were. Yet heads stressed that, despite the usefulness of the models, they did not use them 'religiously' and that 'it gives a feeling of accuracy, but I would never treat it as accurate, it can't possibly be'.

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Transparency and Equity

There was a fairly general consensus from those with a model in operation that, although it was 'by no means perfect', it was 'reasonably equitable', and that staff 'accepted it for what it is'. Others noted how the models had been 'tweaked' over time to be fairer and that it allowed staff to 'play to our own strengths or desires'. More negatively, some staff questioned not the model but 'the reality of the allocations' in relation to the time allotted to do a certain aspect of work. Heads had also noted some problems with certain members of staff complaining about their allocation. These staff often complained about their allocation comparing it to another school's weighting for the same sort of work. Heads felt that this was a possible downside of a very open process, but that such comparisons were out of context and did not show how in other areas the weightings were more favourable.

In relation to transparency there was no university policy, but those systems seen were totally transparent and published online, 'everybody can access, everybody knows who is doing what'. Staff seemed to feel positive about this and heads acknowledged that it eliminated accusations of favouritism, but the model still allowed for 'strategic judgements' and so they had be able to 'articulate why a decision is taken', if they could not, then management weaknesses could be revealed.

Flexibility

Although there was space for development activities under the new contract, there was no university policy on sabbaticals; in fact there was a feeling that the resource level of the university precluded them. However, some

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heads had invented their own and were trying, through long term planning, to accommodate special projects.

Head of Department's Role and Consultation Process

Heads reported on the wide range of different tasks that they were responsible for. As one noted, 'I was just told "you are responsible". I hadn't realised that [I was] to be responsible for so much'. It was felt to be 'a shock' for which the limited training given (after appointment) had not prepared them. The increasing burden of financial accountability as schools got larger through faculty restructuring, was also discussed. Others spoke of how time-consuming staff grievances were and how 'extraordinarily destabilising and upsetting'. Both staff and the university were felt to have certain expectations of heads, and presumptions of both knowledge and agreement with past decisions.

Heads felt that they managed to fulfil the roles of representing their schools' interests to their dean and of interpreting and relaying university strategies to their staff. In terms of how staff responded to this, some felt that the consultation process worked constructively with staff actively engaging in the process; others felt that, in areas such as the review of the workload allocation model, staff were reluctant to engage in a working party, preferring 'to complain about it afterwards'.

Workloads

Loads did seem to vary between schools as a result of differing staffing and resource levels. For example, one school seen had very high staff student ratios whilst another in the same Faculty was able to operate with a 'slack of ten per cent'. Some felt that if the faculty was examined as a whole, the budgets and staffing level might balance as some schools' courses were not as popular as they had been. However, this had caused some tensions between schools, with a feeling that others were 'getting it easier'. As one noted, 'workload models are fine to measure within schools, but nobody had got their head around how it works between schools'. The faculty response was to use part-time staff, but found recruiting good, qualified people was a problem. There was a general awareness between the schools of each other's position in relation to staffing. Problems were often exacerbated by high recruitment levels (staff-student ratios in one group ran at 40-45:1). Heads tried to keep within the various contract limits in their allocations for their staff, who they generally felt were very tolerant. For themselves their attitude seemed to be, 'whatever time is needed I put in'. Staff seemed to feel that, 'the university has required us to do more and more with less and less', and that these increases in teaching and administration had led to negative impacts on their research. It was felt that this problem extended to all staff, and there was concern among some that students would suffer. Staff were unhappy that pressures of work meant it took them too long to give students feedback on their work. The Human Resources department felt that the university was 'pretty lean academically' and that many academics were working beyond their contracted hours. Some schools acknowledged that standards set by professional accrediting bodies could be used constructively to exert pressure in relation to student care.

Teaching

Some schools had experienced problems with student recruitment and this had resulted in a 'disparity of students', and failure rates in the intake becoming problematic. Other schools, facing the opposite problem of high recruitment, were looking at commonality between courses in order to increase efficiency. These departments were, as one individual noted, 'victims of our own success'. Other measures that were being contemplated were the capping of module sizes and postgraduate numbers in well-subscribed areas. Some felt there was a danger that staff could 'over-teach', but one of the most commonly cited issues was that of assessment, especially the crucial period between exams and the module boards. One member of staff told how another with large classes had such a tight marking schedule that he calculated that it was 'physically impossible' to do the task, 'even if he worked for 24 hours a day'.

The introduction of a fixed block timetable system was also discussed. It was hoped this would create more stability, so that students would know when certain classes would run, and that such a system would prove attractive to part-time students. Another aspect of the 'blocks' was that they would allow staff to use the time as they wished, for example between lectures and tutorials, and that, further, an hour at the end of the session would be used for the lecturers to be in their room for consultation purposes. The 'university centre' was keen that the stability of this system would not preclude flexibility of delivery, for example allowing for continuing professional development activities to be timetabled.

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Administration

Some staff reported that although certain administration tasks were branded as being good for promotion, in reality this was not often the case and staff often 'backed off' from them. One told of how an important administration role had 'fatally wounded my promotion prospects'. The reason given for this was that this individual's research suffered as a result of the activity. Another said, 'my colleagues and I feel that all our processes are driven by administrative needs'. An example of this was the early demands for examination papers to be entered, before staff felt that they had really been able to consider the assessment needs of the students.

Another area that had caused disquiet were the allowances given for administrative tasks, it was felt that they were often 'not an accurate replica' of the time needed. Further, staff felt that they had become 'more and more accountable', and one stressed, 'I don't want to be an administrator, I am an academic'.

Research

There was a general feeling that although schools varied significantly, the university did not have, overall, a strong tradition of research. It was felt that what did occur was mostly at the Knowledge Transfer end of the spectrum, which had been very successful in some schools. The university had begun a drive to encourage research, and allowances within workload models were being used to direct activities in this area. However, since the last RAE some schools had been forced to reduce the allowances given, especially as staff had become more established in the research work. Greater distinction was now being drawn between funded and unfunded work and, for example, allowances for the latter were being capped.

Those staff that were not research-active were given the opportunity to discuss their situation with the Research Committee, so that they could have support if they felt they wanted to change direction. One felt that recruiting strong research-active staff was a 'cultural challenge' for the university. Another suggested that although a few might be 'a bit uptight about the RAE' for most it just 'passed them by'. One senior member of staff summed up the difference between teaching and research as, 'invest a pound in research you get three pounds back, invest a pound in teaching you get 95p back'.

Problems

In some schools, staff were felt to be tolerant of the work allocation system, not comparing between themselves on loads, just accepting that all were working hard. As a comparison, one head noted with surprise, 'how vocal other parts of the university are'. In some schools heads noted that staff wanted clarification on weightings or adjustment to their allocation, some compared allowances with other schools, some even took up Grievance Procedures. Human Resource staff felt that it was rare for Grievance Procedures to occur in areas where there was a model, as the complaint was usually around 'the judgement of a manager, rather than the model itself'. They also felt that despite the success of the models, staff in those schools without one were not generally demanding a model either. Staff themselves felt that most problems arose from the sheer volume of work, as one noted 'the model is good in theory…..but in practice at times it is not acted upon'.

Individual Response

High workloads had been problematic for some members of staff. High staff-student ratios were felt to be 'sustainable in the very short term', and there were anxieties that it made a school vulnerable if, for example, any staff went off sick. In general it was felt that workload allocation models balanced over a year, but that the teaching element occurred within the a 26 week period, and this caused 'pinch points', especially around exam times. However, staff enjoyed their work, the new initiatives, the research and generally working with people, as one said, ' the primary object becomes people'. Another felt that the student always came first in work priorities, 'the student is the customer'. In relation to coping with large workloads, the autonomy and variety of the work was often cited as a means of managing stress, although the resourcefulness of the individual was also felt to be crucial. Compromises, when made, were often in the area of research.

The university had taken the problem of stress seriously and a working party on stress amelioration had been formed as it was felt that there was 'a lot of stress' in the organisation. One factor often mentioned in relation to this was repeated resource cuts over the last seven years. A senior staff member suggested that the organisation was 'stretched', partly through 'strategies to generate surplus', and that this might mean that 'stress levels will squeak'. An

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audit of stress by consultant Occupational Psychologists was going to be carried out. Surveys on the issue had also been planned looking at workload issues, but also focusing on areas that could actually be addressed, such as the appraisal process.

Organisation

The university was about to undergo a restructuring, involving a reduction from four to three faculties with fewer, larger, schools within them. At senior management level there were to be changes too, with the appointment of another vice-principal to bring that number up to three. The three deans would also have associate deans to work across the faculties in areas such as academic development and knowledge transfer partnerships. Some staff felt that these changes could improve communication and management within the university. There had been some criticism from staff about these latter areas. Heads of school had made efforts to keep their staff informed and at briefing sessions to emphasise university priorities and to suggest ways that the schools might respond to them. However, they recognised that for staff to be involved there needed to be 'ownership' of issues. One member suggested that a lot of staff responses related to their origins as a polytechnic. It was argued that the culture which had developed meant staff were good at 'implementing the defined task', but were cautious about constructively contributing, preferring to wait for the 'next command boss'. Along with this came calls for changes at senior lecturer level with a greater emphasis on these individuals taking management responsibilities. The degree to which this occurred was felt to vary considerably across the university and it was felt that training could help this be made more consistent.

Staff responses revealed the other side of this issue, suggesting that the management style of the university was 'managerialist', with very centralised decision making. Another described this as a, 'we will tell you what we have decided approach', where reasons for these choices were not given. The management style was described by yet another as 'like a benevolent dictatorship where the management aspects are not done particularly well' and there was also a feeling that the Principal was rather 'invisible' to his staff. Yet at the same time, staff were also expressing a need for 'more guidance', for example in relation to the means to actually address falling part-time student numbers. In relation to documents informing of the restructuring plans, one said that they were 'just words' and 'it's above my head'.

Staffing levels and recruitment within the university were described by one as a 'crawl rather than stall', and lags were reported in the replacement of lost staff. The question of whether restructuring might prompt further changes made one comment on the university's desire to change its redundancy policy to make this process cheaper for the university. Human Resource staff reported that although the university was happy to recruit newly qualified lecturers, they had few applications and generally employed staff with previous experience. They also discussed the need for 'fresh blood' and suggested that the rather sluggish rate of staff turnover might partly be because academics were unwilling to leave, and thereby relinquish their favourable employment contract of FE64.

Heads with buoyant student recruitment felt that resource restraints were hampering their progress. They appreciated economic costing systems that allowed them to see the value of activities, and if and when they were subsidising a specific area. Staff generally took pride in the university's role in preparing students for the job market. However one academic, who had worked extensively abroad, felt that the 'provider culture' in the UK meant that pleasing the student customer was not the central priority.

University Systems

The staff review scheme was carried out by heads of school and through their senior lecturers, with whom issues and targets had been discussed. This approach had been problematic as some staff refused to be interviewed by anyone other than their HoS, as they felt others had no authority to make decisions. Heads also reported that within the process there was some 'disparity in terms of seriousness' in the approach taken. Those staff that had already had a review with their head described the usefulness of the process, for example the setting of targets that could be later reflected on and reviewed. One head however, described the process as a 'soft approach' with the real hard issues showing up in the workload allocation.

The promotions policy required staff to excel in two out of the three areas of teaching, research and other activities such as administration. However staff tended to think otherwise, the following view encapsulates many of their sentiments: 'in reality the evidence would suggest that

unless you are seriously research active then forget it'. Another suggested in relation to this that 'all people in academia speak with false tongues'. For promotion to professor, research and funding became even more vital and as one noted 'the university is more heavily swayed by money that's being brought in for research and knowledge transfer partnerships than it is by an extra 500 undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment'. In certain schools without a long tradition of research, appointment at chair level had been through external appointments.

The actual number of promotions a year across the university was set to six at senior lecturer level, although the previous year only half this number had been promoted. Human Resources staff talked of a mixed approach to promotions, with an annual round that allowed staff the opportunity to go forward, but also ensured competition for the real posts that were available. They believed that staff who had been disappointed in the process sometimes returned to their head to talk over their workload allocation. Union representatives expressed the potential dangers in the Framework Agreement to 'sign off' against a teaching and scholarship profile and thus cause discrimination in the promotion process. The Fellowship Scheme for teaching and research was running in parallel to the promotions system.

Various other issues were touched upon in the interviews such as transparency review and costing. One felt that the latter had evolved away from its original intention as a tool for modelling and measuring time, towards funding purposes and was suspicious of how the data was being disaggregated and used within the university. However, heads had found data from the Full Economic Costing useful in order to see the real costs of activities and to help decision making.

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TABLE 13

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 8

DEPARTMENT 1	DEPARTMENT 2
Department Context • New faculty structure soon to be created. • This School of the Built Environment had 3 sections and 35 academic staff. • Across these sections student:staff ratios were high ranging from approximately 30:1 to 45:1. • Owing to financial constraints restrictions had been made on new appointments, but the market for students was buoyant. • Considered capping student numbers. • Staff felt to be all working hard. • Two forms of employment contract in operation, the old FE64 and the newer HE2000. New staff and those promoted moved on to the new contract. • Quite a lot of consultancy and knowledge transfer partnerships (KTP) activity from which the university, but not the schools benefited. • Sabbaticals taken, but required careful planning to accommodate.	**Department Context** • School of Engineering with 34 academic staff and about 600 students. • Student recruitment numbers ranged widely, so as timetable prepared 4 months in advance - more classes timetabled than actually delivered, so rationalisation of workloads done in semester 2. • Programmes accredited for Incorporated and Chartered Engineer status. • Belief that because of financial constraints staff retiring would not be replaced. • Various measures had been adopted to cope with increasing workloads - support staff had been used to take on some of the academic administration work. • Part-time staff had been employed to cope with some teaching and lastly there had been changes of teaching in the lower years to introduce commonality to some modules in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering courses, thus reducing the demands on teaching resources. • Resource cuts felt to have created stress for staff as had some admin aspects e.g. early planning of exam papers.
HoD/S Context (Continued) • Felt staff committed, industrious, but coping. • Belief that some over-teaching occurring, and that staff needed to be reflective about their work choices. • Own work considerably exceeded allocation, had found timetabling constraints difficult, so had had to reduce postgraduate contact. • Enjoyed all the work, but frustration at the inadequate preparation for the role and belief that people felt the HoS should know all the policies and procedures. • Saw his role in emphasising to staff university strategy and aligning school strategy to that, e.g. on recruitment. • Also worked at looking at all aspects of the school, knew that some areas of research not really profitable, but that it was politically impossible to withdraw from due to university stance.	**HoD/S Context (Continued)** • Had a few staff that always complained about the WLA, comparing it to other models, other staff never did so. • Had attempted to modify the model so that a bigger allowance was given to lecturing rather that tutorials, the overall effect for over 80% of the staff would have been zero, but unanimously voted down. • Had problem in the past as large number of staff doing consultancy work, so university insisted that allocated hours were fulfilled before consultancy work would be paid. • Felt that the university was very managerial, but believed academic leadership more vital. • Felt that an open admissions policy had led to problems i.e. failure rate for students, but this had to be balanced by the need to maintain standards to meet aspects such as professional accreditation requirements. • Enjoyed the work very much - given a 'free hand' by deans.
Allocation Methods • Established model in operation worked out on hours basis. Subject group leaders responsible for WLA in their area. Teaching allocation driven by modules with account taken for student numbers, assessment, and preparation time - extra allowance made for new modules. • Administration roles had been calibrated and were reviewed, e.g. allowance for Subject group leaders would be determined by the number of staff in the group, the number of students and the number of programmes offered. • Research – (capped for unfunded) allowances worked out retrospectively on aspects such as publications.	**Allocation Methods** • Established model that had been tweaked over the years. • Worked on a semester basis. In December HoS asked staff for an update on all their non-teaching activities. These were then entered on to a spreadsheet with the weighting allowances for the various activities (these allowances had been gradually reduced over the years). The model then calculated the target teaching hours based on the maximum contact hours - these followed the old contract, FE64, of about 1,280 hours a year. With for each hour's contact (lecture or tutorial) one hour was allowed for prep and marking time - extra allowance for large classes.

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS IN CASE STUDY 8 (CONTINUED)

DEPARTMENT 1	DEPARTMENT 2
Allocation Methods (Continued) • All these areas then passed to HoS to 'smooth' out and identify areas where redistribution needed. • Outputs transparent and available on line. • Care taken over hours so that contact time of especially the FE64 contract (1,280 hours a year = 40 weeks x 32 hours) were not exceeded. (new contract, HE 2000, pro rata at 1,390 a year = 40 weeks at 35 hours). • One day a week with no student contact hours, and for half of this time research and scholarship activities could be engaged in. • Fixed 3 hour block timetabling for lectures or tutorials, plus an extra hour with staff available for student consultation.	**Allocation Methods (Continued)** • Teaching subject group leaders allocated modules, with generic teaching elements sorted out early on. Few evening sessions now, as reduced resources had led to common timetabling between part time and full time students. • Allocation based on 40 working weeks, but the teaching time was actually 26 weeks, so it was felt that staff with a larger research element could spread their work more easily across the year including the holiday period, whereas staff with a higher teaching element could be more overloaded in certain periods. • Standard timetabling package allowed them to block out days of non-contact time, for research etc. but under half of staff requested this. • Extra allowance given to new staff. • Research was allocated retrospectively in terms of outputs-funding and papers. The allowance for unfunded research had been reduced sharply. • Administration roles tended to be stable, with a variable aspect of their weighting e.g. student numbers in programme leader role. • Draft document on the allocation was distributed for comments and adjustments. • System transparent and published.
Staff Consequences/Outcomes • Felt the WLA system was fair and transparent, but the problem with it was that the times allocated towards roles did not reflect the amount of work involved. • Had expressed anxieties, that because of universally high workloads that the students would suffer, saw them as the main consideration, but also saw that the university was prioritising research. • Felt own workloads had spiralled with lots of administration. • Had instigated successful teaching initiatives, and got recognition for this in terms of promotion - keenly contested. • Felt that ultimately research was the key to promotion and that worryingly, because of work volumes, his research was suffering. • Believed that the new university structure would improve management systems. • Felt that the new system of career review had worked well for him, but was 'not that simple' for others.	**Staff Consequences/Outcomes** • Enjoyed the autonomy the school offered, as once the basics were covered there was 'relative freedom' to work as hard as you wanted, on what you wanted. • Acknowledged that whilst there was pressure on the school to perform in certain areas, such as research, this was not a pressure on the individual. • Did feel that research was the most vital aspect for promotion. • Enjoyed the variety of work. • Contact time varied at present about 10 hours a week, but on average around 16 hours. • Exam scheduling could make marking workloads difficult when large classes involved. • Not happy with the present review system, as felt that only the HoS could make decisions. • Felt that the university management were 'working quite independently from us' and that the strategic work 'sometimes bears no relation to what is going on'. • Management was not giving sufficient advice in certain areas. • Had experienced various initiatives over the years, and felt that the best approach was to 'keep my head down' and just do the work.

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5.9 Mini Case Study 9 (Non-higher education organisation)

Organisation

A large, multinational, professional service company with a range of disciplines operating within each office. Within the organisation as a whole, benefits had been gained through flexible use of staff and knowledge sharing procedures. For example, in relation to the latter, the company had an Internet Skills Network, where a key word search would reveal specialist staff with expertise in given areas. Staff were also able to ask for technical advice on the intranet so that 'we don't reinvent the wheel'. This was also a forum for discussing areas of common interest, linking staff in the company across the world.

Each office had its own five-year business plan, with target areas for work. There was a big emphasis on the importance of technical expertise at all levels, so that staff dealing with clients and competing for work were aware of the resource and workload implications in their own areas. Newly graduated staff were seen as an investment and an extensive training scheme operated to meet the needs of work and professional bodies. The graduate cohort from each year were an unofficial mechanism of support and contact within the larger organisation structure.

Policy

The company set the working week at 37 hours, allowing up to a maximum of 48 hours to cover periods of extra or unusual load. The general feeling was that working long hours regularly was counterproductive as 'productivity drops' due to a loss of the 'concentrated eye'. Managers wished to know where workloads were routinely becoming high so that they could manage them by sharing work out more evenly and investigating the nature of the problem to ensure that unnecessary or inefficient work was not being done.

Allocation methods

Work usually arrived through either repeat work from clients or from a successful bid for a project. After this, a cross-discipline meeting would work out, in a more detailed way, the size of the job and the profile of the team required to deliver it. Discipline leaders would take care of the technical side of the project and the overall Project Manager would co-ordinate across all the disciplines to ensure smooth and efficient co-ordination of the project. A Manpower Forecast, on a spreadsheet, would be created to reflect how many days each discipline would be involved in the project and a formula would then calculate the fees based on this. Staff filled in a weekly timesheet against each job and the Project manager kept track of how the costs were building up. Meetings within the teams were held regularly, weekly or fortnightly, to gauge progress and 'see how the ship is steering' and to plan further. The nature of the work meant that initial estimates were often 'educated guesses' and as more information became available the team had to be ready to adjust planning. Also, clients often changed their brief, which created difficulties in workload planning. Allocating work and planning relied on both formal and more informal channels and managers having a good level of awareness of the workloads within the group so that they could adjust them accordingly.

Flexibility

The nature of the work required all teams to be very flexible in their approach. Changes in scope could alter their workload and timescales dramatically. Further, projects could often be placed on hold whilst technical issues were sorted out. This created problems in dovetailing projects and caused problems of 'peaks and troughs'. Various mechanisms were used to smooth these problems. The company ethos of all offices operating as one without division meant that staff could move to other offices to provide the expertise needed in any given field; fees were then charged to that office against the relevant job number. Less radically, staff could also move between teams within the same office. This process not only smoothed workloads, ensuring that staff were neither unoccupied nor overloaded, but it also widened their experience in their field. However, more experienced staff could be used most flexibly. This was evident in the discipline leader level where these staff, because of their wide knowledge of many projects, could act as a 'buffer', soaking up certain aspects of work when deadlines approached.

Transparency, Equity and Consultation Process

The whole process was transparent with 'nothing to hide'. All the information on times and finances, even the invoices against hours worked were available for staff to see. Team Leaders ensured that jobs that were seen as less enjoyable than others were moved around. Further, managers had to ensure that graduates working towards professional qualifications gained the appropriate range of experience.

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Staff felt that in the small groups it was easier to know what was going on, but regular meetings within the teams ensured that staff were aware of any pressures or issues coming up. Within the organisation, regular emails, bulletins and journals ensured that staff were kept up to date with developments and a new initiative had been created to provide a direct link with leaders and the Board so that decisions and issues could be mooted to representatives throughout all their UK offices. On a more technical level, video conferencing and 'see and share' software allowed staff in different locations to consult and work interactively.

Workloads

Managers felt that they probably worked up to the 48 hour limit, but staff felt that usually they could keep within a nine-to-five day with just occasional weekend work when things got busy. They felt that a lot of responsibility was placed on the individual, but no 'cracking the whip'. Managers did emphasise that because at times there was a heavy workload, staff needed to ensure that when things eased they responded by leaving work on time in order to recuperate. Some felt that priorities were managed well, looking at the 'costs to the client' and 'costs to us'. The intra and inter office resource management had kept work levels fairly stable, but if there was a persistent problem then new staff would be recruited. The problem facing the company at that time was that all of the offices were experiencing heavy workloads, so some of the usual flexibility had been lost.

Systems

There was a yearly appraisal process where a development plan was agreed, with the individual responsible for realising objectives and getting the relevant experience. This appraisal covered aspects from 'personal effectiveness, to team working and delivering projects through to business management'. The emphasis was on openness, with both sides looking at questions around any problem areas. However, managers stressed that if any problems were occurring they would be actively addressed immediately. Further, as most of the more inexperienced staff were trying to gain professional qualifications, managers had to ensure that these staff got appropriate experience and so they were active in 'monitoring training, and training objectives'.

