



Academic Staff Workload Models

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ABSTRACT

In a constantly changing educational environment the issue of staff workload is foremost in the business planning and budgeting of any academic department in a tertiary institution. It is also foremost for all academic staff planning. This presentation contrasts two academic schools within the same faculty that use different models for determining academic staff workload.

Keywords

Workload, research, teaching, professional development

1. Introduction

Over the past decade in tertiary education in New Zealand the role and responsibilities of academic staff has changed. While academic staff were hired for their academic qualifications and current skills this may no longer be sufficient. Certainly in a computing environment the skills base changes very rapidly, and therefore to keep current with industry practice course prescriptions can change from semester to semester. Academic staff are required to continuously update their skills to maintain industry currency. Undergraduate degree programmes are primarily taught by academic staff engaged in research, so there is also an expectation that academic staff engage in research. With the move to the development and offering of degree programmes there is also a requirement to not only be actively engaged in research but also to upgrade academic qualifications. These pressures on planning and academic staff workloads can create tension in already overworked academic staff. Any model must be fair and transparent.

2. Requirements

All academic staff in the Faculty of Business at UNITEC are required to follow the REST model in the planning of their years workload and professional development.

The REST model developed by the Dean of the Faculty of Business, Professor Gael McDonald is:

R = Research

E = Entrepreneurial

S = Service

T = Teaching

This requirement is not dependent on the level of teaching but a fundamental philosophy of the Faculty, in that by contributing under each criterion the academic staff are developing personally and professionally and also contributing to the Faculty, the Institution and the wider community.

3. The Models

The academic staff workload models of the School of Information Systems and Computing and the School of Applied Management, within the Faculty of Business, are very different yet both strive to meet the REST model. They both allow staff to upgrade academic qualifications, engage in research, upskill, develop new courses or curricula, teach classes and also be fair to all staff. They allow time for these activities, yet not at the expense of their colleagues or the students.

The poster presentation will outline the two models and discuss their advantages and disadvantages.