

Teaching Duties Planning in Sol¹

The current approach to allocation of teaching duties is creaking because:

- We have more academic staff.
- We have many more students so “big” classes are in some cases infeasibly large (a 10 point level 11 course can have 20 students on it or 200 and they appear to be the same in the duties allocation).
- We see more heterogeneity in the courses we are offering in terms of numbers of points allocated, style of course (online, distance, face to face, flipped, traditional...)

Currently we allocate in the semester preceding the next year of teaching and this creates quite a bit of pressure that helps to contribute to what is perceived as a non-consultative approach. We have experimented with Institutes having some responsibility for allocation in specialist courses and this has been reasonably successful.

We have different classes of course and these need handling differently. Board of Studies will determine the classification of each course. The main classes are (notice some of these overlap...):

- Generic courses that no Institute feels the have responsibility for (e.g. year 1 and 2 courses and others e.g. SAPM).
- Required courses that are built into degree programme specifications and so must be delivered (e.g. Software Testing for the Software Engineering degrees).
- Institute courses that a particular Institute feels responsible for (e.g. NLU or NLP for ILCC).
- New courses that are being introduced for the first time.

We also need a way to measure the load a course imposes on the staff members presenting it but we’ll leave that aside for the moment. We need this to ensure equitable distribution of work across the staff. **This will be dealt with in a forthcoming duties workload model.**

We propose moving to planning on a rolling three-year cycle where each staff member knows their teaching allocation for the next three years and negotiates what they will be doing in three years time while they are teaching the first year of the allocation. This will allow us to approach the whole allocation process in a less pressured manner that can be more consultative.

In the following when we talk about devising an **allocation**, whoever is doing it will start with:

- A set of courses to be allocated with the amount effort required to deliver each course recorded in whatever units the workload model uses.

¹ We probably need to do something similar with Admin duties but I’ll stick to teaching for the moment.

- Resources in the form of available staff effort recorded s the availability of a person in whatever units the workload model uses.
- An allocation allocates staff resource to courses. An allocation is required to ensure that all Required courses in the set of courses is fully resourced.

The normal process would be:

- When we are teaching year n allocated courses we do the allocation for year $n + 3$.
- We determine the teaching workload that each member of staff will be expected to fulfil for that year. This is a matter for HoS (or delegated to DoT) informed by things like buyouts, other duties etc but this needs to be determined by the teaching workload model. During this process staff could also indicate any plans they might have for not teaching in the year being considered.
- We determined the workload imposed by the delivery of the course based on historic data, this will include class size, type of class, etc.
- DoT leads an allocation of all the generic and new courses. An open staff meeting discusses this. This then fixes the resourcing for these courses and determines the available resourcing for the Institutes. The generic allocation has to take account of the viability of our degree programmes and the skills balance needed by the Institutes to successful allocate.
- The Institutes allocate and report back to DoT (this should be a consultative process). Not all staff are in only one Institute so there may be a bit of horse-trading around this process.
- The Institute allocations are integrated to create the next year of the cycle. This is published and there is a meeting of academic staff to agree the final allocation.

The main benefits of this will be:

- Less pressure on the allocation process.
- We allocate generic and new courses first so the resourcing available for other courses is clear.
- Resourcing of required courses is mandatory.
- We have staff meetings to discuss the allocations that make the allocation process clear and transparent.
- The role of teaching workload model is clear.
- The sabbatical committee can see the allocation for the year they are considering and if it causes AoD issue can consult with applicants to re-schedule their applications.