Promotion was viewed from many angles, including technical excellence as well as business aptitude. Staff could become a specialist in their field, with the category of 'Fellow' being given to the most illustrious, or they could be a 'generalist', technically expert, but also with responsibilities for managing a group and developing the business.

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5.10 Mini Case Study 10 (Non-higher education organisation)

Organisation

The department involved was part of a large multinational professional service organisation with specialist services in the different offices. The case study office dealt with the public sector part of the organisation in the north of England. The department, spread over two offices, employed 80 staff, of which six were support staff.

Policy

Broad principles were set around workload allocation so that, for example, Partner/ Directors looked after a range of fee income streams, the volume of which was dependent on the 'balance of client-facing work and going out into the markets'. At the level below this, staff were matched to the work depending on their skills and experience. More detailed policies then dictated work practices, aspects such as risk management and audit procedures. The organisation had two sets of objectives that managers worked to perform against. The first were 'performance objectives', to do with 'client service utilisation' and profitable growth, and the second were 'values' objectives that related to aspects such as ethics, behaviour and team working issues. These aspects were condensed into nine business principles, statements of the organisation's ethos that were displayed on office walls. At one level these values were felt to act as a counterbalance to individual competitiveness.

Allocation Methods

The staff were divided into two pools dependent on their specialisms. Each had a senior manager to carry out the logistics planning, and where possible to accommodate the objectives and interests of staff. A consultation process at the start of the year provided a framework for this, for example in relation to training needs. A bottom-up time plan was then developed for each individual audit, then the staff skill mix of the team, managers, assistant managers, juniors and trainees was matched against this. It was felt that some staff enjoyed routine work whilst others enjoyed 'going offline' on 'one off stuff' This information was entered into a three dimensional operational diary, a specialist piece of software. This could then give the organisation some ideas about how resources might be placed for the next three to six months. This facility required a huge amount of maintenance time because of the constant changes in the day-to-day running of the work. Broadly, for planning purposes, 200 days client contact time a year was assumed, with staff working theoretically 35 hours a week. Staff filled in weekly time sheets and this enabled managers to monitor time and costs, especially in relation to future pricing of work. The audit approach was dictated to by company policy which in turn was automatically in compliance with professional body guidelines.

As a practical example, at the level of assistant manager, the senior management team allocated specific clients to individuals, and they would then manage their work, allocating elements to their team depending upon their skills and experience.

Flexibility

Much of the work was recurrent allowing for forward planning, but the 'wild card' was the 'one off' assignment, that caused variations in workflow, which had to be smoothed by two mechanisms. Firstly by building in some spare resource, and secondly by 'borrowing and lending' staff within the organisation. Very occasionally, self-employed contract staff were used for simple work in real peak periods. The work pattern of the recurrent work was eased by the different year-end periods and the subsequent phasing of audits of the various organisations. However, the patterns of work varied between the various sectors, for example some of the commercial departments had more widely differing loads through the year. Contracts within the organisation were drawn up on an individual basis and it was felt that the firm was able to be flexible in working patterns for staff. For example, one individual did not work in the school holidays, but worked more than full-time the rest of the year to compensate.

Transparency, Equity and Consultation Process

Staff interviewed felt that they became aware of how the workloads of others were shaped compared to their own, through informal mechanisms. One said that he felt it to be 'very open' and a situation where any issues could be discussed. Further, they believed that the company made efforts to ensure that work was spread out equally amongst staff of a similar grade. There were considered to be opportunities for feedback to senior management. One felt that this feedback was acted upon and that what made the company good to work for was this 'cumulative knowledge' and the 'continuous learning process'.

It was felt that staff typically spent around 65 per cent of their time doing work that they wanted to do, and that fitted in with their interests or training objectives. Trainees first had to work as directed, but they would then progress to more interesting work later, in line with their level of training. Staff

acknowledged the need to provide stimulating work for these trainees in order to retain them. Retention in this area was given a great deal of consideration in the organisation.

Another piece of software was used to record the objectives of each member of staff so that it could be reviewed at the end of an assignment. Staff felt at ease with mentioning their interests and felt that the managers facilitated the move to other sectors when possible.

Workloads

Staff felt that workloads were quite high, with a lot of staff working beyond the 35 hour contract especially at peak times; as one manager noted 'people rarely work less than forty, and in peaks significantly more than that'. However it was not felt to be at an unmanageable level. Also it was suggested that there was a lot of staff commitment and this came down to the 'type of people that we recruit'. Pressures could mean that staff became so involved with their work that they did not realise that they had done a good job; however, senior managers made the effort to provide feedback from clients about this. One manager suggested that managing the work-life balance was 'very much an individual responsibility', so that for example staff planned their annual leave well in advance and did not carry forward more than five days leave a year. The pattern of work in this department was described by one as, 'medium intensity continuous peak', with little letup in the loads compared to areas with a more differentiated pattern. One manager spoke of the frustration of constantly having to respond to other people's immediate priorities, which meant that it was hard to manage individual longer-term objectives. As well as client-facing work, senior managers had responsibilities in relation to the internal management of the department.

To help staff cope with these pressures, emphasis was placed on team building and working. It was felt that there were a lot of 'very real' support mechanisms in place to prevent staff from becoming overloaded and pressured. The organisation also allowed staff, where appropriate, to work from home.

An issue that did emerge was that some staff did not put the extra time they had worked on to their ledgers because of the profitability targets of a job. Staff were encouraged to record the genuine figures, so that the next round of fixed fee contracts could more accurately reflect the work involved. Travel time between jobs was mentioned as an additional time factor in relation to workload, although if staff were working more than an hour away from their home office then they were supposed to stay at a hotel.

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Systems

Senior managers put a lot of effort into matching skills and experience with training needs. Within the appraisal process, objectives were set at the start of the year, reviewed at mid-year, and signed off at the end of the period. The appraisal process was based on the appraiser's perspective, so to widen this there was a 360-degree feedback process running every two years. Although responsibility for meeting these targets was placed firmly with the individual, staff felt well supported in meeting these objectives, either in relation to training, international secondment or work sectors. Specialist software provided feedback on assignments and this was then discussed, looking at performance and values criteria. To facilitate this area and to help with career planning and mapping an online record was kept of all personal data, training and career choices. The emphasis on team values and the buddying and mentoring schemes were felt to help staff in the 'very competitive, dynamic environment' so that issues of stress, burnout and retention were actively managed. This latter aspect was seen as especially vital in relation to retention of trainees, and for the period immediately following qualification.

The organisation also ran a leadership programme, identifying staff with potential early on and offering them more extensive training. Some staff within the department had expressed some unease about this selective approach. Managers felt that this might be explained by the fact that this group was part of the 'not-for-profit' sector, where values were 'a little away from quite a lot of the rest of the firm'. In relation to promotion, it was felt that it helped if, along with having the personal and business case, you were a specialist in an area for which there was a rising level of demand. There was also a belief that just because of the huge workflow there were more opportunities in the London office rather than in regional centres.

The organisation had an annual staff survey and the department also held its own more focused survey. In the past, questions about communication and their knowledge of internal business management had revealed that staff did not know much about the latter and that 'actually they weren't too bothered that they didn't'. In order to assess performance the organisation had an external website for clients' comments as well as running formal client service reviews run by someone independent of the team concerned.

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6 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS OF CATEGORIES

Using the case study material, a cross-case analysis was carried out looking at individual categories, such as equity, across all the cases. Through the frequency of occurrence and the different factors that related to a category, its context, and the actions and consequences associated with it, a broader picture of the mechanisms and relationships at play was built up.

Please note that in the following summary of findings, Cases 4 and 5 are Australian universities; where a case number alone is given this refers to the university or a response from outside the in-depth studies of any given department, e.g. from Human Resources; lower case letters 'a' or 'b' relate to specific departments or schools within a major university case study.

6.1 Policy

Nearly all of the universities interviewed had a set of principles or guidelines about workload allocation models. The contents of these guidelines usually related to aspects such as fairness and transparency in the process (case studies 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7), although as Case Study 6 noted transparency levels could vary in degree. However the guidelines did vary in the level of detail involved, and nearly all of them were under review by working parties and review groups. In addition staff themselves (including heads) very rarely knew about the institutional policy or any of its details.

A view frequently expressed was that it would be impossible for one university-wide model to accommodate all the different needs of the departments and schools (Cases 2, 3, and 8). As a consequence, the development of the actual model was usually left to the discretion of the HoD/S. Whilst most universities were happy to leave the HoD/S to develop and implement systems, there was recognition that such discretion also had costs. Some felt it was too vague, with not enough training and direction given to HoDs to accomplish such a task, and that it resulted in a 'mishmash' of systems (Cases 2, 3, 4, 6). To compensate for this, one had introduced more training (Case 5), another had a committee to monitor implementation (case 4), and some included recommendations to HoD/S about models to ensure that the system was 'defensible' and to avoid interpretation issues leading to disputes (Cases 1, 4, 5, 6). Expectations about levels of agreement among staff in relation to the models varied. In one there was a feeling that the model should be agreed between all the parties concerned (Case 6); others related to compliance with employment contracts, especially in relation to teaching hours (Cases 3, 4, 5).

Many of the universities commented on the time consuming nature of sorting out the issue of workload allocation, especially when burdened with other higher priority administrative tasks. Some described the need for input from high-level leaders to address the problem systematically (Cases 2 and 8). Another issue that arose both explicitly (Cases 1 and 6) and implicitly (Case 8) was that managing workloads should be a faculty wide issue. Case 1 stipulated in its Code of Practice that departments' workload assessments should be mapped onto student FTEs, both to assess the funding resource balance and to allow for interdepartmental comparisons. In Case 6, the university had decided that schools within a faculty might have different balances of activities, but that they should reflect the strategic plan of the faculty as whole. Here, the units used should be able to be converted to notional hours in order that comparisons might be made. This idea of balancing staff and resources at faculty level, rather than just within schools or departments, cropped up again in Case 8, where it was apparent that resources were balanced or averaged out across the faculty as a whole, leading to problematic differentials in resources between schools.

Some universities (Cases 3, 4, and 5) seemed to have had a greater degree of involvement from union representatives in the formation of workload allocation guidelines. One (Case 3) used, as a basis, its employment contract agreement for a maximum of eighteen hours contact time a week. Australian case studies (Cases 4 and 5) used enterprise bargaining agreements to inform their policies on workload allocation and whilst actual working hours were not set, there were guideline recommendations of thirty-seven hours a week. In addition, work types were specified and in Case 4 time was proportioned between the main areas of teaching, research and administration, set at 40:40:20 respectively. Unions had expressed concerns about systems that required precision accounting, and about systems that required staff to total their hours in relation to different duties over a year. The latter was seen as being potentially undermining of the professional decision making of staff in relation to their work. In universities without forms of contract stipulating work hours, there was an often-expressed belief that capping of hours would be destructive in relation to

working practices. However, the issue of reasonable workloads was often discussed and some had this built into their principles (Cases 5 and 7), with a system of checks being initiated if levels consistently exceeded notional guidelines.

Some case studies expressed an interest in using the allocation models to look beyond workloads to issues of service quality and an understanding of funding that could feed into activity costing and full economic costing.

6.2 Allocation Methods

A wide variety of models existed, even within individual universities; one interviewee described the situation as 'bumpy', ranging from sophisticated approaches to more ad hoc divisions that relied on a 'kind of traditional grandfatherly head of department'. The model involved was often the result of an evolutionary process and was a reflection of factors such as: the discipline and culture of department; the leadership style of the head; the size of department; the complexity of the allocation; and the employment contracts set. Sometimes the HoD/S delegated responsibility for the model to another member of staff whilst still making final decisions and fine adjustments. These systems actually fell into three main approaches: those that collected background information, consulted and then divided the work informally; the sort of model that actually combined a limited range of activities formally or numerically to give an output in terms of points or hours; and lastly those that had a more comprehensive scope. However, within and across these broad categories there was a continuum of approaches. As a starting point the taught element obviously had to be timetabled and so the contact hours were fairly easily defined. The research aspect, on the other hand, was commonly not included in models, partly because it was felt that it was harder to quantify, but there was also a sense that academics were motivated to do this work anyway, so there was less need to include it in the model. Administrative work was sometimes just divided up 'equally' and in other cases some rough weighting was used, using a teaching hours or points equivalence.

The allocation model which was adopted in a given institution was a reflection of factors such as the discipline and culture of the department, the leadership style of the head, the size of department, the complexity of the allocation, and the employment contracts in use. Sometimes the head delegated responsibility for the model to another member of staff, whilst ultimately making final decisions and fine adjustments. The following is a broad summary of the methods used to allocate work and a discussion of some of the advantages and disadvantages encountered in each. Although the summary works from the more simple approaches through to the more complex systems, this is not a reflection of any evaluative judgement on the methods, i.e. the more complex models might not be any better or appropriate to their given situation than the simpler systems. More specific discussion on this and issues such as transparency and consultation will follow in later sections.

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Informal Approaches

At the most informal end of the spectrum, the HoD/S divided up work, based on consultations with staff and taking into account preferences, specialisms and competence issues (Cases 7a and 2a). Often this division was informed by basic rules, for example that staff should deliver two modules (Case 6b). Administrative work was similarly divided up, informed by a consultation process. Research was not allocated as such, and staff were expected to arrange their own work in this area (although a day free of contact teaching was often allocated to facilitate this). At a more formal level, another case study (Case 7b) had a database in which module level, class size and assessment type were collected and used by the HoD/S, in judging the work allocation and dividing up the teaching and administrative work. The last case (Case 3b) that could be included in this group was one in which a formal model had been introduced and had found disfavour with their union. This was partly because of the institution's attempt to collate all the different activities with an hourly rate, and partly because the loads were seen to balance over a year rather than accommodating the weekly limit as set out in their contract of employment. As a result the head concerned had been forced to revert to forming a judgment on duties and loads through negotiating with staff individually. The breakdown here seemed to be a result of misunderstandings about the nature of various agreements within the process.

As the last case illustrates, the advantage of this informal mechanism might be the potential for an individualised system which can accommodate complex information, in a way that a more numerical model would find hard to deliver without being over-complex. It could also potentially be used flexibly to accommodate change. However, such a system would be harder to operate in

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larger departments, partly because of the time it would take to operate and also because it relies on a head being knowledgeable about all the staff and the intricacies of their work. However, Cases (2a and 7b) also indicated that problems might arise due to inadequate consultation and a lack of definition and norms for work, even in small departments. Another related disadvantage of the system, is that the rather subjective basis of decisions might make heads vulnerable to claims of favouritism and 'doing deals', or responding to 'who complains the most'. Conversely, where decision-making criteria are not transparent there might be no effective mechanism of appeal against unfair allocations, or the issue of 'workhorses and skivers'. The system also does not readily accommodate employment contract specifications and problems might arise when trying to accommodate the potentially huge differences in the assessment task size. In practice, a variety of approaches were used to counteract this: some institutions used other teaching tasks and student projects to accommodate differences in class size and fine-tune loads (Cases 7a and 3b), others used second marking and weightings to balance things (Cases 6b and 2a).

Partial Approaches

This group of departments reported quite high levels of consultation and negotiation, and models varied with regard to what they included and how this was incorporated into the allocation. For example, some models included administration, but not research activities and vice versa; in some, variations in student numbers and assessment work were balanced through informal mechanisms, and in others through numerical weightings. More generally, another distinction between these various sorts of approaches was whether they used hours or points to describe allocations. There was, perhaps, more inclination to use an hours model in departments or organisations that had employment contracts stipulating maximum contact hours (Case 3a, and 'comprehensive' Cases 5a, b and 8a, b). The 'experimenting' Case 3b, mentioned earlier was the only exception to this. Two cases (Cases 1b and 2b) not within this 'contract' category still chose to use the hours units. In one case this was because the head had made a definite choice to use hours to highlight high workload issues (Case 1b) and in the other (Case 2b) the model used a 37 hour week as its basis. However, what staff often commented on was that although the system looked equitable, both the weekly limit and allowances for each work type were unrealistically low and made to accommodate a set total. As an indication of this, for those models using hours research was either not included (Cases 3a, and 1b), or calculated retrospectively and capped (Cases 2b, 8a and 8b). The Australian Cases 5a and 5b were an exception to this as they set standard loads in each area and varied the balance between them to match the individual staff member. However, this seemed only to fit within their contract hour limit through efficiencies on the teaching front, such as online provision.

In the most simple 'partial' approaches, the allocation was based solely on teaching contact hours, with marking equalised out, and with administrative work shared out informally through the judgement of the head in relation to equity (Case 3a). More complex approaches accommodated this administrative work within the actual weightings of the model (Cases 1a and 1b). These approaches used allowances for teaching and administrative work, with assessment and preparation weighted within the model. However, the mechanisms used to calibrate them varied: one used hours (Case 1b) and another (Case 1a) used a system of FTE units as a means to match allocated time to resource inputs, an approach probably informed by their university policy (see above). So, for example, if second-year students did four courses, then staff teaching one of them would get a quarter of an FTE per student. The advantage of this FTE model meant that the lecturer could teach the students in however large a group they wished, and the marking would also be reflected in the numbers.

Administrative tasks were also given an agreed FTE tariff although this had to be tweaked frequently to try and more accurately reflect the work involved in these tasks. Loads were then weighted to reflect aspects like new appointments (50 per cent load); HoD/S role (40 per cent); leave (0 per cent); although most people were on a 100 per cent load. The disadvantage of this approach was that as the figures were expressed in percentages, it was felt that the number of hours could inflate over the years as student numbers rose. Another disadvantage was that research was not explicitly weighted within the model.

Comprehensive Approaches

As the systems got more comprehensive, the research element was incorporated into the models, although in many of the cases it was a capped element. Cases 8a and 8b used research outputs, distinguishing between funded

and unfunded research, to determine this allocation retrospectively. In both of these models, target teaching hours were determined by the maximum contact hours stipulated in the employment contract. They used weightings in teaching for numbers, assessment and preparation but, interestingly, these models also had weightings for administration work, reflecting things such as staff, student and programme numbers that subject group leaders would have to co-ordinate as part of their role. Once this data had been entered into the model (usually held on a spreadsheet), heads could then examine allocations to identify any areas in which small readjustments were needed.

These models were felt to have the advantage of accommodating areas such as assessment and preparation times, whilst at the same time allowing staff the flexibility to make choices about modes of delivery. However, some staff felt contracted employment hours were accommodated in a way that obscured actual loads; and in both models of this type, the allocation spread over a forty-week period, whereas the actual teaching was fitted into a period of about 26 weeks. This meant that staff with a higher researching load had their work more evenly spread than staff predominantly teaching. Some staff also felt that tariffs for certain administrative tasks, although carefully weighted, did not reflect the actual work involved and that there had been a gradual reduction in some of these allowances over the years. Retrospective inputs on the research side were also felt to be slightly inflexible, in that changes to work patterns took some time to be acted upon.

In Case 2b this practice of entering data retrospectively extended to all the work areas. Here the model allowed staff to constantly update the spreadsheet on their work. It had a system of weightings for the various areas (some of which were capped) and would then work out the next year's allocation based on the data entered. A problem found with this model, was that again it was based around a 37 hour week. The whole idea of hours did create problems, often because amounts allocated to tasks were not felt to reflect the reality of the situation.

There also seemed to be an almost cultural resistance to defining allocations too exactly in hours. Where hours were used they often referred to contact time or to specific duties, leaving out or capping aspects such as research. Heads were faced with the problem of conditions within contracts of employment, and the unacceptable face of the actual loads.

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Staff seemed resistant also to the restraints of tight systems and accountability, that might threaten their cherished autonomy. Systems using points to some extent obscured this issue, and in some cases (such as 6a and 4b), heads were keen to ensure that their model would not be used to limit work, in the way that an hours based one might. The 6a system used a database that collated information on teaching tariffs (comprised of fixed elements on credit rating and module level and a variable element on numbers) for each module that could then be divided amongst the staff teaching on it. This was especially important in this case as each module had inputs from a large number of staff, thus making the task of allocation very complex. Administration and research tariffs were determined through a consultation process and also fed into the database, and a 'catch-all' category was included in the allocations to account for various and diverse work types. The purpose of this was to reduce quibbles over minor allocations.

The Australian models

The approaches taken by the Australian departments are best described separately. The approach taken in Case 4b was informed by the university EB agreement, which divided the time allocated to each work area, at 40:40:20 to teaching, research and administration activities respectively. Although it was not fully inclusive, in that administrative tasks were shared out equally, it was a very sophisticated approach that was developed through high levels of consultation. Different models and weightings had been developed for the different modes of study (undergraduate/PHD etc.), and each divided into sections on co-ordination, facilitation and assessment. Credit rating and student numbers were fed into the model, and also the dependence level of students in relation to the co-ordination and facilitation aspects. This refinement captured the fact that the marking element of a large class had greater work implication than the differential between lecturing small and large groups. To inform the model, comparables between teaching and research were found by examining the workloads of staff employed 100 per cent in teaching and 100 per cent in research. Then a base-line level for research was set and the weightings used to 'reward' or 'punish' variance from this.

The advantage of this model was that the weightings

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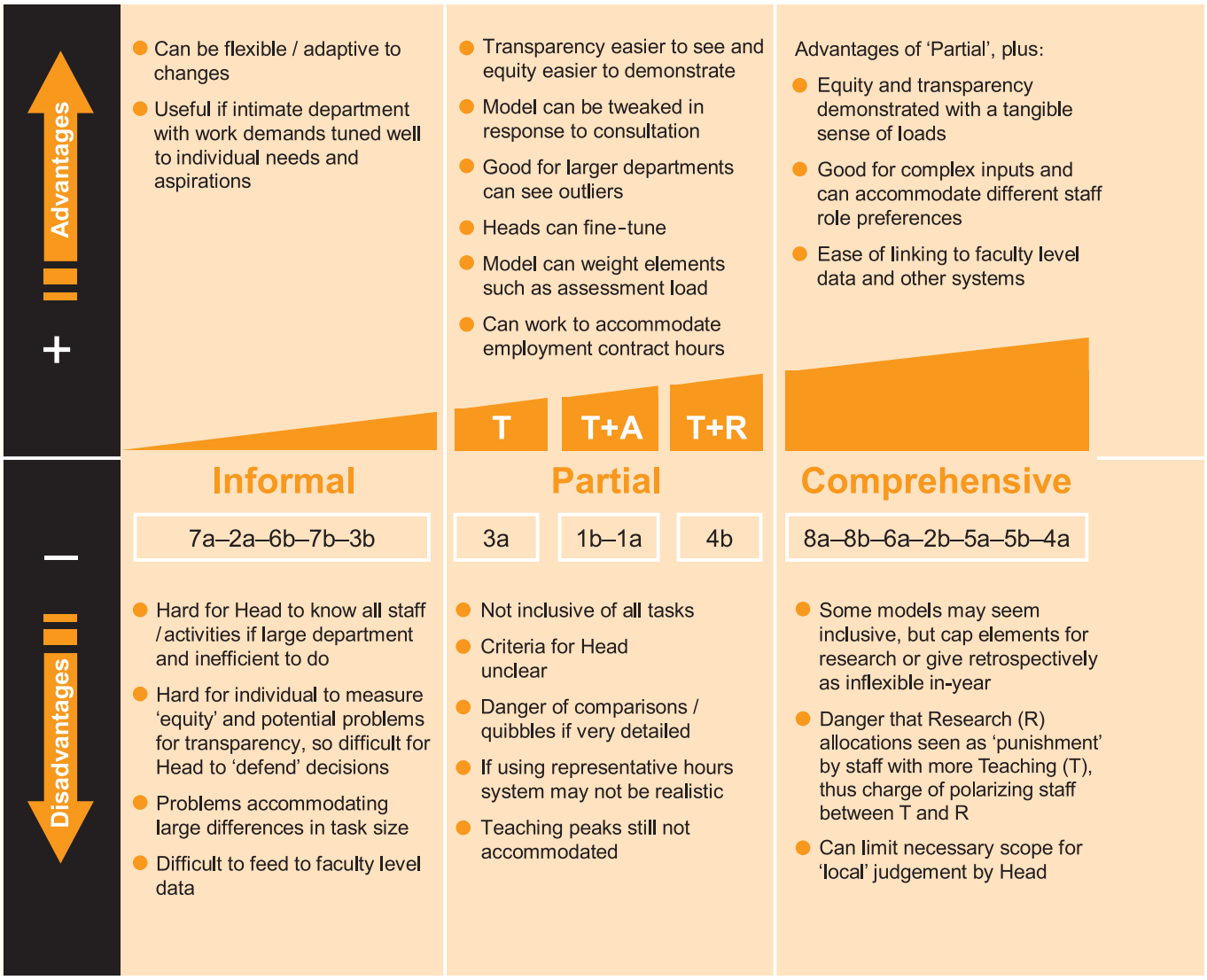
allowed staff to move the balance of work between research and teaching. Case 5b used a similar approach to the last model of determining a load for a given area by calculating the work involved at 100 per cent loading. Staff had to rank themselves on a scale in the three main areas, and then, through negotiations, heads would work out allocations by using staff self-assessments against these notional 100 per cent loads. Similarly, in Case 5a, standard loads in each of the main areas (teaching, research, administration) were set as a benchmark to balance workloads against. Care was taken to avoid the polarisation of staff, so teaching hours were not used as the balancing mechanism. (This was similar to the aim in Case 4a, where with the EB agreement in the background, equal weightings of points were given for the three main areas). In general the teaching loads were allocated equally, but not capped. Research on the other hand was capped, but those staff not gaining funding were not given extra teaching duties, as the aim was to maximise chances for them to succeed in research in the future.

