

Academic Staff Handbook

August 2016

Document title			
Academic Staff Handbook August 2016			
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Approving body		Date of approval	
University Negotiating and Consultative Committee		6 July 2016, Min 16.79	
Review date	Edition no.	ID Code	Date of effect
Please email hrenquiries@ port.ac.uk	4	24	1 August 2016
For public access online (internet)? Yes			
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This Handbook applies to academic staff as agreed locally by the University of Portsmouth and the University and College Union (UCU) . Local agreements with the UCU may necessitate amendments to the Handbook. These will be notified to staff and the most recent agreed version of the Handbook will be available on the website.

Academic Staff Handbook

Summary

What is it about?

The Academic Staff Handbook provides an explanation of a range of terms and conditions of employment for academic staff. This Handbook gives effect to the National Agreement between the University and UCU. It will be updated from time to time to accord with updates in relevant legislation.

Who is the Handbook for?

Academic staff.

How does the University check this Handbook is followed?

The Handbook is a point of reference, not a policy or procedure in its own right nor is it a contractual document. It provides guidance and clarity to elements of the academic contract and any changes to the academic contract will be reflected in the Handbook.

Who can you contact if you have any queries about the Handbook?

If you are external to the University and you have any queries please contact the HR Service Centre at hrenquiries@port.ac.uk.

If you are internal to the University please contact your HR Business Partner.

1. Purpose

These guidelines seek to support academic staff and their line managers to achieve the following:

- A high standard of educational provision, research, scholarship and knowledge transfer
- Recognition of the professional contribution that academic staff make to the HE sector
- Avoidance of unreasonable workloads
- A framework that enables the distribution of work to be performed fairly, taking into account local circumstances.

2. Principles

The duties and responsibilities of academic staff are inherently of a professional nature and are wide ranging. They include: teaching; research; scholarship; supporting the student experience; curriculum development; management; leadership; administration; participation in the democratic processes of the institution (including committee membership); participation in quality assurance procedures; recruitment and admission of students; Performance and Development Review (PDR); representing the University on or to appropriate external bodies.

The proportion of time devoted to any of these activities is a matter for professional judgement and will vary between individuals. The balance is necessarily determined on an individual basis, and must take account of the personal development needs of the member of staff and both the strategic ambitions and operational needs of the University.

Academic staff and their line managers have a responsibility to seek to contribute to the achievement of the University's strategic ambitions. To this end there is mutual concern to improve flexibility and to bring about changes in working practices and methods of delivery, supported by a commitment to the professional development of staff.

Workloads that damage performance and that are detrimental to staff and students must be avoided through good management practice in which line managers and their colleagues collectively determine optimum working practices that safeguard standards for all aspects of the academic role.

3. Definitions

3.1 Teaching

The University recognises that teaching activities are diverse. Teaching involves a number of student facing activities that are delivered both on-site and at other locations, remotely via web-enabled and other technologies, and at times that can vary.

The following activities are recognised as ‘formal scheduled teaching’: lectures, tutorials, seminars, practicals, workshops, laboratory projects, studio work, fieldwork, professional practice, other formal pedagogic activities (including engagement in distance learning) and direct supervision of projects, dissertations and higher degrees. It is important to note, however, that differential weightings to convert clock hours to contact hours may be applied to each type of activity when calculating workloads.¹

3.2 Scholarship

The University of Portsmouth uses the term ‘scholarship’ to describe a range of activities that relate to teaching, research and knowledge services.

Scholarship is defined as:

- The application of the most current knowledge of disciplines or professional specialisms to broader activities and practice, communicated in ways that are validated by peers and that influence others within and beyond the institution.
- Important contributions to knowledge and understanding within disciplines or professional specialisms that do not in themselves constitute original and significant research.
- Contributions to the infrastructure of disciplines or professional specialisms.

Examples of ‘scholarly activity’ are given in Appendix 1.

3.3 Research

The University of Portsmouth uses the same definition of research as is used by HEFCE for the purposes of the REF 2014:

Research is a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship (scholarship for the REF is defined as the creation, development and maintenance of the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines, in forms such as dictionaries, scholarly editions, catalogues and contributions to major research databases); the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It includes research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs, and confidential reports.

