Updates to Teaching Support Staff Policy
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Summary and goals
This document is a companion to the proposed updates to the School Work Allocation Policy, and is needed to keep the two policies in sync. The aim of the changes is to keep up with the need for greater support for very large courses.

The proposed 'standard tariffs' are maintained at similar levels to the current policy for small-moderate course sizes, but raised significantly for large/very large courses.

In practice, 2018-19 Theon bids indicate that large courses are already getting approval for roughly the level of support listed in this document. Updating the policy will make it easy for ITO staff to approve this level of support autonomously, so that only unusual requests need be passed on to DoLT for approval. This in turn will make it easier to identify and reject unreasonable claims, which is not currently happening reliably (e.g., in 18-19, two ‘very small’ courses had bids approved for a total of 280 hours of support).

Proposed updated version of TSS Policy Section 2

The full current TSS policy can be found here. All proposed updates are to section 2. Changes relative to the current policy are highlighted in red.

2. Teaching Support Allocation Policy and Procedure

2.1 Teaching support

The School provides teaching support through allocations of Teaching Support Staff in terms of a set of defined roles for a course and numbers of hours allocated to each role. The level of support allocated to a course is agreed prior to delivery of a course.

2.2 Responsibilities

Teaching Support Staff are responsible for monitoring their hours of work and for reporting the total number of hours worked to the ISS through weekly timesheet submissions. If the hours worked reach the agreed limit for the position, but there is still work remaining, this must be raised with the course lecturer who has a duty to report it to ISS. In this situation, TSS must not carry out any further work until permission to do so has been received from ISS. The online timesheet process will prevent TSS claiming more hours for a role than they have been allocated. If necessary, ISS will escalate to the Director of Teaching to decide the course of action. In addition, ISS will monitor the total number of hours claimed by TSS and will alert lecturers if there is advance warning of agreed limits being exceeded.

2.3 Very small courses
By default, very small courses or courses that are taught voluntarily by a lecturer over and above their normal duties are not allocated a teaching support budget. The definition of "very small course", in this context, is defined in the academic staff Work Allocation Policy, and may vary from year to year.

2.4 Tutor and Lab Demonstrator allocation

Unless specified during the bidding process, the allocation of Tutor and/or Lab Demonstrator effort to a course is calculated automatically, based on an average tutorial size of 12 or the specified lab group size, the number of tutorial/lab hours delivered by a Tutor/Lab Demonstrator plus an equivalent number of hours for preparation. A standard overhead equivalent to 1 tutorial hour (2 paid hours) will be added to all roles for coordination and course-specific training (e.g., a pre-course training session laying out expectations and needs for this course).

2.5 Demonstrator allocation

The allocation of Demonstrator effort to is calculated on a course by course basis, based on information provided during the bidding process (e.g. availability of kit, lab space, timetabling restrictions etc) and the number of lab sessions to be delivered by a Demonstrator. Time for coordination with the lecturer and course-specific training should be factored into the hours bid for.

2.6 Teaching Assistant (TA) allocation

For moderately sized courses, the standard tariff for a TA is 20 hours for every 10 points of a standard course, or 50 hours per 10 points for a new course or for significant redesign of substantial course materials (coursework, tutorials), plus 5 hours for coordination with the course lecturer. The increased tariff will be granted as a matter of course if substantial changes have been formally approved by the relevant committees. An additional 30 hours will be granted as standard for large courses, 60 hours for very large courses.

2.7 Marker allocation

For classes eligible for marking support (see the academic staff work allocation policy for specifics), the standard tariff for Marker allocation is 0.5 hours per student in the class for a 10 credit class, and 1 hour per student for a 20 credit class. These figures are doubled for coursework-only classes. An additional 2 hours is included for each marking task (i.e. piece of coursework, midterm, etc) to cover preparation for marking and liaison with the course lecturer.

2.8 Exam Marker allocation

For classes eligible for exam marking support (see the academic staff work allocation policy for specifics), the standard tariff for Exam Marker allocation is 0.4 hours per student in the class.

2.9 Exceeding approved allocations
A general allowance will be made to exceed approved allocations by up to 15% with appropriate justification. Course lecturers must send requests to ISS at teaching-support@inf.ed.ac.uk and receive confirmation prior to notifying TSS.

2.10 Exceptions

Course lecturers may request higher allocations for a course than those described above providing appropriate justification. These will be considered by the Director of Teaching on a case-by-case basis, giving priority to very large courses.

2.11 Training

Payment for training provided by the School of Informatics is automatically approved for all students following attendance at ‘Essential’ and ‘Advanced’ sessions during the Semester, and paid at the regular hourly rate. Training from providers external to the School must be approved by the Director of Teaching.