Figure 1 summarises, in a continuum, the range of approaches discussed above. It also shows the disposition of all of the cases and summarises the broad advantages and disadvantages of all three of the main systems used.

FIGURE 1

CONTINUUM OF WORKLOAD ALLOCATION APPROACHES



6.3 Issues of Transparency and Equity

Transparency

Whilst the majority of those interviewed saw the advantages of transparent systems, there were a few areas considered to be problematic. The definition of a transparent system was also open to interpretation, and these ranged between:

- Systems that named individuals and listed all their duties (Cases 1a, 1b, 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 7a, 8a, 8b), some even worked out roles in an open forum (Cases1b and 7a)
- Publication of a summary document of the range of duties (Cases 2a, 2b, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b)
- The more confidential approach between HoD/S and staff members (Case7b)

In some cases, it was also found that even where decisions were transparent, the criteria for arriving at them was less so, for example why particular individuals got certain roles or how weightings for tasks were decided upon (Cases 3 and 6b). Hence some felt that openness needed to extend to an articulation of the decision-making criteria, as without this management weaknesses could be suspected (Case 8).

The context was also felt to be pivotal in relation to transparency, not just the stance of the HoD/S, but also the physical environment, the size of department and other factors affecting perceptions of openness and trust across operations (Cases 6 and 7). Some felt that changes at a university level, with guidelines and calls for numerical systems, would facilitate more transparent systems.

The perceived advantages of transparent operations in relation to workload were numerous. Many suggested that it would curtail issues of unfair treatment, discrimination, and favouritism (Cases 2, 5, 6, and 8). It was also felt that a system that openly used a measure allowing for comparabilities, would help to create a mutually agreed idea of a reasonable load. This could then facilitate a 'moving towards the middle' in workload distribution, as 'outliers' from this range became evident, allowing the HoD/S to identify and manage the issues of underproductive and of overstretched workers (Cases 4 and 7). Other staff mentioned that transparency was an important way for staff with different roles to appreciate the contribution made to the department or school by others. For example, teachers might see the benefits that research funding brought in and researchers could better understand the workloads of staff involved in teaching large classes. In some cases this had helped to reduce tensions and niggles arising. Some staff also felt that it helped to promote diversity, and when work was balanced openly and flexibly (case 5 and 8) this helped staff to find their own niche. Others felt that the openness of systems was useful when it came to times such as appraisal and promotions, so that the importance of an individual's contribution was more easily judged (cases 1, 5).

As with many situations, these issues could be seen from other perspectives. Some saw a danger in transparency, particularly if the model was detailed, as it could encourage staff to bicker over the smallest details through divisive comparisons (cases 2, 5 and 8). Still others felt that such openness was best only at identifying those lying outside the normal range. Despite concerns in some cases, the majority of those interviewed saw the advantages of transparent systems and most felt that the model needed to be detailed in order to be fair and comprehensively cover work areas (Cases 6 and 7).

Equity

In relation to equity there was generally a belief that these issues were handled fairly within schools and departments; however, this was somewhat hazier where systems were less transparent. Some departments used simple principles, along with the workload allocation models, to ensure equity, for example in some an explicit expectation that all staff should do some teaching (Cases 4a, 5a, 6a) and others that all staff should research (Case 1a). The head was actually considered to be pivotal to perceptions of trust and equity, rather than the workload allocation model. There was a lot of discussion within the interviews about, on the one hand, staff who tried to do the minimum, and, on the other, those efficient, amenable and diligent members that always picked up any extra tasks (Cases 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7). Some heads talked of the problems of managing equity where some staff seemed to 'thrive'on hard work and always worked beyond the allocation. Research was mentioned frequently as the aspect that accounted for the most diversity in loads, and many staff reported routinely using their vacation periods to catch up on research work. Further, it was felt to be relatively more difficult to quantify research activity time-wise, than other work types. Administrative tasks were also a vexed issue. In some cases, staff attempted to avoid large

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tasks, and in other instances a knowledge of their weightings or promotion prospects had made staff more willing to take them on. Certain administrative roles were felt to often fall to women, (sometimes because of a belief in their superior communication skills (Cases 1, 2, and 7)), and these roles tended to be more open-ended. Marking and assessment were also areas frequently highlighted as being potential problem areas in relation to equity because of differences in class sizes. Finally, from a more general position, there was some questioning of the time allocated to given tasks within the various models where they were not a true reflection of the work involved, even though across a department there might appear to be equity between staff. Looking at the wider picture, some staff were starting to question equity levels across their faculty and even their university (Cases 6 and 8).

6.4 Flexibility

One of the aspects that nearly all staff, both senior and more junior, appreciated was the relative flexibility and autonomy in how a lot of their work was arranged. Some woman academics particularly appreciated this because they could fit the time in with home demands (Cases 5a, 6b, and 8b). Many staff used all days not allocated to teaching to work from home, which had advantages in terms of concentrated activity, but there were dangers felt in that the work-home divide became blurred. In one case the university had relocated, and flexible-working practices had accommodated those staff unable to move within the given period. An instance of inflexibility was reported, relating to the way in which employment contracts that stipulated maximum weekly contact hours could undermine the innovation of new intensive courses that might run for say a week over the vacation period.

The availability of sabbaticals varied. Mostly, staff could apply to the relevant committee after a certain number of years' service or at a points' threshold level (Cases 2, 4, 5, 6,7). The proposed sabbatical project was then assessed to ensure suitability and outputs were checked at the end of the period. Smaller departments and schools had greater problems in accommodating sabbaticals, often because of difficulty in covering teaching (Cases 2, 4, 5, 7). Some universities were rarely able to make provision for them (Cases 3 and 8) and at the other end of the scale, one successful well resourced department found staff were often unwilling to take them because of a reluctance to leave their research group (Case 4). One department used sabbaticals to help staff reach target levels for the RAE (Case 7) and another used them to help staff regain ground in their research after a lengthy period in a heavy administrative role (Case 6). Funding sources, such as from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), were used to match university investment in sabbaticals and, similarly, Teaching Fellowships were used for scholarship activity.

In order to smooth workflows, sometimes semester rather than year sabbaticals were given and staff could generally be given one "light" and one "heavy" semester. In one case seen, sabbaticals of one year were spread over two academic years, the last semester of one and the first of another (Case 7). One problem encountered with these was that staff often worked so hard in the run up to their sabbatical that they were exhausted and less productive throughout it. It also proved difficult for staff to take sabbaticals if they had input into other courses or disciplines (Case 5b).

6.5 Head of Department and the Consulation Process

The heads interviewed often expressed their enjoyment of managing their department, but many had also found it very challenging - especially at the start when they often felt they were expected to be aware of things of which they had no real knowledge. Heads also generally acknowledged that as they became more experienced, the initially daunting task of managing staff became easier and less time consuming. Some felt that the training they received after taking up the role would have served them better if it had been given prior to appointment (Cases 1, 3, 4, 6, 8). However in general most felt that they were able to represent the views of staff to the university, and also successfully relay information back to staff. The heads considered involvement and information were key elements to help build confidence and trust in organisational decisions and noted that size of department was a key factor when it came to actually knowing what was taking place (Cases 4, 8). Juggling resources and balancing the needs of students, staff and RAE priorities were the biggest causes of tensions for heads, many of whom had invested in more administrative support and felt the need to delegate and not micro-manage situations (Cases 2, 3. 4).

Nearly all the heads involved felt that their staff were committed and industrious. Some felt they needed to ensure that staff did not over-teach, and looked for efficiencies, consolidation and new modes of delivery in their teaching programmes (Cases 2, 4, 5, 8). They

discussed mentoring staff, and many felt an important part of their role in this was encouraging, and at times challenging, those who were not fully engaged. Heads also frequently discussed the issue of personalities, often in relation to staff who were motivated and almost overstretching themselves (Cases 1a, 7b). They more rarely talked of difficulties, but had experienced passive resistance to change, such as in relation to a new workload allocation model (Case 3); disruptive personalities; and problems with work paid as overtime (Cases 8b and 3b). Some heads expressed a belief that the problems were best acted upon quickly to avoid their escalation (Cases 5, 6, 8), and even small grievances were generally felt to be very time-consuming.

Heads did report that workloads were high and felt that workload allocation models were important to help achieve equity. However there was a feeling not only that heads themselves needed the discretion to make adjustments, but that ultimately staff had to make their own assessment of work priorities. Most heads had been highly consultative over the introduction, or amendment, of workload allocation models, discussing aspects such as weightings for roles (Cases 1a, 1b, 2b, 3b, 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 7a, 8) although this process was not always successful (Case 3b).

Even when there was a process of consultation, some staff were reportedly unwilling to engage in the consultation process (Case 8), but where staff had become actively involved, their awareness of the complexities of the problem of workload allocation had made them more supportive (Cases 4 and 6). One school had invested in quite a lengthy process of consultation and pilot study implementation, followed by further review, consultation and implementation (Case 4b). This resulting model seemed to have been introduced with little friction. Often, heads had inherited a working model of workload allocation and continued to run it without too many problems, (Cases 1a, 2b, 3a, 8a, 8b) although resistance was reported to any changes made to existing processes. Indeed the introduction of new workload allocation models was more often greeted with suspicion; in one case this had meant the model was withdrawn altogether (Case 3b). Heads noted how difficult it was to judge all the issues and implications of a new model (Cases 4, 5).

In relation to their own work, some HoD/S noted how the job could be isolating or lonely (Cases 3 and 7). Some also noted an element of 'competition' with other areas of the university which was necessary in order to serve their department (Cases 1 and 6). In certain cases, heads met up to share knowledge on things such as workload allocation. Some departments had also introduced associate heads to support the head and to prevent any undue dominance. A few heads still managed to teach a little and several still carried out research, (Cases 1a, 3a, 4a, 4b, 5a, 8b); however, others had difficulties maintaining research (Cases 1b, 3b, 6a, 7b) or felt it to be squeezed by other demands (Cases 1a, 2a, 2b, 5b, 6b, 7a). Research was frequently cited as being pressing and the demands of the RAE seemed to be uppermost in the minds of many at the time of interview.

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Staff interviewed seemed to generally have good relations with their HoD and there appeared to be quite high levels of trust towards them (Cases 1a, 2b, 4a, 4b, 6a, 6b, 7a, 8a) although the question of trust was not asked directly. Only on two occasions did staff show some nervousness about being interviewed and require reassurance on the confidentiality of the process. Honesty and openness were said to be appreciated, although there were a few instances in which staff were unsure of the plans of their head (Cases 1b, 2a, 3a), and others did suggest that communication of plans was sluggish (Cases 3a, 4a, 7b). Where staff had had anxieties and concerns over their work, any reassurance given by heads had done a lot to mitigate the stress of the situation. There was a degree of conflict between a small minority of staff and their head in a few departments, and this often focused on problems surrounding workload allocation, sometimes in relation to contracts of employment (Cases 3b, 8b). In others this 'unhappiness' was more limited to the detail of the model (such as marking allocations) or temporary in nature due to staffing shortages (Cases 4a, 6b, 7b).

6.6 Workloads

Most of the universities had carried out surveys on issues such as workloads and wellbeing. In some, unions had also tried to get involved in the agreement of what a reasonable workload was, sometimes where there were contracts of employment specifying contract hours this had a sharper focus (Cases 3,5,8). Workload levels were generally seen as high, with many academics working in the evenings and weekends (all Cases). How staff responded to this seemed to depend to a large extent on what their work involved. Increased bureaucracy and demands for external audit had been one of the most unwelcome aspects discussed in almost every case, especially 'mundane' and 'repetitive' tasks which were very unpopular (Cases 3, 4). Where heads had

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employed more administrative support this was widely felt to be beneficial. Small-sized departments specifically reported problems in distributing certain tasks and roles (Cases 3a and 7a) owing to limited flexibility. Workload allocation models showed research to be the cause of the biggest inequalities in workload; however, it was something that many staff seemed keen to do and would fit in even if it meant working unsocial hours. The open-endedness of research was also cited as problematic in this regard (Cases 1, 2, 7). Research caused most difficulty in departments where the discipline was new to research and had no background of resource support, but where the organisation still had high expectations of research success.

Another issue frequently discussed was the uneven flow of work through the year, mainly in relation to teaching and assessment (Cases 2, 3, 6, 7). Some heads had tried hard to find ways of spreading the work, using part-time sessional staff, and PhD students for some work, and also using innovative ways to cope with large class sizes, Australian case studies especially showed an extensive use of 'casual' staff. Some heads had also liaised with Central Administration departments in order to minimise extreme peaks of work caused by short periods between exams and expected completions for marking. High Staff:Student ratios were problematic in several cases (Cases 1, 3, 6, 8). This was sometimes because of an extreme upturn in the popularity of a given subject and a time lag before new staff were employed, and at other times because of resource implications where staff losses were not replaced. Some cases, especially those in less densely populated locations, also spoke of problems recruiting suitably qualified staff. Importantly, many staff, especially junior academics, expressed anxieties about the implications for students as a result of these high loads (Cases 1a, 1b, 2b, 7a, 7b, 8b), feeling that lectures were not prepared as well as they hoped and time for student consultations limited.

The credit rating of modules was mentioned as a factor in two of the universities (Cases 6, 7). In both institutions, moves were being made to increase the minimum credit rating of modules. Although it was felt that this would be beneficial in the longer term through efficiencies, in the shorter term it had increased workloads as staff had to prepare new material. New work was also being created through the use of technology. Many staff complained of an influx of student emails and queries and other talked of organisational moves to put more work online and even to deliver lectures online (Case 5). Some felt happy to move in this direction, while others worried about equity issues, where their load was compared with an individual, who admittedly had made a large investment to prepare online work, but thereafter did much less.

Personality issues were also seen as a big factor in relation to workloads. Sometimes this was felt to be due to enthusiasm, high standards and high levels of motivation, at other times staff felt inefficiency played a part (Cases 1, 2, 3, 5). Some staff talked of needing the discipline to limit the amount of time that they spent on tasks, while in other cases there was a feeling of irritation with managers who glibly talked about the need for efficiency. Another frequently cited issue was that of efficient staff being heavily loaded with work because they could be relied upon to do the work well. There were felt to be dangers in being 'a safe pair of hands'. Staff also recognised the problems of mismatching of staff to a role and acknowledged how often this limited the choices available to heads (Cases 1, 7). There was also a feeling that to progress you just had to work harder, and some believed that newer staff felt more comfortable in this climate than staff that had been longer in the profession (Cases 2, 4). Some felt that there were dangers in new staff being overloaded too early with large responsibilities, such as admissions officer (Cases 1, 5). Many described how they felt new staff should be mentored and nurtured (Cases 4, 5, 6). Yet there was also an issue, where new staff were protected and also supported through teaching certificate programmes, that there could be a knock-on of higher loads for more experienced staff. This could be problematic, for example in relation to research when there was difficulty meeting output expectations.

Although staff felt comfortable discussing high workloads, they played down any suggestions of stress-related illness. Only one head actually commented on staff with physical symptoms, although Human Resources and union staff seemed to be more aware of cases and suggested that high workloads made staff feel more vulnerable (cases 3, 5, 6, 7, 8). A few universities had noted a large rise in these cases. In two universities, Human Resource staff felt that women workers were presenting with relatively more cases (cases 2 and 3) and they felt that these often related to poorly developed personal support structures. In one other case some schools had used workload allocation models to assess the hours of fractional workers (case 4). Their

findings were that these often far exceeded what they were contracted and paid for - these sessional workers were mainly women with childcare responsibilities.

6.7 Teaching

The actual allocation of teaching has been described in the earlier section on "workload allocation"; generally it was a result of consultations based on preferences, competencies and specialisms. Heads then, using their own discretion and/or a model, divided up work, usually taking account of factors such as class size, credit rating and module level.

Although many cases stressed the importance of teaching and ensured senior staff continued to teach (Cases 2, 4, 5, 6), it was felt that teaching was under pressure from many sides: a lack of resources, research pressures, and even from the students themselves. The resource issue and increases in staff student ratios had led to drives for efficiency, for example by increasing lecture sizes (Cases 2, 3, 6b), but room size was often a limiting factor here. In those cases with high undergraduate numbers, for example in Cases 4a and 5a, where the department had around 2,500 students, then lecture sizes could be about 200. Some felt that capping class sizes was not an option (Case 1) whilst others had considered it (Case 8). The discipline involved was also seen as pivotal here, for example it was felt it would be harmful to try and increase class sizes in subjects such as modern languages because of the highly interactive nature of course delivery (Case 7a). The recent popularity of some subjects, such as Psychology and Surveying, (Cases 6b and 8a) had caused problems. However recruitment of new staff in one case (6) had eased the strain, although delays were reported between staff leaving and replacement academics arriving. In other subjects, such as modern languages and engineering (Cases 7a and 8b) poor recruitment levels had led to lower funding or recruitment of students with lower levels of attainment, which in itself had resource implications.

Differences in teaching loads within departments were being scrutinised and one was looking hard at the viability of poorly subscribed modules (Case 7). In others, to encourage efficiencies in the delivery of teaching, units rather than hours were used in the workload allocation model (Case 4b). In this latter case, staff who did not perform well in research were loaded with more teaching. Such a response contrasted with the views of other cases who were determined that teaching should not be seen as a form of 'punishment', with some providing teaching scholarship schemes to promote this activity (Case 5b).

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Commonality and synergies between courses were seen as another means to reduce the teaching load (Cases 7a, 7b and 8). This was occurring in Case 8 as result of organisational restructuring, so that integration of some areas across the departments could occur at Level One (first year). Team teaching and strategic provision of teaching, for example through selecting to offer only certain portions of a wide subject area, were also used to help with teaching resources (Cases 7b and 6a). Small departments and more specialist areas had the most problems in accommodating changes (Cases 1, 3, 7). Different modes of delivery were being experimented with to optimise the teaching element (Cases 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), for example in the Australian cases online teaching provision was much in evidence. Some heads were also exhorting staff not to 'over-teach' (Cases 7, 8). In many cases staff were working just to keep courses stable with minor 'refreshing' only (Cases 1a, 1b, 3a, 4a) although one was investing in new courses (Case 3b). Distance learning packages were another means by which to help resources as they were popular with foreign students and they brought in a good level of fees (Cases 2a, 4, 5).

Another means that was used to stretch out teaching resources was the use of research students for certain elements of the work, and part-time or sessional staff. Although this looked economical there were often further resource implications as these staff needed mentoring and because some work, such as assessment, either could not be undertaken by these individuals or needed moderating (Cases 1, 4, 5, 8). On the positive side it was recognised that this was the means by which many new staff entered the profession and some cases felt they needed far more staff of this sort (Cases 7, 8).

Although the input and support from professional institutions was welcomed, some cases also felt that meeting their requirements for professional accreditation also had resource implications (Cases 3, 4, 6, 8). Time had to be taken to ensure that teaching met requirements and students on placements had to be supervised. Teaching programmes for staff themselves were felt to be helpful, but had implications for workloads; further, some staff felt frustrated that they did not have the time to try out the new ideas that they had learnt about (Case 2b).

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Resource issues were often discussed in relation to student recruitment and often beyond just simple numerical relationships. For example, in some a broader intake had meant greater disparity between students and this had meant that for certain subjects such as Engineering, sound mathematical ability could not be taken for granted, and extra provision had to be made (Cases 1b and 8b). Hence where recruitment levels were low, student performance had become a resource issue (Case 8b), but of course there were also problems when the course was popular and additional resources did not follow (Case 8a). In the Australian cases (4 and 5) there was a greater awareness of the student as a customer, and they had made a conscious effort to improve the learning experience, for example in one case streaming the years intake to ensure the appropriate level of provision (Case 4a). However, many Australian staff felt that students had become more demanding about the teaching provision, wanting comprehensive notes, on-line provision, lectures in the evening to suit their working arrangements, and responses to numerous email queries (Cases 4, 5). Although most staff stressed that personal interaction with students was vital and beneficial, some of the UK cases felt that the increase in their student numbers and demands had led to the 'open door' policy being replaced by one of consultation hours (Cases 1a, 7a). Some staff also acknowledged that the quality of their teaching work had slipped a bit over the years (Cases 1a, 1b, 7a, 8a) in areas such as refreshing material, and speedy responses for assessment (Cases 1a, 1b, 2b, 7b); in some instances this was blamed on the pressures that had come from research and the RAE (Cases 2b, 5, 7a, 7b, 8). However many felt that the pressures of examination marking were often exacerbated by organisational demands on timings, with often an insufficient gap between semesters one and two to allow for the assessment (Cases 3a, 5a, 6, 8). In those cases that did not weight marking or student numbers in the workload allocation model there was felt to be reluctance by staff to take on modules with high marking loads (Case 5a).

6.8 Research

The tradition in relation to research varied greatly between the cases seen, but even those institutions where it had not been strong in the past had recently started to change their expectations in this area and were implementing strategies to promote research (Cases 3, 8), for example giving support through research committees to non-researchers. Having said this, approaches within individual departments and schools varied considerably by discipline, with some working more at the 'knowledge transfer' end of the spectrum (Case 8). Some in the Australian universities suggested that research was increasingly managed through centres and that these were forging closer links to businesses and their needs. Those UK universities that had a long experience of working in research were also increasing their commitment to it (Cases 2, 4, 6). In these cases, 'top-down' strategies had been set out to improve investment in research. In many of their schools this meant providing up to 40 per cent of academic time for research; however, in practice many academics disputed the figures, suggesting that research was usually done in the time left at the end of the day. Mock RAE-type exercises had been carried out to assess the performance of staff and to ensure their awareness of research objectives. The group of cases in the middle of the continuum (Cases 1, 5, 7) were all successful in their research and at increasing their investment, but perhaps without the same impetus as the traditional research group. Of this middle group, case 7 was developing the most radical initiatives, although some staff felt that the response from new leadership had left it rather late to meet research objectives. Tactical judgements had been made to release staff from other commitments in order that work for RAE submission could be completed. Also in this case, in order to generate surpluses and to focus reinvestment, departments had been scrutinised to find non-researching staff willing to take voluntary severance. A similar approach had been taken in Case 2. Staff commented that this approach could destabilise the teaching provision and further could be counterproductive in the research area by actually reducing the time available for research for the remaining staff.

All the staff seen, felt conscious of this strong leadership stance towards research. Many noted how important a research profile was in relation to promotion, despite university policies that often stressed the contribution of staff in say two out of the three main work areas (Cases 2, 3, 5). Some staff felt happy with the approach. Others wondered about the impact on their department's culture through the recruiting of research-only staff and creating elite research groups (Cases 3, 5, 6, 7, 8). Others discussed the hurt among staff who, through RAE negotiations had found that their work would not be submissable for the exercise (Cases 6, 7). Generally it was felt that the context of the department was usually a strong 'decider' in how much of a driver research was, but many felt that the RAE exercise had caused lots of pressures (Cases 2, 6, 7), and in

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one case it was felt that few staff would feel much impact from the exercise (Case 8). Excluding those on teaching-only or research-only type contracts, the time allocated to research in the cases seen varied from half a day to two days a week. Some gave differentiated allowances dependent on outputs (Case 6), or distinguished between funded and non-funded research (Case 8). However in the latter case, because of resource issues, the amount of time allowance given to established researchers had had to be reduced (Case 8). Some universities seemed very aware of the risks of this investment in research, on teaching quality and were actively using measures, described below, to ensure that this did not suffer (Cases 4, 5).

Another research strategy was to group researchers into centres (Case 5) or teams, each with a shared focus (Cases 4, 5, 6). There were felt to be advantages to this in that it allowed busy senior academics to keep going on the research through directing a group, and on the other hand it helped new researchers to start work in a supportive, mentored environment. However, some criticised this strategy, suggesting that it could separate the unit from the more general research area, and exclude those whose area of interest was outside the main focus which in some cases had resource implications too (Case 5). Academic staff and their recruitment were also pivotal to a lot of the discussions. Some universities saw the recruitment of research-only staff as a good way of investing in research (Case 5). Others believed that investment in good staff would improve staff-student ratios, decrease teaching time and this would shift into research (Case 6). Another approach had been to 'grow your own' researchers, using a policy of recruiting young academics keen to research. This approach was seen as a long term commitment and a way of stabilising the age profile of the university (Cases 2, 5, 6). Another strategy with long-term implications was to use the best researchers for teaching as well; this was felt to be a way to enthuse students with the subject and to later recruit them as researchers (Case 4). Where research had created problems in meeting teaching commitments, then funding was often pooled to buy in new permanent, rather than temporary, staff (Case 4). A problem frequently encountered in relation to these sorts of approaches was that of retention and hence gaining a return on the investment as these staff were often approached for recruitment by rival universities.

Another problem mentioned by staff was the growth in postgraduate student numbers who, because of their year-round work, had eaten into the Summer vacation period that staff often used to catch up on their own research work. Others noted how, within a given university, the patchy incidence of summer working revealed big inequalities between staff workloads (Case 3). Another issue related to differences between the disciplines. Some staff in Arts departments found it hard to justify large bids, as for many of these subjects what was needed was time, rather than expensive equipment or resources and this had implications if comparisons were made between workloads. Other researchers talked of the problems of getting funding and publishing in top-level publications for applied research and felt this was also an issue in relation to the RAE (Case 6b). In some universities there were individual departments or schools of relatively new disciplines that had no long tradition of research funding to provide resources for a rolling programme of work. Further, the newness of the discipline would mean a paucity of staff with PhD qualifications who could supervise students doing a doctorate. To overcome this, a strategy had been introduced so that staff with doctorates applied for research funding with resources built in to 'buy' another member of staff part-time, as a researcher, who could then use the research to gain this qualification (Case 4b).

6.9 Administration

Most staff interviewed felt that there had been an unwelcome rise in the amount of administrative work in their roles, and some cases expressed this view particularly strongly (Cases 2, 4, 5, 8). To help with this, extra administrative support had been brought in (Cases 1, 2a, 4, 5, 6, 8b), but heads often had to weigh this against the costs of academic posts. In one case the administrator employed was highly qualified in the discipline itself, and this had allowed the head to extend the scope of his work beyond the usual duties (Case 4a). Some heads did comment that overlap between academic and administrative staff, in the 'grey areas', had caused a few minor problems and confusions.

Administrative work was often shared out equally between staff by heads (Cases 3a, 4b, 7a); sometimes standard loads were set for the whole department (Case 5a), and in other places the amount of administrative work allocated would depend upon the overall balance of activities engaged in (Case 5b). Heads in many departments worked out the weightings of the roles involved through consultations with staff on comparables (Cases 1a, 1b, 6a, 6b), others used a calculation to ascertain the weighting, for example the weighting for Subject

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Group Leaders would be determined by the number of students, staff and programmes involved (Cases 8a, 8b). In distributing the work, many mentioned the importance of personality fitting the role. One member of staff commented on how, if the wrong person was allocated to certain pivotal roles the implications could be profound for students and other members of staff who might have to try to sort out problems that had been created (Case 1a). One head mentioned that they considered factors such as the individual's workload, but also how the administrative role would fit in with their academic profile in relation to promotion aspirations. Further, their ability to do the job and to bring energy, impetus and enthusiasm could be considered (Case 7b). Some roles were felt to be generally unpopular, so various strategies were deployed to help this; for example some large roles such as admissions officer were broken down into smaller areas and sections delegated to administrative staff, or terms for the role were strictly time limited. Some heads also used certain roles as a promotion gambit (Cases 4a, 6b); however staff in one case talked of how these large roles were often seen as being detrimental to promotion, as they prevented staff doing the research that helped their case (Case 8). How this worked would seem to depend on the profile of the department. In those cases where nearly all the staff were working successfully in research, an administrative role, with many responsibilities, was a way that the individuals could distinguish themselves (Cases 4a, 6b).

Both heads and staff talked of the reasons behind the rise in administrative work, for example for external audit requirements, government directives and the need for greater accountability and recording (cases 1, 5, 7, 8). Some talked of the need for self-discipline when it came to this type of work given that it could be open-ended (case 3a). Some senior staff had made the move to limit the number of committees in operation to try to cut down the workloads involved (Case 4a), although in another case the staff put into these University areas were felt not to be given sufficient recognition (Case 6). In certain cases staff felt that changes to their university's structure, and the creation of 'strong' faculties, would take away some of this work; however, there was some uncertainty as to what aspects would remain with the departments (Case 7). Other cases felt that they were facing more devolved responsibilities, especially in relation to finances.

Some universities, in their staff surveys, had touched upon areas such as administration; in one case, Human Resources staff felt that the findings showed that a lot of what was conceived of as administrative work was in fact teaching-related work (Case 1). Certain tasks were indeed felt to be time-consuming, for example sorting out clinical placements (Cases 4b, 6), and placements abroad for modern language students (Case 7a).

6.10 Problems

Generally there were few problems seen outside the issue of high workloads, where as one noted, the workload allocation models could expose problems, but not necessarily remedy them. Further, where there were problems, heads observed that these seemed to focus around only a few people in any one school or department. Of the other remaining issues, many centred around the communication and consultation processes. Across the universities, some staff felt uncertain about the future direction of the organisation and talked of the need to gain information through informal channels (Cases 1b, 3, 7). Where working parties had been set up it was felt that they were slow to have an impact, yet heads and senior staff did feel that they circulated a lot of informative material. Sometimes the problem was more about the consultation process where staff felt unsure about the plans of their head or did not feel that the workload model had been fully discussed; often this concerned the reasoning behind decisions, rather than the decisions themselves (Cases 2a, 3b, 6).

The growth of organisations was felt to be problematic, especially where there had been mergers with other colleges (Case 6), and these problems were exacerbated by changes in the mission of the university, for example where research was given a higher priority than previously (Cases 3, 7, 8). Union representatives reported that these changes had caused tensions, for example among staff who had a high workload on the teaching and administration front and who felt that they were being disadvantaged under this new ethos (Case 7). Comparisons were often at the foundation of the problems seen and these occurred either where there was no actual workload allocation model in place, thus allowing staff to negotiate directly with their head, or where staff took their own model and compared it with other departments in relation to weightings and so on (Cases 3, 8). Departments with employment contracts stipulating contact hours, seemed more predisposed to this sort of conflict (Cases 3, 8). However, other academics in these cases were aware of the need to be flexible in their

working practices in order to compete in their provision with other institutions. Consultancy work and paid overtime in these cases had also caused a few tensions and heads had brought in measures to limit this and to encourage efficient teaching practices.

Some staff felt faculties should be able to look across their schools and departments to ensure that resources and funding were being distributed equitably at this level as well (Cases 2, 6, 8). Heads dealing with many professional disciplines in one school felt the need to work hard to prevent divisions between the groups (Case 6), and there was an awareness of the danger of escalation of small gripes (Cases 5, 6). Further, heads were watchful of these sorts of frictions developing where a group became 'precious' and tensions grew between groups of staff who saw themselves as predominantly teachers or researchers.

Retirements had caused problems in some departments, especially in small units, (Cases 1, 7b), where staff - student ratios had worsened. The academics who joined to replace these posts often took some time before they were working at full efficiency because they needed to be trained and mentored (Cases 2b, 4a, 5b, 6a). Some new staff talked of the extra work pressures of taking teaching qualifications (Cases 2a, 2b). At the other end of the scale was the lack of senior staff to take on management roles because they had taken up Research Fellowships.

There were also a few frequently raised more practical issues such as the small gap between the first and second semester, that did not allow much time for exam or assignment marking (Cases 3, 5, 8b). Online provision and higher demands from students were also cited as causing problems for academic staff.

6.11 Individual Response

This section links to the above 'Workloads' section in which it was reported that high workloads and the open-endedness of much of the work, meant that staff in all cases seen often worked long hours into the evening and weekends. Some felt that they had compromised a little on the quality of their teaching, but generally this commitment was their first priority. Research was felt by many to be the element that differentiated loads, and was the area that suffered most when loads rose; a loss of creative thinking time was also frequently reported (Cases 1a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 6, 8). The factors that were mentioned about responses to this work situation were: personal efficiency, motivation and the compromises that staff were willing to make. Reference was made in all of the cases to the personal qualities that made some staff willing to pick up extra duties and this section will examine these individual factors in more detail.

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Efficiency was often cited as pivotal, and the need for staff to actively place a limit on some of their work activities, especially in relation to administrative work (Cases 2a, 2b, 4a, 4b, 5b, 6). Heads often noted how, as they became more experienced, they had improved in areas such as making decisions under pressure. The disadvantage for willing staff was felt to be that they could prejudice their chances of promotion if they burdened themselves with 'mundane' tasks – so the balance between efficiency, role stability, and promotion was implicitly weighed. Some were felt to thrive on their work and interviewees expressed a belief that to get promotion staff needed to put in some long hours (Cases 2b, 5b). Others commented that families and the work-life balance were upset by such an attitude; trips overseas to conferences were also sometimes problematic for family life (Cases 1b, 3b, 4a, 5, 7).

One of the elements that academics seemed to most enjoy was their autonomy at work, and this in many cases was felt to mitigate the strain caused by high workloads (Cases 3, 5, 6, 7, 8). Women staff also said that this autonomy was helpful in juggling family and work commitments (Cases 5a, 6b). Quite a few of the universities had undertaken surveys around the issues of workload, stress and satisfaction (Cases 5, 6, 7, 8). One survey had found academics to have much higher stress levels than any other workers within the university, but these levels amongst academics varied enormously between faculties. It also revealed that academics did not feel particularly supported by colleagues (Case 6). In the interviews quite a few individuals expressed some anxieties about their own performance, efficiency, and adequacy (Cases 1a, 1b, 2a, 3a, 7b,). In cases where this issue had been confronted, reassurance given by the head had relieved feelings of guilt and strain. Some staff did talk of their 'tetchiness' especially at peak periods, and reported some minor health problems (Cases 1a, 2a). Another survey carried out had found no negative correlation between high loads and satisfaction levels (Case 5). Interestingly the variety of the work involved - the teaching, research and general interaction between students and staff - was often cited as being one of the most satisfying aspects of the work (Cases

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4, 5, 6, 7, 8). Staff and heads both seemed to find 'the buzz' of their work environment stimulating (case 4, 6, 7). These findings have parallels with the large Kinman and Jones survey (2004) which also showed that psychological wellbeing measures had surprisingly low correlations to hours worked.

6.12 Organisation

Nearly all of the universities seen, seemed to be experiencing some form of change. Many of their faculties were undergoing restructuring (Cases 1, 6, 7, 8), others were streamlining their committees (Cases 3, 6, 7) or reducing the size of Council membership (Cases 1,6). These changes to committees and Council were aimed at making decision-making structures more efficient. Some of the committees were felt to be powerful structures in danger of eroding a lot of the powers of HoD/S (Cases 1, 2, 4). Some universities were looking hard at their course provision with an aim to 'rationalise' some of their less viable courses (cases 4, 7, 8). A stronger emphasis on budgets and efficiencies was noted (Cases 4, 5, 6, 7). In one this involved a business-like perspective on the 'student market' (case 4). Often efforts were made to provide information on income and charges so that staff were more aware of where to place their efforts (Cases 4, 5, 6, 7). Another case welcomed the prospect of economic costing systems that would provide information on where cross-subsidies were being made (Case 8).

In all the cases seen staff felt that management had become more centralised, and there was a wide variety of responses given to these changes. In some, mistrust was expressed (Case 3), but often there was some sympathy with the strategic plans. What had often caused problems was the manner in which these plans were put into effect. There was some feeling that the communication and consultation processes had been rather quick and rather general in approach (Cases 2, 3, 4, 7). Large groups were felt, in a few cases, to make this process more difficult, so that staff could not ask questions (Cases 4, 5). In other places the staff felt that consultation did not really occur, and instead that the process was limited to 'telling sessions' (Cases 3, 7, 8). In one case staff felt that this was almost what the staff expected, as they were often cautious about engaging in consultative processes (Case 8). However, the importance of staff 'buying in' and having 'ownership' of these decisions was seen as crucial, and there were reports of how departments that fell in line with these central plans benefited (Cases 2, 8). Other universities reported a better dialogue; however, even within this there were examples of disagreement about how much staff views were actively listened to and acted upon (Cases 4, 6). A few cases expressed a view that these changes to universities needed to be balanced by informal meetings and mentioned that Senate became more pivotal when other committees had been scrapped (Cases 5, 6). Although management was felt to have become more centralised, some cases still felt that the managerialist aspects were balanced by the collegial influence and allegiance to the departments or schools (Cases 1, 4, 6).

Staff seemed very aware of the pressures facing their university. Some were concerned about income from student fees and the impact that this had on their university (Cases 1, 4). Some staff knew that changes in their institution were a response to financial pressures (Case 7); others felt that their university was in a fairly healthy state financially, often because of restraint with resources (Cases 5, 6, 8). Many felt positive about their vice-chancellor or principal. Most felt that their vice-chancellor had responded to the challenges placed on them from external sources, whilst not neglecting the core focus of intellectual discovery (Cases 1, 4). Vice-chancellors were often felt to make efforts to maintain their visibility with staff, for example informing them of strategic plans (Cases 2, 3, 4, 6, 7) although in one case the vice-chancellor was described as 'invisible' (Case 8). In relation to these plans, although all of the universities seen described their research commitment, some had recently strengthened this stance in their strategy documents. Staff seemed well informed about this aspect of their university strategy (Cases 3, 4, 5, 7). In some this was felt to be a slight (and possibly unrealistic) change of focus (Cases 3, 5), in others a reaffirmation of priorities (Cases 4, 7).

As well as reshaping the organisations through restructuring and strategies, investment was also made in the staff. Training programmes for new heads of department were generally provided and some institutions were also offering leadership programmes to help maintain succession of staff at higher levels (Cases 1, 2, 6). The profile of staff within departments was also discussed. There was some talk of aging profiles and the need to recruit young lecturers. Some departments had had to manage quite a lot of early retirements (Cases 1b, 2b, 7b, 8b). In some, these individuals had not been replaced (Cases 7b, 8b), but quite a number of departments had replaced or created new posts (Cases1b, 2b, 3b, 6b).

6.13 University Systems

Most universities operated some form of staff review (appraisal) procedure but in some a wide range of practices was reported across the institution, with some departments not actively engaging in the process (cases 1, 3, 8). There did seem to be more disenchantment with the process in those cases where the HoD/S shared the responsibilities of this task with his other senior lecturer colleagues, as there was a feeling that the latter had no decision making powers (cases 2, 8). Many of the universities were in the process of developing new procedures for the review system (cases 3, 6, 7), and one was still in negotiation with the unions regarding the scope and aim of the process (case 3), the union preferring it to centre on development rather than evaluation. The other universities were looking at training their reviewers, so that they had clear objectives and were more able to identify staff who were over- or under-burdened (cases 6, 7). Human Resources staff in one case did note that better managed reviews linked to workload issues. The Australian universities looked at performance and development issues at review (cases 4, 5). Special care was taken with staff on probation and before tenure was confirmed. Guidelines for heads were set out so that workloads could be monitored and pressure points identified, with the aim of helping staff to clarify issues and prioritise their work; training needs were also discussed.

In relation to promotions policies, most staff had a clear idea of the criteria involved in judgement, and only one case had yet to develop a clear policy (Case 3). Mostly, staff were assessed on performance in the three areas: teaching, research and administration (or service as it was described in the Australian cases – a term that covered both the community and the university itself). Usually staff had to perform at a given level in two out of the three of these areas (Cases 2, 6, 7, 8); in one case staff could choose the weightings and balance between the three areas (Case 5). Some cases talked about alternative routes for promotion with just teaching and administration assessed, to accommodate clinical staff or those on contracts without a research element (Cases 6, 7). However, there were concerns from unions that teaching-only type contracts could be ultimately limiting for staff in relation to higher level promotions or even moving to other establishments. Similar concerns were expressed over the classifying of staff roles under the Framework Agreement. Generally,staff suggested that in practice it was hard to show excellence in areas like administration and teaching, and research often held the bigger sway (Cases 2, 5, 6, 7, 8). In one case the union representative declared that the criteria had eventually been changed to research and one other area (Case 2).

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There were a variety of other disparate concerns discussed too, for example the institutional surveys carried out that looked at issues such as workload, stress, and communication (Cases 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8). The latter was an area that was causing many problems, with staff sometimes reporting problems stemming from central strategies and among others owing to the style of their line manager (Cases 1, 2, 7). To answer these problems, some universities were looking at ways of diversifying their communication channels and developing new training for managers (Cases 2, 7). Many of the universities were running these surveys every year, but in one case, although informal work had been done on communications, no actual survey had been run. This was partly because the university was in a period of great change and disruption; they had many focus groups working and were aware that there were problems coordinating information between these groups (Case 3). Other results of these surveys also showed that workloads were problematic and this had made organisations look in more detail at workload and allocation issues (Cases 1, 5, 8), although in some instances other matters had prevented development of these aspects (Cases 3, 7, 8). In one case, Human Resource staff targeted their stress and workload surveys and audits on issues that could realistically be tackled (Case 8).

Training was another issue that had been looked at, with some universities updating their provision for staff, heads and future leaders (Cases 1, 2, 6). Timetabling was also mentioned, and many disliked the way that when this was done centrally the process started from scratch each semester, causing lots of disruption to both students and staff. Loss of personal room space for teaching was also felt to be a disadvantage through this timetabling system. The last issue that arose, especially among Human Resource staff, was the implementation of the Framework Agreement. This was felt to very time-consuming and had, for many, taken priority over other important matters (Cases 3, 7, 8).

6.14 Non-Educational Organisations

These organisations had some practices and responses that could be usefully reviewed in relation to approaching workload balancing in universities. Firstly, in these organisations time was invested early on; planning work out, forecasting, and organising the mix of teams to work on it. A three-dimensional operational diary, with time,

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staff, and project dimensions, was used in one case to assist with this. Team building was seen as an essential part of the process, so that staff felt supported and to ensure that newer staff got the relevant experience. For example this approach might help to mitigate some of the problems uncovered by the staff survey in Case 6, where staff reported feeling unsupported by their colleagues in relation to maintaining a work-life balance. Another approach these organisations used was to borrow or loan staff within the organisation to cover peak periods of demand and with the aim of maintaining flexibility. Technical expertise and problem sharing was also encouraged in one case through web networks. These responses have some resonance with the hopes of staff in Case 7 for synergies to be found in academics' work areas through amalgamations of departments. Another method that was used to help at peak periods was the use of the head to step in on projects. This obviously required the individual to be both informed and competent in the given area. Lastly, organisations tried to operate with some spare resources, obviously this is not likely to be seen as possible in many departments that feel very stretched financially, but one university case was seen (Case 8b) that was operating with ten per cent slack to help manage workloads more evenly.

Having built in as much flexibility as possible, these organisations spent time monitoring both the workloads and the staff. Regular meetings were held to track the progress of work and to ensure that it matched resources. In one, staff were also interviewed at the start of the year to set objectives and again mid-year to ensure that these were being met, for example in relation to staff training or experience needs. Heads used this time where necessary to reassure, support and to provide feedback on work, for example, from clients. This has parallels with those staff in university cases who expressed anxiety about the quality of their work, especially the teaching aspects. Those academic staff that had discussed the problem with their heads of department felt that the reassurance provided had helped a lot with the strain (Case 3a). One non-higher education organisation also ran departmental surveys, as well as organisational ones, in order to be aware of any problems. Many of the university staff seen were dismissive of these organisational surveys, feeling that they were quite detached from them, but an initiative at department level might overcome this cynicism.

Heads in these non-higher education establishments were also very focused on efficiencies, ensuring that there was no unnecessary work done. They focused on ensuring that work was done to the right standard and organisational procedures followed. Such an approach would probably be felt to run counter to the academic belief in autonomy. However it does resonate with the response of many heads to their staff about the risk of over-teaching. Such structuring also addresses, and could perhaps mitigate, the issue of personal response to work being one of the biggest perceived factors in relation to workload quantity and quality. Efficiency was talked of a lot in the university interviews too. For example, many heads described how much more efficient they became after a few years experience in the role. This seems to confirm Gmelch and Burns'[173] (1994) view about stress levels for heads being more related to factors such as experience, rather than age or gender.

The last aspect that was of interest in these cases was that the departments within these organisations were more aware of the profile of their workloads. For example, one described their work as 'medium intensity, continuous peak' and contrasted it with other areas that had bigger peaks and troughs. Such a view has resonance with reports that teaching and research profiles differ over the course of the year. Some staff noted how in workload models the teaching allocation had to fit in over the shorter teaching period, whilst research loads could be spread more evenly throughout the year. How this is perceived will obviously depend upon the individual's perspective. Those with a higher teaching load will suffer peak periods of work around exam time, but might be able to relax more over the vacation, whereas a researching colleague may feel that they are working pretty steadily all through the year. As so much of the research on workloads and stress relates to individual response, then this would appear to be a factor that ought to be considered when workloads and staff resources are reviewed.

Interestingly in one of the non-higher education cases there was frequent reference to being a "company" person, in other words the fit between the individual and the organisational profile was recognised and apparent. The nature of academia involves a very diverse grouping of 'types' making this notion of 'fit' fundamentally more difficult.

173 Gmelch, W. and Burns, J. (1994)

7 AXIAL CODING

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Following Strauss and Corbin's[174] ideas on axial coding where context, actions/strategies and consequences are explicated, a framework was developed using the categories of phenomena arising from the cross-case analyses set out above. Using the interview data each selected phenomenon (node) was analysed through looking at its relationship with other nodes. The latter were designated as either part of the selected phenomenon node's context, or the strategy/actions that would handle or manage the phenomenon or the consequences or outcomes of these actions. The results were then tabulated (Table 14). Through this, a deeper understanding of the connections between various categories (nodes) was gained.

Note: The symbol <> indicates a reciprocal relationship

TABLE 14

THE CONTEXT, ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF MAJOR PHENOMENA (NODES)

PHENOMENON	CONTEXT	ACTIONS/STRATEGIES	CONSEQUENCES (can be negative or positive change)
Policy	Leaders Management style Organisation Employment contracts Unions	Leadership Communication Training HoD/S	Allocation processes that are: Transparent Equitable and defensible
WLA Process	Organisation Employment contracts Policy Unions HoD/S Department environment Departmental strategies WLA model development Individual response <> • experience profiles	Balancing loads/roles Employing other teaching staff Employing specialist staff Consultation with staff Timetabling	Workloads • distribution patterns • roles • fit Transparency Equity Trust Disputes/conflict Individual response <> • performance • coping
Transparency	Organisation • management style Policy Employment contracts Department environment HoD/S Individual response	WLA process. • communication • HoD/S	Equity Trust Individual response<> • behaviour Problems Flexibility Facilitation of appraisal and Promotion processes
Equity	Organisation • management style Policy Employment contracts Transparency HoD/S Individual response <>	WLA Process • consultation Communication	Individual response<> • coping • behaviour • performance Workloads • roles • gender • fit Problems Trust

[174] Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990)

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TABLE 14

THE CONTEXT, ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF MAJOR PHENOMENA (NODES) (CONTINUED)

PHENOMENON	CONTEXT	ACTIONS/STRATEGIES	CONSEQUENCES (can be negative or positive change)
Flexibility	Organisation. WLA Process<> Department environment HoD/S Timetabling	WLA process <> • staffing/balancing loads • sabbaticals Systems Consultation Staffing	Individual response • autonomy • coping • satisfaction • performance Working at home Research
HoD/S	Organisation Employment contracts Training Department environment<> Individual response<> Staffing	Policy WLA process • communication • department strategies • staffing/balancing loads and roles. Consultation	Individual response <> Equity Trust Problems Department environment <> WLA process • model development / theories
Consultation	Department environment <> Departmental strategies HoD/S Individual response <> Trust	Communication Staffing - balancing loads and roles Transparency <>	Transparency <> Individual response <> • coping Fit Trust Equity Department environment <> Flexibility WLA process Model development/theories
Workloads	Organisation • resources • environment Employment contracts WLA process <> Department environment <> • staffing • work types (teaching / administration / research) Individual response <>	WLA Process <>. • HoD/S- • consultation • staffing/balancing loads and roles Staffing • specialist staff • part time staff Support factors Surveys Roles	Quantity Fit Distribution patterns Gender Individual response<> • coping • performance • behaviour • autonomy Teaching • students • courses Administration Research Department environment <> Systems • promotion • surveys
Teaching	Organisation Employment contracts Department environment Staffing Timetabling system	WLA process • balancing loads/roles • HoD/S • consultation	Individual Response <> • coping • performance • satisfaction • autonomy

THE CONTEXT, ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF MAJOR PHENOMENA (NODES) (CONTINUED)

PHENOMENON	CONTEXT	ACTIONS/STRATEGIES	CONSEQUENCES (can be negative or positive change)
Teaching (Continued)	Individual response <> • competency • specialisms Students Professional associations (requirements)	Qualitative measures • modes • stable/new courses • team teaching • online teaching Quantative measures • hours • capping numbers • number of modules Other Staffing Training	Workload • distribution • fit Assessment
Research	Organisation Employment contracts Department environment <>. RAE Individual response <> • experience • competence • behaviour • satisfaction <>	WLA process • HoD/S • consultation • balancing loads Training	Promotion Individual response <> • autonomy • satisfaction <> Workload • home working • quantity • distribution patterns Department environment <>
Administration	Organisation • environment Department environment Workloads • specific roles Individual response <> • performance • behaviour	WLA Process • HoD/S role • consultation Staffing – specialist	Systems • surveys • promotion Individual response <> • performance • coping Workload • gender • quantity
Problems	Organisation • environment • strategies communication Trust Employment contracts WLA process Department environment HoD/S <> Consultation <> Transparency <> Equity <> Workloads • quantity • fit • distribution patterns Timetabling Individual Response<> • age profiles	Flexibility HoD/S <> Consultation <> Transparency <> Equity <> Communication <> Individual response Training Surveys	Transparency <> Equity <> Individual response<> • behaviour • coping • performance • satisfaction • frustration • autonomy Flexibility Trust

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TABLE 14

THE CONTEXT, ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF MAJOR PHENOMENA (NODES) (CONTINUED)

PHENOMENON	CONTEXT	ACTIONS/STRATEGIES	CONSEQUENCES (can be negative or positive change)
Individual Response	Organisation • management style • environment Trust Systems Department environment HoD/S Workloads <> • roles (teaching / administration / research) • fit Students	WLA Process • HoD/S • consultation • home working Surveys	Workloads <> • fit Trust Appraisal Promotion Behaviour Performance Coping Satisfaction
Organisation	Policy Employment contracts Systems <> Department environment <> Individual response <> • age profiles	Leadership Management style Systems <> Organisational strategies / Resources Training Communication <> Research Teaching HoD/S Departmental strategies Consultation	Trust Department environment <> Systems <> Teaching • staffing Individual response <> Communication <>
University Systems	Organisation • unions Employment contracts Individual response <> • age profiles/new staff	Systems • promotion • appraisal • training • surveys • timetabling • framework • agreement / communication HoD/S <>	Individual response<> • performance • satisfaction • coping Workloads • fit • quantity • distribution patterns Trust HoD/S <>

8. COGNITIVE MAPPING

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From the above axial coding it can be seen that complex forces are at play within departments and institutions, which deserve further analysis. So the data from the tables were extracted and plotted using cognitive mapping[175]. Thus, for each phenomenon coded as a 'node', connections were drawn in from its related context nodes and out to its consequences nodes. (To avoid over-complication of the maps the *Actions* elements are covered in the discussion). In this way the links between contextual factors, and consequences or outcomes could be considered. Sometimes this relationship was cyclical, so that, for example, the HoD/S category might have Departmental Environment as both the context and the consequence for their activities; in this case diagrammatic arrows would be shown in both directions. Software was then used to model various situations and structure the findings. The related groups of concepts were colour coded for clarity, the following colours are used in Figures 2, 3 and 4 later in this section:

- Organisational - light grey
- People - light orange
- Workload - dark grey
- General characteristics - dark orange

To avoid over-complication of the diagrams the 'properties' were not included (with a few exceptions) in the main Organisation and System categories. In the case of Teaching, Research and Administration, these are major categories in themselves, but are also sub-categories of Workload so shared many of its contexts and consequences. To avoid over-complication of the diagram only factors particular to Teaching, Research and Administration were shown. (The discussion section covers this in greater detail).

Once all the nodes were mapped, the tools within the software allowed any given node, such as Transparency, to be extracted with and all its direct connections viewed. This was a useful way to understand the relationships at work in greater depth, but it was also necessary to get an overview of the process. Whilst the whole map usefully highlights the complexity of issues involved, the sheer number of nodes can obscure the main or pivotal factors at work. To overcome this problem, commands which list the links between nodes in order of their density of connections were used (namely Centrality and Domain commands). The Centrality command highlights chains of influence extending across up to seven links and hence, the centrality of a node may be seen beyond just its immediate vicinity. Domain commands, on the other hand, highlight direct links to adjacent concepts. For both commands, results were listed in numerical order from those with the greatest density of connections to the least.

The results of these two different commands, identified the same top ten linked concepts with only the order varying slightly between the two lists. These were: Individual response'; Organisation; Workloads; Problems; Workload Allocation Processes; HoD/S; Equity, Systems; Transparency; and Departmental Environment. These were then taken as the pivotal elements that make up the core dynamics of the process. In any of the mapping diagrams, concepts could be hidden from view. This was especially useful for those nodes that seemed to impact or have connections with every other node, for example, the major node University Systems. Whilst this had to be borne in mind for general understanding, it could be temporarily removed to make the diagram clearer. Many of these main nodes have properties that are also involved in the relationships, and a judgment was made, with reference to the data, as to each one's specific relevance to the issue in practice. For example, in relation to University Systems, appraisal and promotion systems have been explicitly mapped, whilst framework agreement has not. Figure 2 (overleaf), is the main map showing all of the connections. Given its complexity a series of more specific maps were captured and experimented with. The most insightful were those that showed the relationship of the top ten factors from the Domain and Centrality selections, and the maps of particular perspectives on the issue, namely, HoD/S and also Individual Response.

Figure 3 (overleaf) gives a map of the top ten nodes and shows that Organisation, Departmental Environment', HoD/S, and Individual Response, all directly inform the workload allocation process.

From Figure 3, showing a map of the 'top ten' nodes, it can be seen that nodes such as the Organisation, Departmental Environment, HoD/S, and Individual Response directly inform the workload allocation process. Looking at each of these in turn, informed by the source data, it can be seen that the actual environment of the university concerned, such as its level of resources, had impacts on issues such as

175 Ackermann, F. *et al*. (1996)

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FIGURE 2

OVERALL RELATIONSHIPS

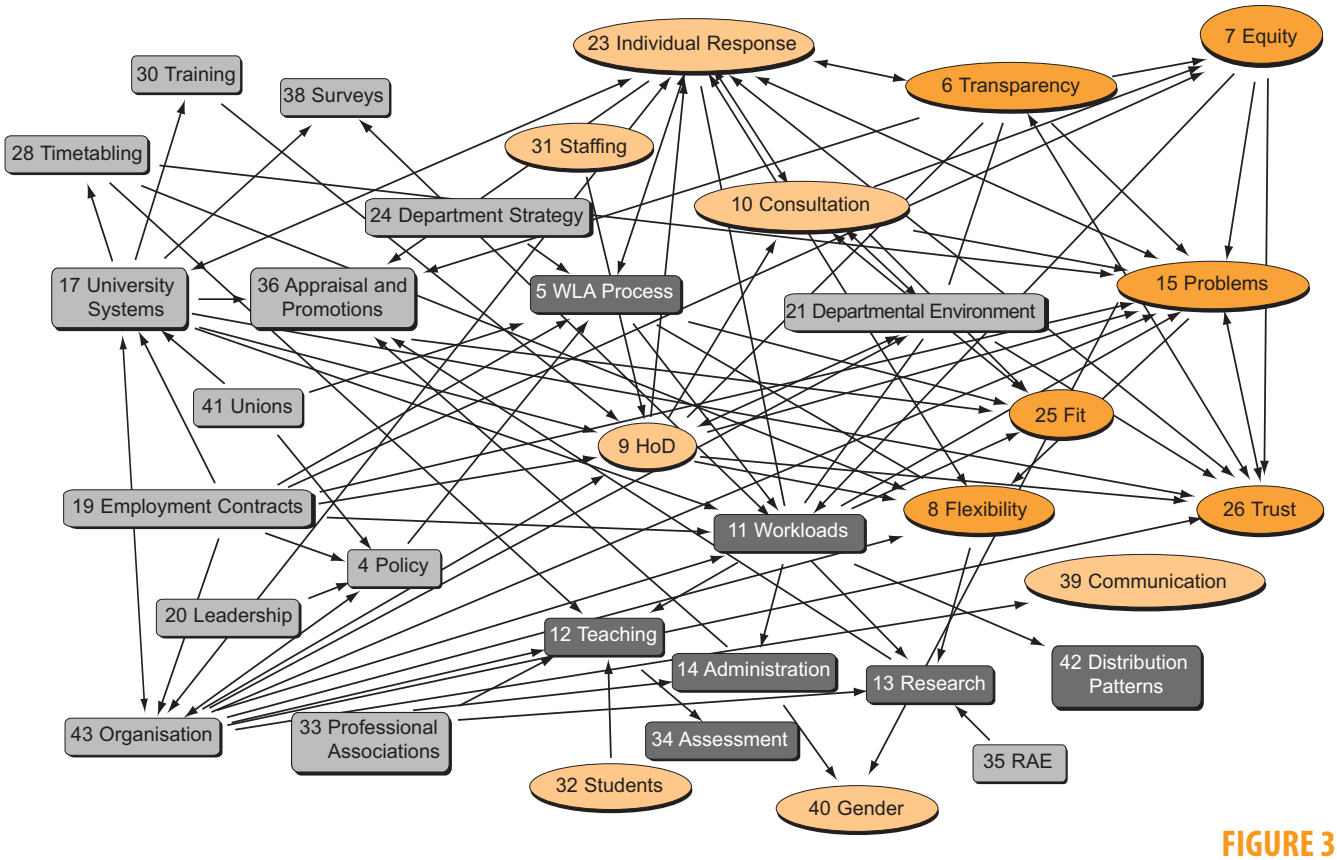
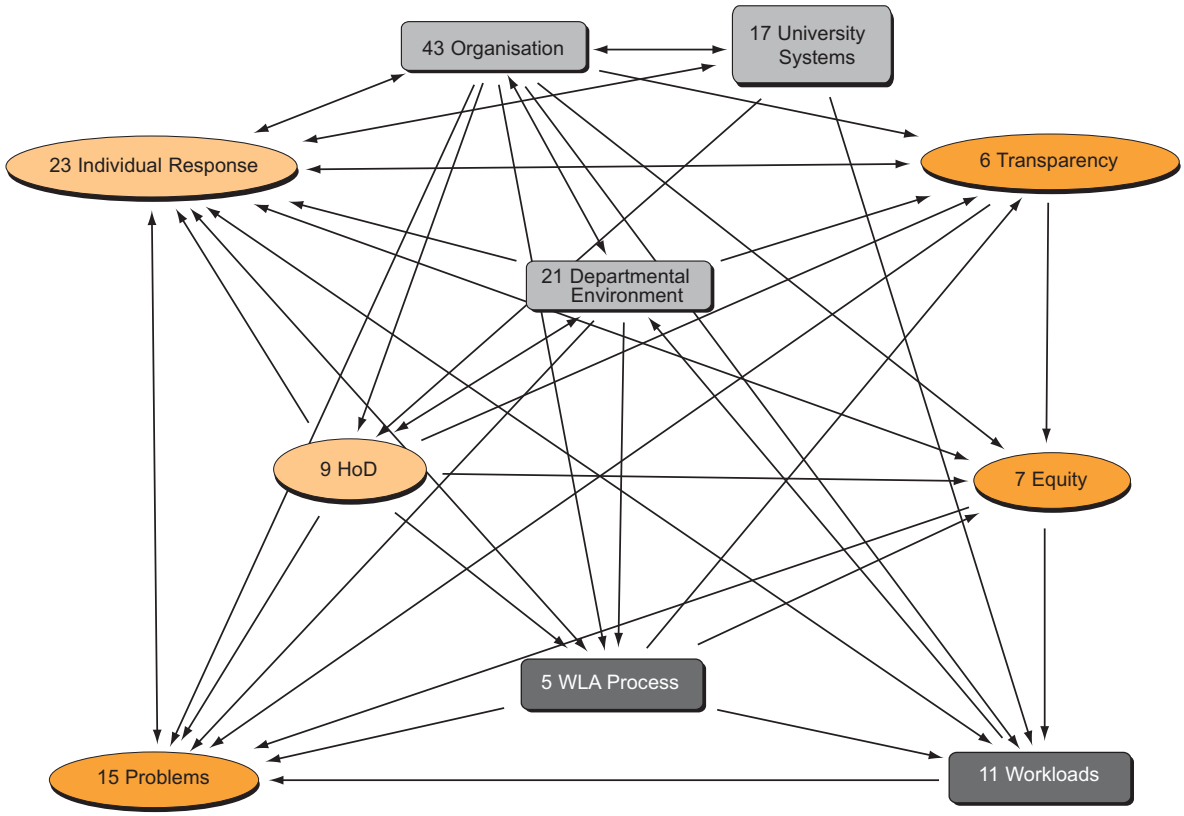


FIGURE 3

'TOP TEN' MOST CENTRAL FACTORS



staffing and recruitment. The strategy that it adopted, such as the degree of focus on research, affected how at departmental level these strategies were implemented within workload allocation, as did the communication of these strategies. The management style operating was also influential, for example more managerialist approaches looked for some conformity of approaches within faculties to facilitate their resource allocation systems. There was also a wide range of other organisational factors that were influential on workload allocation, such as geographical location that affected recruitment for both staff and students and mergers with other institutions with staff on different employment contracts that resulted in HoD/S having to have models that could accommodate such variety. The department environment, for example its size, in terms both of staff and students, influenced how formal the model needed to be and the discipline too had implications for aspects such as teaching modes and delivery. Research profile was also an aspect of the department environment that affected the model, for example determining whether research was included, what weightings were given, whether they were capped, given retrospectively and how they were decided upon.

The HoD/S also had an impact on the workload allocation system. This was partly a function of their own management style and character, how much they liked to control their staff, how much they delegated responsibilities, and how detailed they made the model. Also, some heads were happy to adopt an old model and just adapt it to fit changes in circumstance, whilst others felt happier experimenting to try out new methods of allocation. Experience and training had an impact too on their responses. However the individual responses of staff, working collectively, or in some cases in isolation, also had an effect on the workload allocation model adopted. For example, some staff constructively engaged with consultation processes surrounding aspects such as determining weightings for certain work, whilst others seemed more passive, yet critical of the process. In developing and implementing a model heads seemed very aware of the potential reactions of staff. These seemed to be a function of both intrinsic character factors, such as efficiency and performance aspects, and also extrinsic factors such as particular employment contracts and role profiles that affected individual responses. These factors had some influence on what was identified to be shared out and also on the manner of that sharing.

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Coming out from the workload allocation process node it can be seen that there are consequences in the form of Workloads, Equity, Transparency, Problems, and reciprocal relationships with Individual Response. The way work was distributed had an effect on workloads, with many seeing a move of the distribution towards the middle as outliers were identified and rectified. The link from Workloads to Problems reflects the issues resulting often from sheer quantity aspects, but also other qualitative factors such as roles undertaken and the impact on issues such as promotion. The model used also affected equity in workloads as a result of the number of factors considered within the system and how calculations were made on the work involved. For example, many systems did not include research within the model, which did not seem fair for those staff spending large amounts of time in this area. In relation to teaching there were also inequities felt in relation to online teaching and models where no account was taken of differences between class, and hence assessment and size. Transparency can be seen to connect up again to issues of Equity as staff awareness of others' loads became a force for more equitable distributions. However Transparency and Equity connect also to Problems, because this very awareness often either caused or alleviated problems when staff were able to make direct comparisons with others. Individual Response connects in a reciprocal relationship with workload allocation process as perceptions of the model influenced aspects such as motivation and behaviour. Further the actual equity of the system had impacts in relation to coping and performance. A reciprocal relationship also operated in relation to Workloads and Individual Response where aspects such as efficiency and coping styles had an effect on how workloads were dealt with and this in turn influenced staff causing emotions such as satisfaction and frustration.

Going one step back from these more direct relationships about the workload allocation process, it can be seen from Figure 3 that a number of other nodes have a network of relationships that are influencing the process indirectly. For example, many of the organisational and systems influences described above are mediated through Department Environment and HoD/S nodes initially. So, for example, university systems that produced much in the way of administrative work and organisational aspects such as resources had impacts at department level both in the work needing doing and the ease with which that work could be done, such as help from support staff.

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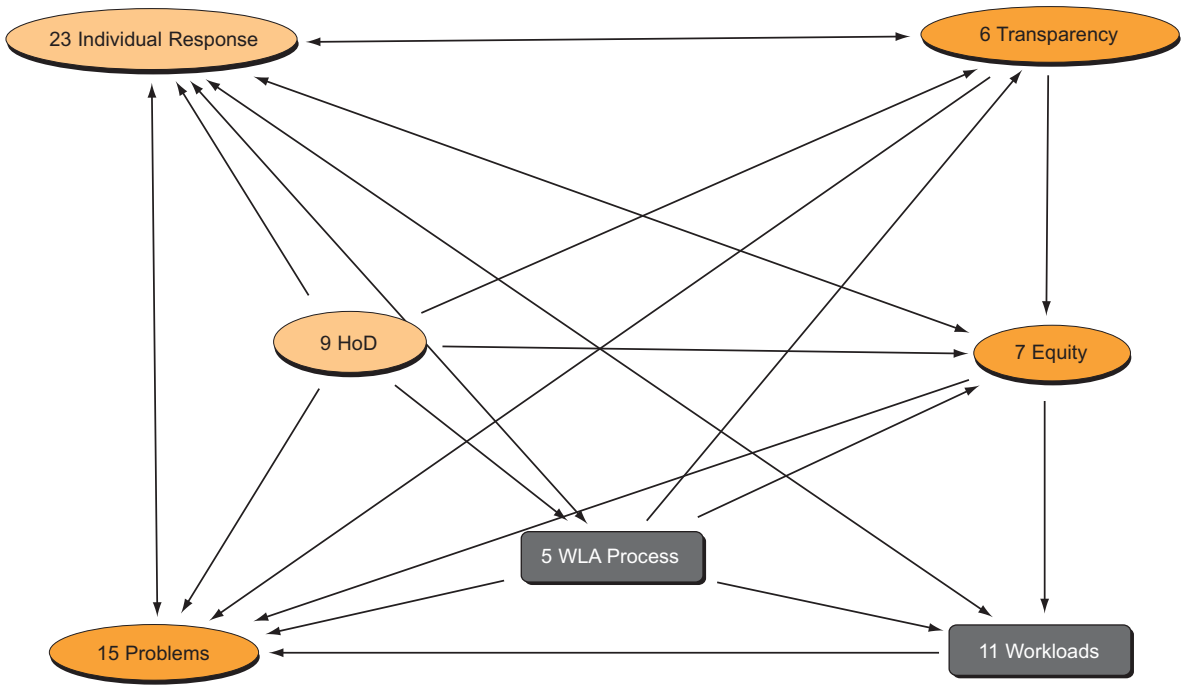
Looking at the HoD node again these Organisation and University System categories had an influence through aspects such as policy, employment contracts and even the training programmes offered to new heads. These aspects affected the decisions and choices that heads made about allocation methods, their strategies, consultation processes and aspects such as transparency. This in turn affected perceptions on issues such as trust and autonomy that could be seen to affect the Individual Response node, in terms of behaviour and satisfaction.

Figure 4 shows more clearly the direct relationships operating as Organisation, University Systems and Departmental Environment are hidden. From this a clearer view can be gained of the mainly reciprocal relationships operating between the people aspects (HoD/S and Individual Response), the work nodes (Workloads and WLA process) and the characteristics nodes (Equity, Transparency and Problems). It can be seen that the workload allocation process is informed by both the HoD/S, for example in their development or adoption of the models and by individuals, the staff within the department. However these 'people' nodes also have impact on the 'characteristic' aspects of the process in terms of equity, transparency and problems, that are not easily defined or quantified yet have major impacts on all involved in the process. It can also be seen that there are interactions between both characteristics and work factors, such as Transparency to Equity; and Problems / Workloads to Problems.

Another method of analysing is described above. Instead of selecting the most densely linked nodes, an individual node was selected and all of the connections made to it examined. Such an approach works well with the soft systems approach of naming the main perspective or *Weltanschauung* of the analysis[176]. In this case the HoD/S was chosen. Figure 5 shows the additional factors that are picked up such as Trust, Flexibility, Consultation and Staffing as a result of including all the nodes. However the Organisational and Systems nodes that connect to just about everything have been hidden from these views in order to see the more direct influences more clearly. Staffing is a contextual factor for the HoD/S, but the node Consultation, driven by the HoD/S can be seen to impact on

FIGURE 4

'TOP TEN' MOST CENTRAL FACTORS (BUT, WITH 17, 21, 43 HIDDEN)



176 Checkland, P. (1993)

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many of the other nodes: WLA Process, Trust, Equity, Transparency, Flexibility and Problems. However the Trust node also follows as a consequence from HoD/s, Equity and Transparency nodes, but without a direct connection from workload allocation process itself, suggesting the importance of these 'soft' elements within the process.

Individual Response has been hidden from this HoD/S *Weltanschauung* for ease of analysis, but when it is introduced again in Figure 6 its highly influential nature can be seen. Once again it needs to be stressed that the maps cannot show all the subcategories operating, for example for Individual Response this would include Behaviour, Coping, and Satisfaction nodes. This detail is supplied by Table 14 (Axial Coding page 103).

Creating a map of the nodes connected to the Individual Response node, as shown below in Figure 7, shows similar relationships, but with the extra dimensions of Workloads and their 'fit to the individual' as added consequences. This aspect highlights that the HoD/S achieves fit through a combination of the workload allocation system and the consultation process. In addition to all the other reciprocal relationships at work this diagram also shows the reciprocal effect of individuals in relation to workload itself, for example in relation to their performance and efficiency levels.

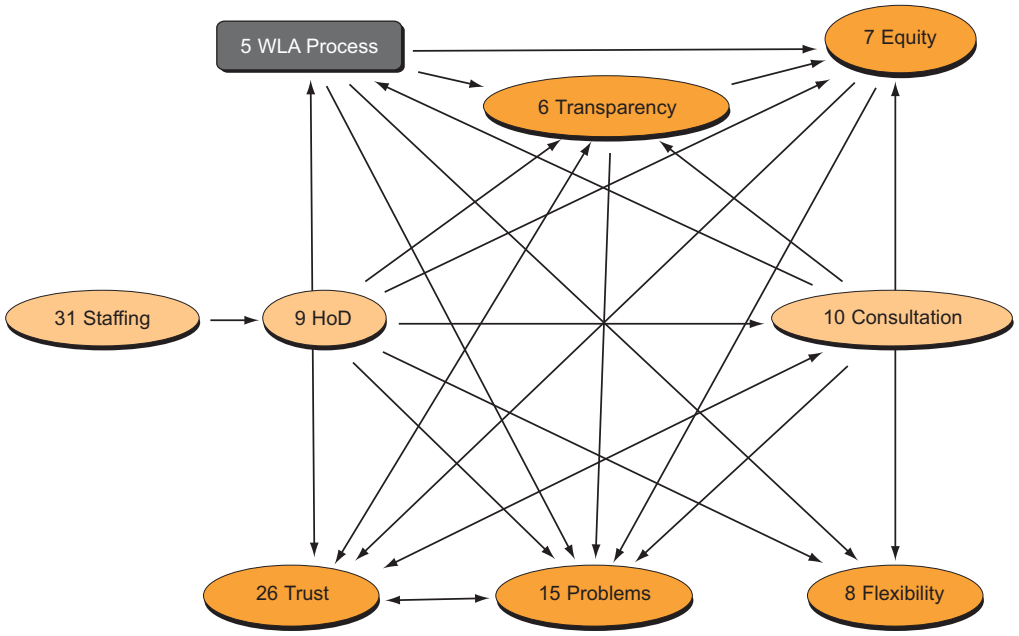
Summary of cognitive mapping diagrams

The cognitive mapping has provided some different perspectives on the interview data and highlighted various dynamic relationships.

- The main map (Figure 2) shows a very complex system of relationships at work. This appears to move from the general and pervasive influence of university-level organisational factors on the left-hand side, through a complex web of interactions to outcomes, such as "problems" on the right-hand side.
- However, this apparent linearity belies the dynamic nature of the situation, which has to accommodate past actions and their consequences and creates the conditions for future exercises.

FIGURE 5

"HoD/S" VIEW (EXCLUDING ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS AND 23)



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- The coloured and shaded boxes help to show that quite different sorts of factors are involved, such as people-related, organisational, workload-specific elements and general characteristics. The broad split is between hard factors, such as the calculation and allocation of workloads, and soft factors, such as trust and equity.
- The maps of the top ten major factors (Figures 3 and 4) highlight the key relationships and reinforce, first, that the various categories of factors are all involved and, second, the frequency with which these are connected with reciprocal links, so stressing how dynamic the interrelationships are.
- The analyses taking the perspective of the HoD/S (Figures 5 and 6) reveal consultation to be pivotal, with consequences to both the workload allocation process and factors such as trust and equity. This is reinforced by the perspective given by taking the view of Individual Response (Figure 7), together with the notion of the "fit" between individuals and their work.

FIGURE 6

"HoD/S" VIEW, (AS FIG 5, BUT INCLUDING 23)

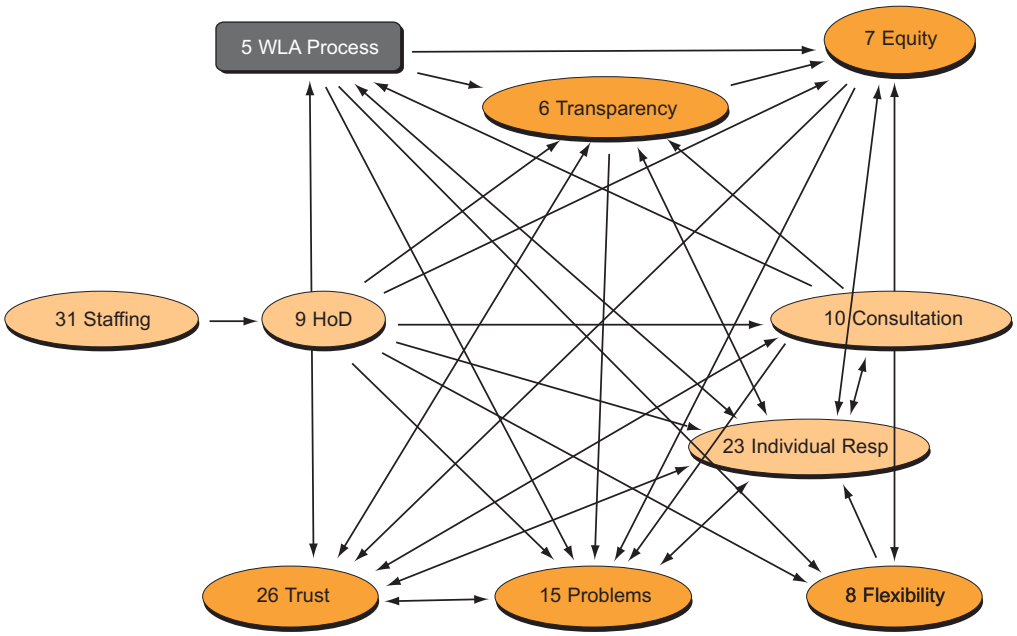

FIGURE 7

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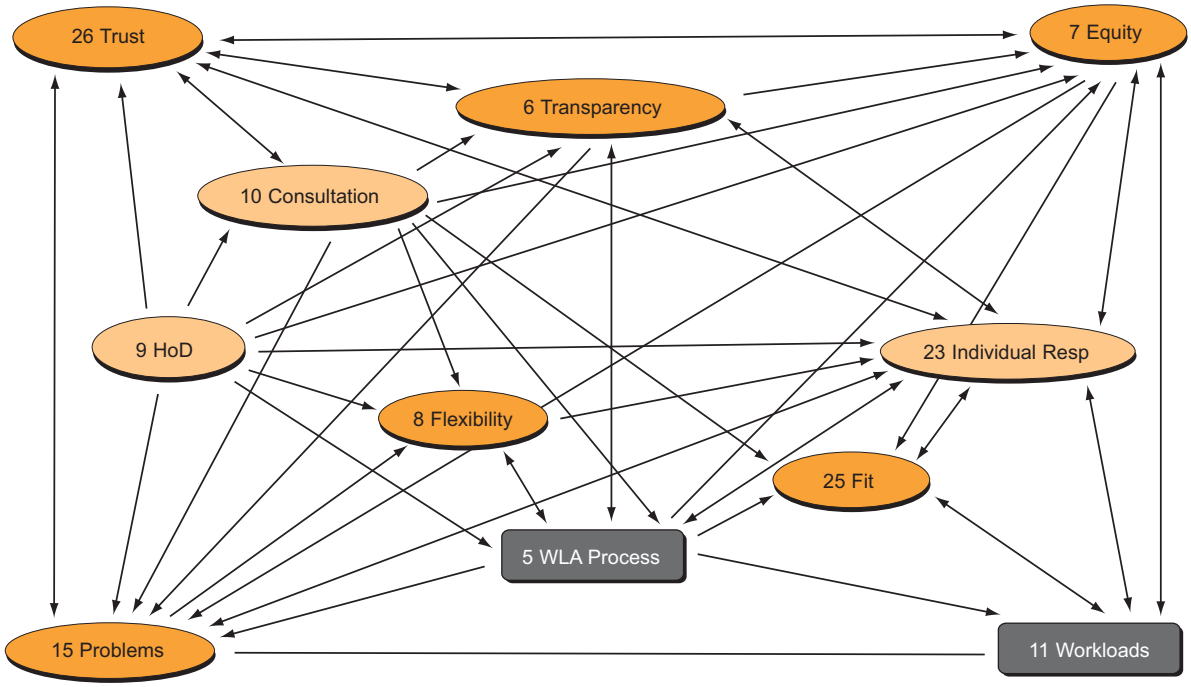
"INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE" VIEW (EXCLUDING ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS 17, 21, 36, 43)



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9 DISCUSSION

The cognitive mapping phase was the culmination of much of the previous analysis; however, its stress on the central processes does leave some aspects, such as unintended consequences, that would benefit from further discussion, reaching back into the interview data. Further, to avoid impossible levels of diagrammatic detail the cognitive mapping did not set out in full the subcategories of activity, namely: teaching, research and administration. So, issues around the interplay of these activities also deserve some additional discussion.

9.1 Organisational Context

There was a very wide variety of approaches by departments to workload allocation within each university. This would seem to be a direct consequence of a relatively weak strategic stance in relation to workload allocation systems in most universities, in practice. They might have aspired to address the issue, but other priorities such as Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) took over. However, there are complex organisational questions that do have an influence on workload modelling. For example, can workload allocation be used to manage motivations and align staff with a university's strategic goals, rather than just reflecting a portfolio of activities? Further, how can organisations manage tensions between research and teaching aspects? In essence, what is the organisational culture within which the workload allocation process takes place?

The relationship between the individual and their university is highlighted by the approach taken to promotion. In most universities, policies have been pursued that widen the criteria for selection to include teaching and administration more strongly, But, as Kinman and Jones' 2004 survey showed, over 80 per cent of staff had felt a significant increase in pressure over the last five years to get research funding and to publish work. So, despite this apparent equality in university systems staff still felt that research was more highly valued. This appears to be an engrained ideology amongst staff and at a senior level, reinforced by the culture of higher education that values the creation of knowledge highly, and compounded by an increasing tendency to rate students, staff and universities, with naturalised criteria for distinguishing 'the best'. As Coaldrake and Stedman[177] point out, success in research may be easier to measure as it can rely on the existing peer review and competitive grant funding processes[178].

In a rather counter-intuitive way this background appears to have led to many of the workload allocation methods *omitting* research from their calculations. These systems rely on self-motivated staff often tackling work outside of normal working hours. Conversely, where research is used in the model it can be perceived as a measure to 'punish' some staff with more teaching. However, some approaches aimed to promote synergies between the two areas with active researchers continuing to teach and enthuse students with their subject, some of whom in turn embarked on postgraduate research studies.

The limited prospect of promotion in higher education organisations emphasises the need for leaders and managers to consider the personal qualities of staff and to ensure that they feel motivated and rewarded through valuing the inherent qualities of their work. It might be argued that with resources being pressed, what actually distinguishes a school is how many of the staff are prepared to work over the workload allocation or how many do not actually fully meet it. This might be especially relevant to research, as although highly defined teaching commitments were always met, research was the area commonly cited as that which had to 'give', again in contradiction to the value system described above. However, staff also suggested that this was the area that they mainly worked on after office hours. So success in research could be seen to depend, in part, on how many people work over and above their "normal" hours.

Self-directed work at home may have benefits for the organisation, but in breaking down the home-work divide there are potential dangers for the individual and their families. However, staff as professionals have some responsibility to balance their own workloads. They clearly enjoy their autonomy and there is much evidence that stress responses are in part a function of individual styles of coping, enabled by the existence of a degree of autonomy[179]. Workload allocation systems may seem like an attack on autonomy, yet the other side of this autonomy and individual responsibility is a context that might offer less support from colleagues than other work environments. Organisational hierarchies are flatter and more fluid when compared to professional non higher education organisations, for example an HoD/S might be elected, a colleague turned temporary line manager.

So, universities still hold dear the notion of autonomy and as a result gain much self-motivation from staff. This latter

177 Coaldrake, P. and Stedman, L. (1999)
178 Coaldrake, P. and Stedman, L. (1999) p24
179 Karasek, R. (1979)

appears to impact particularly on research with consequences for possible individual overload, especially in a context where collegiality is under pressure. These are all factors that operate as part of the complex series of relationships between individuals, organisations, the various work types and the models that are used to organise them.

9.2 Workload Allocation Process

In many situations people were fairly happy with the *status quo* in the allocation process; it was when change was occurring that staff got anxious, even when the new system offered greater prospects of equity and efficiency. There was a feeling that the models could be used positively to match staff and resources and to identify uneconomic activities and help provide fairer systems. However many also commented that despite the sophisticated models the process was not an exact science, and relied on 'gut feeling' and the HoD/S's judgment to a large extent also. A quite strongly held general view was a belief that no single model could cope with the diversity of subjects and the different modes of delivery, etc. This was particularly raised about science subjects versus the arts. However, the results challenge this by showing that the different types of models were in fact used across all the disciplines, although the Science areas displayed a slight tendency to adopt comprehensive models (see Figure 8).

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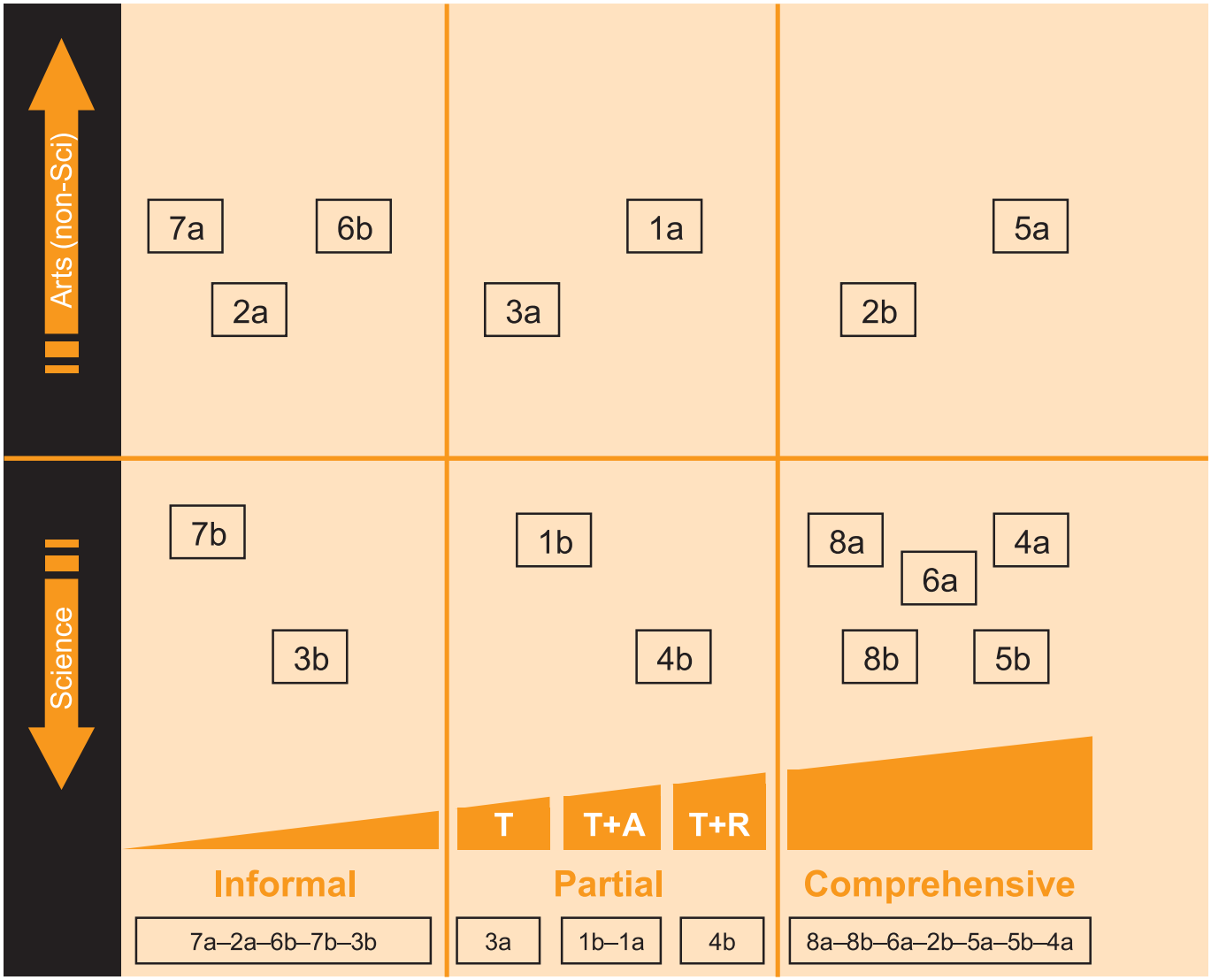
FIGURE 8

APPROACHES USED AGAINST DISCIPLINE



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Some also believed that a model to accommodate such diversity would be either too complex to operate or insufficient to cope. Some believed that too much detail would allow staff room to 'bicker', opening up various antagonisms. Generally though, the more complex systems did seem capable of accommodating the intricacies of workloads such as marking, small inputs into modules from a large number of staff, weightings for research and administration work, and different modes of delivery. The informal systems seen were more precarious, being more dependent on the skills of the head.

The unit of currency in the model was also an issue for some. Academics at all levels expressed their dislike of the notion of timesheets. Explicit reasons given ranged from: a dislike of having to fill in more forms; suspicion of how the information could be used; and concerns about what is perceived as an attack on academic autonomy. Further, some heads expressed a belief that if hours were used as the unit, then staff would work to them and not beyond. Yet the recurrent problem was that working hours seemed insufficient to cover the range of tasks to be done. In models that used hours certain work types, such as research, tended to be excluded or capped, so that actual hours were not apparent. As one stated, workload is all about 'the onerous task', and staff were less concerned about the time used to do what they were really interested in, such as their research or scholarship. Workload models could often exclude or cap research, knowing that it would still get done. However there was potential for problems too under the points system where, as loads increased, some allocations could become devalued.

Even in those areas with a workload allocation model there was often resistance to the introduction of change or minor refinement, a basic conservatism. A workload allocation system might highlight areas that required change, and this could be hard for even those staff who were working very hard. However where the system was not well managed, the implications for staff were great. A case was reported where a member of staff had been given two 'full' workloads from two different departments, and another was seen where the workload was four times what was described at the initial interview. Further, if there was no workload allocation model in place staff seemed to be less aware of the actual hours that they were working. Often this was because of quite complicated inputs of varying amounts in any given semester. In some cases staff seemed to obfuscate on the details - this might have been because they were really hazy on them and genuinely believed themselves to be overloaded, but without any objective reference point. So in this way, lack of transparency in the allocation from HoD/S seemed to spread through the department. At times there was also a feeling that without a transparent system everyone needed to give an account of being busy to prevent further loading. One head described how she always had a spare job ready to give to anyone who entered into workload negotiations with her. A transparent model with quantifiable allocations might lead some staff to be more open to taking on extra work, but could make others more resistant and cause conflict.

Through the discussions it was apparent that introducing a workload allocation model was a time consuming, resource-intensive process. Further, the introduction of a workload allocation system could initially create more managerialism and administrative work in a sector already suffering from high loads. Perhaps because of this, few managers saw the need to connect workload allocation to a wider web of activities such as appraisal, activity costing and strategic planning. However there was pressure in some quarters for some sort of comparability between schools of a faculty (Cases 1, 6a, 7a). This was because within a school workload allocation models might balance, but if the faculty held the budgets then it needed to ensure that schools' resource levels balanced between, rather than averaged across, the faculty. In Case 8 there was some evidence of this disparity occurring, where one school was hard pressed compared to another, even though within the schools loads were balanced. Contracts of employment could also create complications beyond just the hours limits. For example, in some cases (Cases 6 and 8) HoD/S had to create models and systems that could accommodate staff with different contracts. Although this was felt to be potentially problematic in relation to equity, staff had been reasonable in their response to the issue.

Size of department or school was also an issue. High staff numbers helped to spread the load and create flexibility for delivery and for areas such as sabbaticals. Yet it made it harder for heads to know their staff and to have a sense of who was more lightly loaded and who overburdened. This might not seem to matter if there was a good workload allocation model, but in fact through the year the heads

had to make informal adjustments to the model, using their discretion and judgement to accommodate variations in work and resources. Flexibility could also be problematic in small departments, making it harder to cover sickness, maternity leave, fluctuations in student numbers and 'pinch points' of peak activity. To accommodate this some used longer periods for balancing loads, in some cases up to three years. Generally though, departments large and small used their models to give lighter loads to new staff and time to accommodate the acquisition of teaching qualifications.

Finally on this issue, it needs mentioning that the Australian cases (4 and 5), looked at workload allocation more from a position of trying to enhance the student experience, whereas the UK cases seemed more grounded in the staff perspective. This would appear to be a reflection of the different funding sources, with home students in Australia apparently contributing between 25 and 33 per cent of the course income in fees (depending on the course), with uncapped numbers of foreign students at full fee and consequently a relatively low percentage input from the federal government, at around 20 per cent overall.

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10 CONCLUSIONS

There are a huge variety of different practices surrounding workload allocation, with no single method without its problems. However this study has highlighted some general agreement on ideal principles in relation to these methods, for example on equity and transparency. Further, for many individuals the context, such as the discipline, is considered very relevant to the workload allocation process chosen. Another key factor found was the general disposition of many academics, with a high regard for autonomy and a fairly well developed cynicism about managerial practices. Taking all this together, an approach that is particularised to its context, whilst at the same time encouraging involvement from staff, would seem to be the most appropriate way of meeting the agreed criteria. However, given the resource pressures within departments and the frequent merger of units into larger schools the previous informal approaches are becoming less appropriate to the new context. This is reinforced by the need for the actuality and demonstration of equitable practice. It is recognised that more formal systems may be seen as invasive managerialism and as eroding academic autonomy. However organisations are held accountable not just for their resources, but for their treatment of staff, for example potentially by the Health and Safety Executive over aspects such as stress-related illness from high workloads. Therefore a balance needs to be sought between individual needs and the organisation's, with the hope that synergies between the two might be found.

The range of factors which this research indicates should be considered can be summarised as follows.

There are a variety of allocation practices used.

- There is wide agreement from all levels of staff on principles such equity and transparency.
- There is a general move towards larger departmental/ school units.
- Many believed they were overloaded with work, objections were mostly to administrative tasks.
- There is a widespread suspicion about changes to workload allocation processes.
- Staff are disinclined to measure time in detail.
- Hour-based models do not represent real hours.
- There are some variations in employment contracts on this matter.
- There is a strong belief in academic autonomy.
- Teaching commitments are usually met, but some staff report worries about efficiency and quality.
- Motivation to carry out research tasks is strong, but this work often takes place 'outside' of university.
- Individuals believe there is a need for particularised systems for each discipline.

To move forward from the current position as set out in the interviews and their analyses, this report will now put forward a set of connected recommendations. These will focus successively on: the university level; the HoD/S; and the individual. The wider context of these, the higher education sector, has been widely commented on elsewhere, and there is broad agreement on the challenges placed upon it from issues such as widening student access, resource constraints, public scrutiny and accountability.

10.1 University Level

Looking first then at the university level most organisations had a policy on workload allocation, however few members of staff were actually aware of it except union representatives and staff from Personnel. It would seem reasonable for universities to make their policy widely known to staff. This display of transformational leadership[180] would be a first move towards creating a culture where criteria surrounding workload distribution were known and discussed. Further, following from the work of Thornhill et al[181] this sort of improved organisational communication might provide benefits in terms of staff commitment. This could facilitate an improvement in the transactional type of leadership[182] that more commonly operates within the day-to-day operations of departments and schools.

To further this end it would be helpful if prospective heads of department were given training to help them to understand the issues involved. Discussion could focus on the potential for role conflict as both manager and colleague[183] and the problems meeting seemingly innocuous, but sometime conflicting, basic principles, such as equity and quality. For example the temptation to give an overloaded but high performing and willing member of staff the newly arrived extra task. Further, whilst many believe that it is impossible to create a workload allocation system that can accommodate all the

180 Bensimon, E. (1989)
181 Thornhill, A. *et al*. (1996)
182 Bensimon, E. (1989)
183 Gmelch, W. and Burns, J. (1994)

intricacies of a given department, it should be possible to provide a broad framework that goes some way to address policy criteria such as the need for equity. Such an approach at an institutional level would provide some reassurance that all departments were, at the very least, meeting certain minimum criteria, even if their chosen approach remained quite informal. It would also help to prevent local disputes, for example with unions through misinterpretation of employment contracts, or arising from a lack of consensus where informal approaches were being used. This framework could then be customised to meet the needs of individual departments. Central to this should be consultation, as shown from the cognitive mapping in Figures 6 and 7, with the related outcomes in the areas of equity, trust and transparency. This does partially happen in many departments, for example over aspects such as the weighting for certain tasks. This type of input might help avoid new heads adopting extreme responses, either rushing to develop new models without fully understanding the dynamics involved or merely adopting an old system for 'efficiency' or in order not to upset certain sections of the staff.

Equity is hard to achieve through partial systems or in those that do not integrate all work areas. However departments often operated this type of system, possibly because of the problems attendant on creating such an all-encompassing model. Therefore a university framework might consider aspects such as the units of measurement that could be used; this might be calibrated in unit points, hours or FTEs, the essential aspect would be ease of integration of these units across all the different work types. Decisions on units of measure would be a function of factors such as type of employment contract and organisational history/experience. Models based on time measures would provide ease of use within those employment contracts that stipulate teaching contact hours, and would give staff a tangible sense of loads. Preparation and assessment loads could then be calibrated using weightings. However, there are potential problems here in that these hours might not actually be a realistic measure of the work involved. Advantages that FTEs and points systems can offer is encouragement to staff to think flexibly about how they deliver their teaching. Discussion then could focus on how these units of measure, centred on teaching, could be used in relation to other roles such as research and administration. Examples of weighting equivalence might be helpful here, as well as, in relation to research, decisions on allowances being calculated retrospectively on outcomes or as part of forward planning to accommodate research work or to encourage it. Guidance from the university on these choices would help heads gain a clearer view of implications within their department and would be useful for deans looking across faculties at resources.

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More specifically, within each type of work, guidance could be given on factors to be included in the allocation calculation. For teaching this might include aspects such as student numbers, assessment, credit rating of a module and reduced loads for new staff. Other factors specific to the department, such as modes of delivery and weightings, could then be consulted on and agreed locally. With administrative work, discussion could cover both internal commitments and external elements such as work placements, field trips, and liaison with industry partners. In a similar way to teaching, some assessment of the size of the role might be calculated, such as for subject group leaders taking into account factors such as student numbers involved and the number of programmes to be co-ordinated. A pragmatically useful measure adopted in one case was to allow a certain number of units to cover all the small elements in personal workloads that a model could not encompass, so defusing counter-productive exacting discussions over "small change". With research, global allocations or calculations based on funding, papers and research student supervision might be used for weightings. Advice on all these detailed elements could centre just around a loose framework of aspects that require consideration, but that are dependent on departmental context. However, as previously stated the aspect that needs more careful attention is how the major elements are integrated, so that systems provide an equitable distribution of work, balancing all the work types. Research was an element that many left out of models, however at university level all the organisations, even those with limited experience of it, had research success as a strategic aim. Such an approach then relies on staff working on research in the time left over or, as most frequently occurred, in their own time. Omitting this aspect and relying on the self-motivation of individuals cannot help with equitable distribution of work across the departments.

The importance of team building activities and workload monitoring was evident in the non-HE organisations and

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this might be a fruitful area of discussion at the training sessions for heads. Support from colleagues and reassurance from line managers on aspects such as performance and efficiency seemed important to many junior academics, and were of great assistance in alleviating work stress. Again these did not result from formal procedures or appraisal, but rather from informal talks, which served both to reassure and informally monitor ongoing workloads. Changes in working habits were cited by some as part of a decline in informal support mechanisms, for example home working and the decline in use of the senior common room. Mechanisms to overcome this could be discussed and although many staff were slightly cynical about university-wide surveys, thought could be given to local, focused feedback mechanisms. These issues can be related to the work of Dirks and Ferrin[184] on the guidance 'strength' of the work environment. They suggested that in situations where guidance levels are 'weak' trust becomes a higher imperative. In higher education, with a widely shared belief in academic autonomy, guidance levels are likely to be weak, as this research found. The consultation process thus can be seen as pivotal, both in relation to stress, and the necessary reciprocal trust between academics when work is shared out.

10.2 Head of Department/School Level

Having had training and advice on the various potential dimensions to be considered, the head then could engage staff in a collective consultation process. Through this it would be possible to customise the framework model to their department and get some broad agreement on the scope of the model, for example how detailed or formal it needed to be, or how to invest in research. Further refinements could be made such as the division of teaching work into co-ordination, delivery and assessment aspects. Case evidence has shown that where radical changes are being made these could benefit from an approach that incorporates a pilot study, with feedback and modifications. Such a double loop process seems to facilitate staff engagement with the process, and reassure those staff resistant to change.

Further, the process need not be seen as monolithic and consultation should also be done between staff and heads individually, so that using judgement and discretion the overall model can be fine-tuned to optimise equity within it. This finding on consultation confirms research results on strain and the need for managers to facilitate a good match for staff to their tasks[185]. Additionally there needs to be a monitoring process. Case study evidence showed many junior staff were anxious about their own efficiency and the quality of their work; this often required reassurance rather than readjustment. So the head needs to be alert to those individuals predisposed to strain responses, whilst at the same time optimising staff autonomy, an aspect shown to reduce strain[186]. This is quite a tall order, and this approach may seem resource-intensive; however, it might be a sound investment as feedback from heads showed that even small disputes with staff were extremely time-consuming. Further, stress related illness is a consequence that all parties will wish to avoid. The benefits from achieving a good fit for staff around equitable workloads will be very real. However, it is important to remember that despite the existence of the model and a responsiveness to individuals, the head ultimately has to make hard decisions about work allocations and the criteria for these judgments need to be clear and defensible. The head, then, will be key to developing a department model with staff through consensual processes. Feedback could then be made from this to the general university model. Figure 9 summarises this diagrammatically working left to right from the organisation level to the head, staff and their outputs. The solid arrows show existing typical practice and the dashed arrows those elements that seem to call for action as set out above.

Such an interactive approach could help to facilitate a collegial response to an issue rather than seeing it as increased managerialism. Agreements with staff might look beyond just the model and the overall balancing of work to aspects such as how the work arrives, patterns and distribution of work. For example, case studies showed that workload peaks caused stressful conditions for staff that some heads had actively managed. Such an understanding could form the basis of a Socio-Temporal Contract, where work was not viewed in just the one dimension of time, but rather as part of a richer network of relationships that require attention. This of course draws on the notion of psychological contracts, an idea with a long history starting with Agyris in the 1960s[187], carrying notions of organisations and their staff negotiating a "social as well as an economic exchange"[188]. The specific

184 Dirks, K. and Ferrin, D. (2001)
185 French, J. et al (1982)
186 Karasek, R. (1979)
187 See Cullinane, N. and Dundon, T. (2006)
188 Cullinane, N. and Dundon, T. (2006) (p114)

idea here draws from Vischer[189] where the analogous "social-spatial contract" is introduced, highlighting the social complexities of managing work-spaces for staff. In relation to workloads the "temporal" aspect expresses the more subjective experience of time. For example, teaching contact hours are not just objective measures, but are informed by other aspects such as whether the teaching material is new or repeat, how the contact hours are distributed through the week and the diversity of tasks involved. This approach makes explicit what the better-managed departments do anyway, through packaging work sensitively. This type of approach with a broad understanding of what is fair and reasonable, built up across the department (the "socio" element) and supported by a spreadsheet or data base model, could assist in times of change whether from external influences or from internal factors such as a change of head.

This approach shows resonances with the conclusions of researchers in New Zealand whose findings on workload allocation systems in one university indicated that the factors that contributed to successful implementation of a system included department-specific procedures, consultation between manager and staff and regular reviews of the model[190]. However they also noted how 'interviews with staff identified a surprising lack of problem solving or creative thinking'. They saw the dangers of a 'blame culture' in relation to workload management and the need for 'proactive problem solving'[191].

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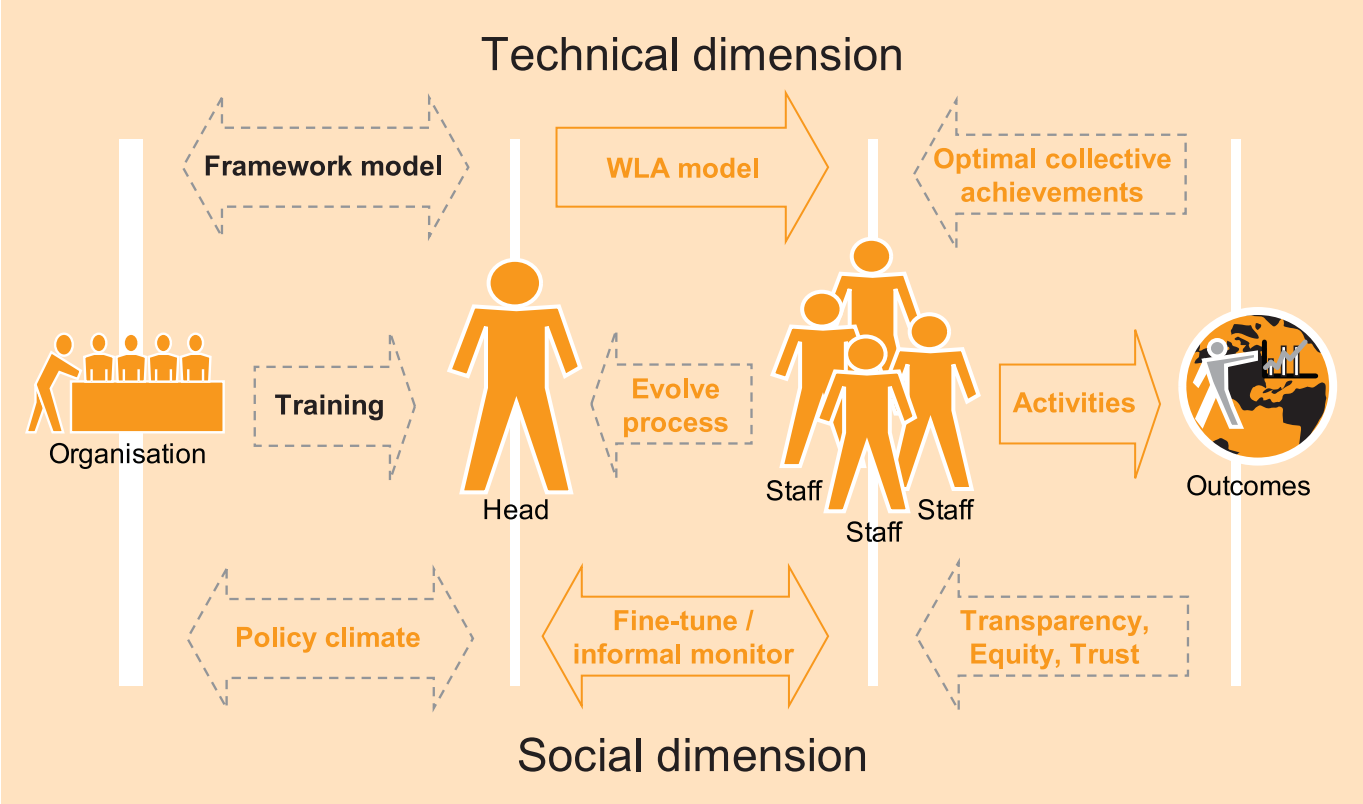
10.3 Individual Level

Individual members of staff then have responsibilities, not just through actively engaging with the consultative processes, but in the choices that they make in relation to their work. Case studies showed that staff needed to be aware of their inputs to various work aspects, as inefficiency and the exceeding of quality requirements were frequently cited. Work resulting from research interests or external industry partnerships might result in staff working in the evenings and at weekends. This might be a choice and the work rewarding, but there needs to an awareness of the impact on other work, such as from fatigue. This resonates with the work of Lazarus[192] about individual evaluation of work demands. Further, rather than just absorbing this extra work there is a need for staff to communicate issues and, if necessary, to negotiate compromises.

FIGURE 9

NEGOTIATING THE "SOCIO-TEMPORAL CONTRACT"



189 Vischer, J.C. (2005)
190 Houston, D. and Paewai, S. (2006) p26
191 Houston, D. and Paewai, S. (2006) p28
192 Lazarus, R. and Folkman, S. (1984)

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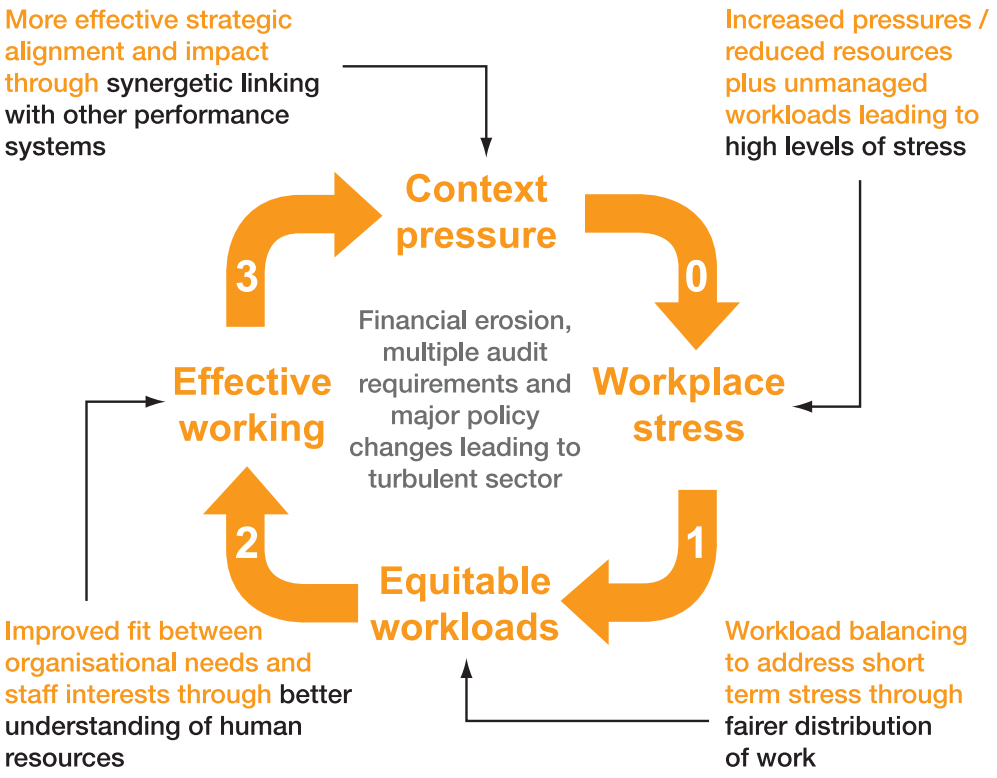
10.4 Summary

Stepping back from the issue of workload management specifically, it is clear from all of the cases that there is very seldom a connection made between workload allocation and other university performance management systems, such as staff appraisals, activity costing or transparency review. This is not because of any lack of acceptance that it would make sense, but rather is a result of the sheer impossibility of aggregating data and synchronising activities given the devolved and idiosyncratic approach taken to workload allocation. The implication is however, that if a university can achieve some broad consistency in its approach to workload allocation then these linkages become much more feasible. Thus, against a background of workplace stress, a first step is to create a broad institutional framework to support workload balancing between staff, leading to more equitable workloads. Secondly, through this process and the associated interactive, individualised actions described above, this should provide the basis for achieving a better fit between organisational needs and staff interests/capabilities. Then, thirdly, from this basis of sound information within a broad, but consistent framework it should be possible to link the staff workload data to other performance systems. This would then enable better strategic choices to be made, so hopefully alleviating some of the tensions flowing from the turbulent HE environment. This progression in levels of impact that could be achieved is illustrated in Figure 10.

In summary then, there is a need to explicitly identify essential elements within the process such as equity, transparency and consultation and to provide a framework model. Departmental factors can then inform the variable features, such as particular teaching delivery methods. The workload allocation model itself might be usefully viewed as a dynamic process rather than a fixed feature. This would allow for incremental improvement that would help staff to feel involved in the process and reduce negative thoughts on managerialist interventions. After accommodating staff views, the implementation process would involve a balance between the model and discretionary inputs from heads to fine-tune to individuals. Case studies that operated with a strong imbalance

FIGURE 10

PROGRESSIVE LEVELS OF IMPACT POSSIBLE



between these two elements seemed to have more problems. Heads operating without any model left staff feeling unsure about decision making processes, whereas departments with very tight models and little input from heads saw staff comparing and arguing over the fine detail of models. Finally, attention needs to be given to the informal bonds within the department so that drives for efficiency do not leave overworked staff feeling inadequate and underperforming.

Thus, at its simplest it is suggested that the following are needed to achieve effective workload allocation practice in the higher education sector.

- Transformational leadership is required to drive university-wide policy and a general framework model is needed which sets out agreed workload allocation criteria.
- Transactional leadership is required through consultative local tuning of the general framework model to fit departments/schools (loop process).
- All work areas should be integrated within workload allocation models - including research.
- The workload allocation model must be linked to other systems.
- There must be potential for feedback from staff to the university model (loop process).
- Heads should fine-tune the resulting model to fit individuals.
- In addition there should be informal regular monitoring of loads - and individual responses to stress noted.
- Heads need training to support these systems.
- Existing teaching allocations should be refined – management of peak periods, role stability.
- Staff should be encouraged to think about/negotiate the balance of their own activities.

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Most universities will be taking some of these actions, but to achieve the full effect demands action on all fronts. In this way equitable workloads can be achieved, the fit between organisational needs and staff interests can be improved, synergies with other university performance management systems can be facilitated, and the university's capabilities to dynamically achieve strategic alignment in a turbulent environment can be enhanced.

Workload allocation could be seen as a low-level operational issue, but given the centrality of staff to the success of universities, it is in fact a major strategic process, which if not well done can disable the organisation. If effectively and authentically handled, universities can create strong socio-temporal contracts with their staff that embody the vision of the university.

We hope that this work will provide a way forward to the benefit of university staff individually and universities in general.

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APPENDIX 1: THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Please note that unless otherwise specified, page numbers in this appendix section refer to pages in the referenced papers, not this publication itself – this differs from how references have been given in the main bulk of the report.

It could be seen that an approach using either questionnaires or surveys, that would most easily be used in quantitative studies, would be unlikely to provide the sort of information needed to understand the complex workings of this issue. Such an approach would give insights into areas such as the amount of time worked and how this was broken up between various tasks or roles, however it would *not* provide insights into how the process worked and about detailed aspects such as feelings about procedures involved. In order to get these sorts of insights qualitative methods were more appropriate.

The theoretical perspective of Pragmatic Critical Realism (Johnson P and Duberley J 2000) was decided upon to inform the approach taken in this research. This perspective considers that all knowledge is socially constructed, but that the veracity of theories and cognitive systems can be evaluated through their 'practical adequacy'(p187). As little research has been done in the area of workload allocation to academics thus it was also felt that a 'Grounded Theory' approach as pioneered by Glaser and Strauss (1967) could be usefully adopted. This method involves inductively building up theory through comparisons of the same event or process, from different situations.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) developed Grounded Theory techniques and procedures as a guide to practice. They described the main purpose of grounded theory as to develop a relevant theory, to do this questions are needed that allow an uncovering of the phenomenon involved through free, deep and flexible exploration. The questions might start broadly and become more focused as the data collection proceeds and as the relationships involved become more apparent. An awareness of the technical literature in a given area could encourage some theoretical sensitivity during this process. Personal and professional experience might also foster an understanding of issues involved in the area. Importantly the process itself of asking questions, making comparisons between responses, and organising these into mini frameworks about concepts and their relationship with each other, helps in the process of evolving theory (p43). This process then involves the interplay of data collection with its analysis, whilst minimising bias and assumptions by questioning the findings and hypothesis and comparing them with the data itself.

An *initial literature synthesis*, as summarised in Section 2 (pages 9-24 of this report), provided a framework of loose themes and issues that might be relevant to the phenomena to be researched (ie. workload allocation). *These themes informed potential lines of enquiry in the interviews*, however in accord with Grounded Theory these areas grew and developed from the interviewee's responses, thus reflecting their specific context.

Within this general epistemological approach it was necessary to clearly identify the 'object' to be studied. For this study there was a hierarchy of possibilities from the higher education sector in general; or specific universities; to units such as departments within universities; to individual academics. Given the desire to understand how workload allocation processes operate in context the intention was to take a case study approach, which as Locke (p16) suggested, primarily concerns the identification of a "bounded system" to be studied. Yin (1989) suggested that case studies are appropriate to research where the focus is on contemporary events and where the investigator has little control over events as they would in an experiment. They may be used as a tool to explain, describe or explore real-life interventions. He also noted that within case studies, the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined, so this method hence utilises multiple sources of evidence. Further the questions posed in this type of research relate to 'how' and 'why' areas of understanding, using methods such as direct observation and systematic interviewing (p17-19).

Following Yin's terminology (1989), as several universities were being researched in this study, a multiple case study design was used, and where sub-units such as departments were attended to, these were considered as "embedded" cases (p49). The unit of analysis was, as Yin suggested, determined by the initial research question (p.31), which in this project entailed understanding how the workload of academics was allocated in universities and the reasons why this occurred in such a way. *Information was drawn from interviews with individual academics supplemented by archival data where available*. Although participant observation, diary keeping and conversational analysis could also have been utilised, financial constraints ruled out observation methods and it was further felt neither they nor diary keeping would help with understanding of the issues involved. As this was a relatively new area archival research alone was unlikely to be fruitful.

In relation to analysis of the findings Yin (1989) described how pattern matching within cases might be used to test out theoretical propositions, which might then be modified in

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the cross case analysis, so that broad conclusions can be drawn (p56). However in this research project, as described above, there was not a well-developed theoretical foundation to work from, so within the Grounded Theory approach, the theoretical propositions in fact emerged out of the case studies (rather than being tested within them) in an iterative process that Yin termed 'explanation building' (p114). Cross case analysis was then used to allow general findings to be drawn that led ultimately to conclusions on how the allocation process could be improved within the sector.

The starting point for this analysis using Grounded Theory (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990) was the breaking down of interview data in a process called coding. Open, axial and selective coding each ask different questions which relate to different phases of the research analysis. The first stage of open coding relates to the 'breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising, and categorising' of data (p61). This involves the conceptualisation of phenomena and giving each a name. These concepts may, when they become more numerous, be compared and those that seem to be similar grouped together into categories, although these relationships are still considered to be provisional. Categories will have attributes or characteristics, called properties (p73).

The next stage is axial coding where the data that has been ordered into categories is put back together in new ways through making connections between categories in relation to the conditions that give rise to them (p97). This includes the conditions and context of each category and the strategies by which they are handled and the consequence of those strategies. Selective coding follows on from this as the means to conceptualise a story from the central phenomena of the study. The sequential order of the story is the key to ordering the categories. Another step in the process is the filling in of detail to give conceptual density and specificity. Strauss and Corbin (1990) stressed that the stages in selective coding do not occur in a sequential order but that the researcher can move back and forward between them.

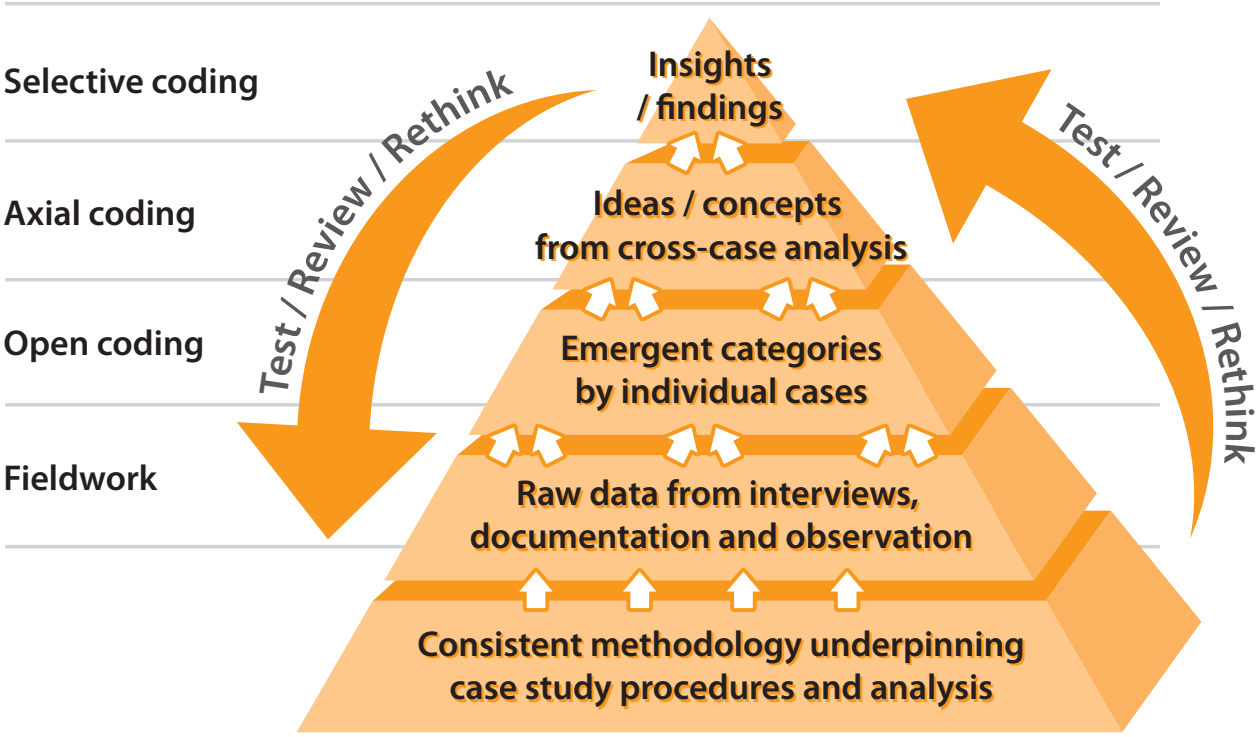
In summary:

- Open coding is the naming of categories
- Axial Coding is where the relationships between categories are sorted
- Selective Coding is the conceptualising of the narrative.

See figure A below.

FIGURE A

A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH



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In this research focusing on the allocation of time to academics' work, the general grounded theory principles described above were followed, but an effort was made to simplify the approach and relate it to an organisational level of analysis. To do this, categories were identified through open coding, these were then organised and related to each other through axial coding using the notions of context – actions – consequences. This was a simplification of Strauss and Corbin, but one that maintained the idea of iteratively generating and testing hypotheses. Selective coding is usually the final phase in which narratives are constructed about the central phenomenon, but in this case the core focus on workload allocation had been clear from the start and the axial coding led naturally into what was effectively an abstraction of general findings through cross-case analysis. Such a process relied on the validity and reliability of the findings being tested. In relation to *construct validity* so that the correct operational measures had been adopted for the study area, these include tactics such as multiple sources of evidence as well as establishing a chain of evidence. In this research, this was done through the stratified samples within and across universities as described below[193].

Investigator triangulation was also a key consideration in this study (p303). This was considered by Denzin (1970) as a means to reduce bias and ensure greater reliability, and he suggested data might be obtained from different sources in order to gain the same ends. Denzin saw theoretical triangulation as a means to consider various theoretical viewpoints in order to test their usefulness rather than choosing one central hypothesis. This has resonance with Grounded Theory, and Soft Systems Theory (Checkland P 1993) was another useful set of ideas which helped with the research process. This asserts that: 'every statement about a human activity system must be a statement about the system *plus* a particular Weltanschauung[194] associated with it' (p220). Thus, the perspective chosen must be explicitly acknowledged and will be a product of the researcher's necessary practical, pragmatic choices, and implicit biases as a result of the researcher's individual experience are assumed.

A root definition of the main activity of this study was given as the workload allocation process itself. The *ownership* of the system, those with the prime concern and ultimate power over it, could be said to be the University itself; the *actors* within who carry out its main activities would be academic staff; and the *customers* would again be the academic staff. *Environmental constraints* are also part of the root definition of the system, introducing aspects of the wider University and sector that impinge on the process. As mentioned above the main focus on this whole process, the *Weltanschauung*, would be that of HoD, although the other perspectives were also considered. So although the methodology accommodates multiple perspectives ultimately the soft systems approach focuses them around a primary view that was chosen for this analysis.

The time frame for the study was decided to be a period of approximately a year, as this would account for a full cycle of allocation.

Summary of theoretical underpinnings

In sum, Grounded Theory was chosen as being appropriate to a complex social issue founded on multiple perspectives of a real world with an emphasis on theory building. Within this, a case study framework seemed the most fitting way to capture the interaction between University and department level rather than interviewing discreet individuals. However in line with Checkland's theories (1993) it was necessary to identify the particular *Weltanschauung* of the study, this could be individual staff members, university leaders, heads of departments or schools, union representatives and so on. As the study was involved with the interfaces between individuals, departments and university the most appropriate perspective seemed to be HoD/S. Individual perspectives by their very nature would focus on subjective experience and perspectives from the wider organisation, whilst broad, would probably not encompass the detailed experience of workload allocation. Heads of academic units on the other hand would be a link between these two, with experience of the model, its impact on staff and an awareness of how it linked to organisational environment and strategies.

193 Other aspects considered in this study were internal validity relating to how causal relationships are investigated (this may require tactics such as are described in the Grounded Theory methodology) and external validity, dealing with issues of generalisability and replicability (this requires the development of a rich theoretical framework about a phenomenon and its context) Yin R (1989) p44; 53.

194 world-view

APPENDIX 2: SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES

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PROMPTS / QUESTIONS: LECTURER LEVEL

Generic

- What is the department? Number of academics? Length of service?
- **Knowledge of University policies or codes of practice** on workload allocation
- What is the normal allocation **process** in the department? Who, what and when? Unit of measurement? **Changes** over the years? How is **Balance achieved**?
- **RAE** effect? Is **space/ slack** for research or creative thinking provided in blocks or small slices?
- **Balance period** a longer / shorter time frame for **adjustment**? **Adaptations** to the **provision** – new courses/modules?- new staff?-sabbaticals/ study leave scheme?
- Is the process **reviewed and monitored** to correct imbalances and identify problem areas such as stress?
- How **transparent** is the process generally?
- How do you **feel** about the process- **effectiveness**- the **benefits**- the **problems**- **improvements**?

Own Workload

- Is their work allocation generally **typical or representative** in terms of quantity and quality within the department. Roughly how would they describe it?
- Best use of skills- **Challenge and variety, development.** Perceptions of competence (peer review and student feedback on quality).
- Do you have a **sense of control and autonomy** to carry out job the way they wish.- allowing for syllabus constraints?
- **How do you balance competing demands** - (eg compromise /prioritise? Lower standards? Give up? Work longer hours?). Perception of **coping** and **Stress**?
- Experience role **conflict/ambiguity**?
- What is found **satisfying (motivating)** about the work?

Work Relationships

- **Perceptions** of Line Manager -**Consultation process**- **communication** on decisions
- Feedback mechanisms- Perceptions of fairness and trust
- Does the **appraisal** process link to the workload allocation?
- Experience of **any dispute** - how resolved

Organisational Culture

- Perceptions of **senior management** - the **management style** in relation to workload allocation **Realistic** view of work levels? Trust in SM – decisions, strategy. **Communications**-info up and down org.
- Does the allocation of types of work have implications generally for **promotion**?
- Perceptions **on** University environment **turbulence**, or restructuring?- **Initiatives** - Transparency review ? Centralised timetabling? Full Economic Costing? Training/development schemes? Surveys?
- To what degree do your personal **goals** align with those of the university values.?
- **Any other points**?

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT LEVEL.

Generic

- What is the department? Number of academics? Length of service?
- **Knowledge of University policies or codes of practice** on workload allocation
- What is the normal allocation **process** in the department? Who, what and when? Unit of measurement? **Changes** over the years? How **Balance achieved**?
- **RAE** effect? Is **space/ slack** for research or creative thinking provided in blocks or small slices?
- **Balance period** a longer / shorter time frame for **adjustment**? **Adaptations** to the **provision** – new courses/modules?- new staff?-sabbaticals/ study leave scheme?
- Is the process **reviewed and monitored** to correct imbalances and identify problem areas such as stress?
- How **transparent** is the process generally?
- How do you **feel** about the process- **effectiveness**- the **benefits**- the **problems**- **improvements**?

W.L.A. AND WORK RELATIONSHIPS

- How did they develop or learn the system that they are using? **Modifications**?
- Perceptions of **competence** in doing the workload allocation and **leverage** in staff performance?

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- Is allocation linked to **appraisal**? Does it link to the general **goals** or mission of the department,
- Degree of **consultation** with staff Perceptions of **fairness**- **Trust** - **coping**, communication of decisions- Opportunities for **feedback** or change.
- **Dispute** resolutions – problems of staff overwork/ under perform. Problems with other staff.

HoD/S. OWN WORKLOAD

- How is their own allocation decided upon? Roughly of what does their **role** comprise?
- **Advocate** for staff or channel for SMT strategy?
- **How do you balance these competing demands.** (eg prioritise? Lower standards? Give up? Work longer hours?). **Delegating** –how well does it work?
- Sense of **autonomy** to carry out job the way they wish.
- Perception of **coping / stress** (eg managing work/ home life/ general health). **Space** for creativity?
- What is found **satisfying (motivating)** with the work? (eg Extrinsic features= promotion. Intrinsic features=intellectual, job itself). .

HoD/S. ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

- Perceptions on **senior management**- interest? Support? Realistic view? **management style- Trust- Communications** info up and down the org.
- Problems **aligning** university goals with their departments or their own personal goals.
- Values - **promotion criteria**? Does workload allocation have implications here?.
- Perceptions **on** University environment **turbulence**, or restructuring?- **Initiatives** - Transparency review ? Centralised timetabling? Full Economic Costing? Training/development schemes? Surveys?
- **Any other points?**

INSTITUTION LEVEL: UNION

Generic

- **University policies or consistent principles** on work load allocation?
- What are the various **approaches taken in departments**? What factors influence these approaches? How is the **balance** achieved? Research and the RAE?
- **Changes** over the last few years over the way allocation carried out? (e.g. change in direction of professional staff work to address Gov. demands rather than academic work).
- Sense of staff **coping**? **Work Life** balance?
  - Role conflict- **competing demands responses**?
- How **transparent** is the process generally? Published?
- How do you feel about the process- effectiveness- the benefits- the problems- improvements?

Work relationships

- Perceptions on **consultation** with staff -on **fairness** generally- on **Trust** -on.

  communication of decisions – on **feedback mechanisms.**
- Is the **appraisal** process linked to the workload allocation?
- **Dispute resolutions** – Sorts of problems that require AUT involvement in relation to workload allocation? Demands on probationary staff? Problems of staff overwork/ under perform

Organisational Culture

- Perceptions on **senior management- the management style- on Trust** in them.
- Communication up and down the org.
- Have there been university wide **surveys** in this area? What has been the response? Are there worries about detailed time controls?
- Does the allocation of certain work types have implications for **promotion**?
- What sort of issues do they encounter **aligning university goals in this area** with their objectives. What do they see as their role?
- Perceptions **on** University environment **turbulence**, or restructuring?- **Initiatives** - Transparency review? Centralised timetabling? Full Economic Costing? Training/development schemes? Surveys?

INSTITUTION LEVEL: PERSONNEL

Generic

- **Policies or consistent principles** on work load allocation. Are they complied with?
- What are the **various approaches taken within departments**? What factors influence these approaches- How is the **balance achieved- Research RAE issues- Changes** over the last few.
- What is the period that the **cycle** covers? (e.g. yearly (less) or 3 year period?). Debits and credits carry over?
- What sense do you have of staff **coping** ?- Work life balance issues?

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- Role conflict- **competing demands responses**?
- How **transparent** is the process generally? – published?
- How do they **feel** about the process generally? Its **effectiveness** – **Benefits**- specific problems **Improvements**?- **Monitor** and review function?
- Perceptions on **satisfaction with workload allocation**?

Work relationships within departments.

- Perceptions on workload allocation in relation to –**consultation – fairness – Trust** - **communication of decisions - feedback** with staff over allocation.
- Is the **appraisal** process linked to the workload allocation? Does workload allocation link to general **goals** of University / Department?
- **Dispute resolutions** – Sorts of problems that require HR involvement in relation to workload allocation? Demands on probationary staff? Problems of staff overwork/ under perform

Organisational Culture

- Perceptions on **senior management - the management style -Trust** in them - **Communication** –up and down the org.
- Have there been surveys on workloads? What response has been made to the findings? AUT response?
- **Promotion implications in workload allocation**? Are there tensions as a result? (e.g research emphasis and RAE versus admin/teaching prep).
- Perceptions **on** University environment **turbulence**, or restructuring?- **Initiatives** - Transparency review ? Centralised timetabling? Full Economic Costing? Training/development schemes? Surveys?

- What sort of issues do they encounter **aligning university goals in this area** with their objectives. What do they see as their role?
- **Other Points?**

SENIOR STAFF: PVC / DEAN

Generic

- **Policies or consistent principles** on work load allocation. Are they complied with?
- What are the **various approaches**? How is the balance achieved? **Research** and **RAE**? What **factors influence these approaches**? **Changes** over the last few years over the way allocation carried out?
- How do they **feel** about the process generally? Its **effectiveness – Benefits- problems - Improvements**?- **Monitor** and review function?
- What sense do you have of staff **coping**?
  - Work life balance issues?
  - Role conflict- **competing demands responses**?
- Is the **appraisal** process linked to the workload allocation? Does workload allocation link to general **goals** of University / Department?
- **Dispute resolutions** – Sorts of problems that require senior involvement in relation to workload allocation?

Own Work Load

- **Own work load** makeup – balance **competing demands**?
- Perceptions on their - **coping /stress - space** for creative thought– **Autonomy - Competence**
- What is **satisfying** about their work - what **motivates** them?

Organisational Culture

- On balance how would they describe **the management style - Trust- Communications** info up and down the org.
- Have there been **surveys** on workloads? What response has been made to the findings? Strategy – precision worries/accounting bureaucracy. Role **of union** in discussions on workload allocation?
- Does the allocation of certain work types have implications for **promotion**? Are there quality tensions as a result (e.g research emphasis and RAE versus admin/teaching prep).
- Perceptions **on** University environment **turbulence**, or restructuring?- **Initiatives** - Transparency review? Centralised timetabling? Full Economic Costing? Training/development schemes? Surveys?
- What sort of issues do they encounter **aligning university goals in this area** with their objectives.
- **Any other Points?**

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APPENDIX 3: NEW ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE EARLY FIELDWORK

A number of issues emerged from the early fieldwork, which were not the product of any specific questions asked, but were offered by respondents, and were of particular relevance to this study.

- For example, an issue that emerged from the initial interviews was that of space in the allocation for creative thought, and where this was provided whether this was in small slices or larger blocks. Further it emerged that there were strongly held views about rigid systems quantifying time spent on roles.
- Another aspect that came out of the interviews was whether the workload allocation process was linked at all to the appraisal process and in relation to the head of department perceptions of their leverage to influence performance.
- From the interviews with heads of department issues arose around how their own allocation was decided upon and whether generally certain types of work were linked more positively with promotion.
- An unexpected issue also arose about how staff with high workloads present, for example pride in their industry or feelings of doubt about efficiency. These feelings on efficiency held a fairly consistent pattern throughout the interviews.

APPENDIX 4:
CRITERIA FOR FINAL CODING CATEGORIES

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CATEGORIES	PROPERTIES	CRITERIA
Allocation Process	Consistency	Common or diverse methods across the University in allocation of work.
	Equity / Fairness	Relating to equity in methods and their implementation. HoD/S role in this.
	Theories/Models	Theories of staff in relation to the process. WLA model development
	Timings	Relating to all the issues surrounding the timing of allocation
	Disputes/Conflict	Problems that have increased possibly with the need for intervention by a third party.
	Problems	Issues arising from the allocation process viewed as non optimal by some quarters. Also unaccounted for factors such as student's emails.
	Transparency	The degree to which the process is seen as open, e.g. published.
	Methods	The actual methods used to calculate workloads e.g. Hour unit / FTE/Other. Accuracy. Allowances.
	Staffing / Balancing Roles and loads, including recruitment	Means by which the various roles are balanced out using more subjective judgements than in the method category. (Type or quantity aspect assessed). Staff recruitment issues.
	Flexibility (including sabbaticals)	Means by which the model is adapted to cover a range of events such sickness, maternity leave and sabbaticals.
	New Staff	The ways or degree to which the model accommodates new staff.
	HoD/S Role	The role of the HoD/S in forming strategy within the department. on this issue and their role in implementing it. Including aspects such as HoD/S training and trust.

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CATEGORIES	PROPERTIES	CRITERIA
Allocation Process (Continued)	Consultation	The discussion between the allocator and staff on work allocation.
	Department / Faculty Strategies	Relating to department. strategies that impinge on the allocations.
	Department / Faculty. Environment	Relating to aspects of department such as size (students, and staff), subject, RAE. History. Existing WLA model.
	Home working	The influence of home working on the work allocation.
University Code of Practice / Policy		Relating to a University code and the degree to which it is known and operational.
Teaching	Courses	The impact of taught work on the allocation e.g. New or stable
	Qualitative	The impact of specialisms /core courses on the allocation. Issues of specialisms etc Professional org. requirements. Modes of delivery aspects. Online courses. Audit issues.
	Students	Student related issues.
	Scholarship Activity	Work in relation to teaching scholarship.
	Quantative	The impact of class size or. numbers of modules Involved in the allocation. Hours**
	Other teaching Staff/ students	Impact of Part time staff or research students on Workloads.
	Assessment and marking	Issues relating to marking exams or course work
Research	RAE	The effects of the RAE process on workload allocation.
	Qualitative	Type of research undertaken in relation to its effect on WLA. E.g. empirical/non empirical.
	Bidding / Grants	Implications of bidding and funding. The degree to which time is allocated for research bidding.
	Dedication	The degree to which time is dedicated to research activities

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CATEGORIES	PROPERTIES	CRITERIA
Administration	Types	Quality audits: Marketing: Finance. The impact of administration on work loads. The ways that they are accounted for in the model.
	Specialist staff	
Workload	Fit	The degree that work is matched to Individual
	Quantity	Hour or other measures. Over burden/Creative space
	Gender	Issues relating to gender in the allocation of workloads. e.g Any. specific roles more frequently allocated to either gender.
	Distribution Patterns	The effect of the different combinations of work types has on the overall load. Also aspects such as holidays and space for research Peaks and troughs.
	Support Factors	Possible help from administrative staff, or from the Faculty etc. IT factors. Library.
	Roles	The roles or duties undertaken and the effect of this in the overall workload. Open-ended roles. Part-time staff issues
Other Activities/ Influences	Consultancy work	
	Professional Association	
Employment Contracts	Part time or sessional contracts	Covering issues such as hours or specific duties involved.
	Limited contracts - Teach or research only.	
Individual Response	Service length / Age profiles	The impact of service length on the experience of work loads. E.g. New/Experienced staff
	Behaviour/ relationships	Relating to responses to allocation system such as interaction of individuals , even aspects such as changing teaching methods. Home/work balance. Motivation.

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CATEGORIES	PROPERTIES	CRITERIA
Individual Response (Continued)	Performance	Relating to aspects such as quality or efficiency. Including student assessment of teaching. Extra activities.
	Coping	The different responses of staff the high work loads e.g. Prioritise / slog / lower standards
	Satisfaction	Relating to the areas found to give most satisfaction e.g. research/Teaching
	Frustrations	Areas that frustrated staff in their work situation.
	Autonomy	The degree to which staff feel able to carry out their work to suit their own judgements.
Organisation	Environment	Internal and external aspects relating to the environment such as Stability / Turbulence / Niche/ Reviews.
	Management style	Expressions of how the management team lead the University e.g Collegial / managerial
	Leadership	Perceptions on the confidence in academic leaders in relation to issues such as strategies, priorities, motivation, information
	Resources	Financial position of Uni.- impact of any changes.
	Strategies	University strategies that are seen to impinge on the issue of WLA
	Communication / shared Values / Goals	Perceptions on information sharing within the org.
	Trust	Relating to issues of trust within the Organisation and Departments.
	Head of Department	Relating to the Involvement of the HoD/S with Org.
University Systems	Full Economic Costing / Activity costing/Transparency Review	Processes within the University in response to external directives.
	Review/Appraisal	Issues relating to the appraisal process and WLA

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CATEGORIES	PROPERTIES	CRITERIA
University Systems Continued)	Surveys	
	Training	Availability of schemes to support roles.
	Promotion	Issues of how advancement within the University is linked to various work types.
	Union	issues of WLA and Union responses. EB agreements.
	Framework agreement	
	Centralised Timetabling	The ways in which this impacts on workloads.
	Timesheets	Issues relating to detailed accounting of time.