As defined above ‘Research’ excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research. The University, however, recognises that engagement with business, industry and other agencies is important, as is the development of pedagogy. Staff involvement in such activities is expected and encouraged, but both the nature and scope of engagement should be discussed and agreed with the line manager as part of the PDR.

3.4 Self-managed time

The academic contract states that ‘research and scholarly activity will be principally self-managed’. The University interprets this to mean that it is the time (five weeks) allocated to these activities that is self-managed. Research and scholarly activities should align with the strategic objectives of the University. As part of the PDR, staff will be required to report annually on their activities, outputs and other achievements and, with their line manager, agree future objectives.

3.5 Academic year/Teaching year

The academic year comprises: 38 weeks teaching year; five weeks self-managed time; 35 days annual leave; and the remainder covers public holidays and University closure days.

Teaching takes place throughout the year except for those periods when the University is closed for public holidays. The contract refers to a ‘teaching year’ that will not normally exceed 38 weeks, of which two weeks will be spent on teaching-related administration. The contract also states that staff will not be expected to teach for more than 14 consecutive weeks.

¹ The document on Academic workload planning is still in development at July 2016.

The distribution of the 38 week teaching period within an academic year may vary between individual members of staff, with agreement, providing the flexibility needed to accommodate changing patterns of course delivery.

Important activities and meetings should normally be scheduled to coincide with the availability of relevant staff.

3.6 Place of work

Unless otherwise specified the primary places of work for academic staff are the buildings and other premises of the University of Portsmouth. It is recognised that it may be necessary and/or desirable for staff to work 'off-site', but permission to do so must be sought in advance and agreed by the line manager. Permission to work off-site will not be unreasonably withheld (see Appendix 2).

4. Working hours and duties

It is not appropriate in a professional contract to be specific as to the exact hours of availability for duties, moreover, it is accepted that not all activities require attendance at the place of work. In relation to teaching duties, however, a reasonable norm may be helpful at institutional level: this norm is not to be regarded as either a minimum or maximum.

Due to the range of teaching and learning methods, and the different needs of various subject areas, a precise specification of teaching hours is neither possible nor appropriate. As a general guide, however, a full time member of academic staff might normally expect to have formal scheduled teaching responsibilities within a band of 14 to 18 hours per week on average over an academic year². Formal scheduled teaching responsibilities should not exceed a total of 540 hours over the course of an academic year and should not exceed 18 hours in any week. Contact time does not necessarily equate to elapsed time. See section 3.1 Teaching above.

The determination of the specific duties for an individual academic member of staff is a matter for discussion and agreement between the member of staff and their line manager and should be linked to the University's procedures for PDR. Allocated duties will be such as to enable the staff member to be effective in the overall discharge of his/her professional responsibilities. In allocating duties, the following factors shall be taken into account:

- the full range and extent of actual duties to be performed;
- personal development needs;
- experience;
- achieving a reasonable balance of activities;
- wider internal and external responsibilities.

Workloads should be organised such that:

- academic staff should not normally be expected to undertake more than three continuous hours of formal scheduled teaching duties;
- early and late formal scheduled teaching duties should not normally be required on the same day and neither should a late duty on one day be followed by an early duty the next day;
- academic staff should not normally be required to undertake formal scheduled teaching duties after 6.00pm on more than two evenings per week.

For the purposes of the above an early teaching duty is one that starts before 10.00am and a late teaching duty is one that ends after 7.00pm.

Different arrangements may apply to staff engaged specifically to support courses arranged to facilitate the attendance of part-time students.

It is important that line managers maintain an ongoing review of workloads to allow adjustment to changing circumstances if needed. To these ends:

- an overview of workloads should be available to staff within each Department (or equivalent);
- the University will maintain an overview of workloads to ensure a measure of consistency across the institution.

Implications for workloads should be taken into consideration as part of the planning process of the University.

² Expectations for staff with fractional appointments will vary both in relation to their contracted fraction and in relation to the range of activities for which they have been engaged.

5. Salary scales, grading provisions and allowances

Salary shall be by monthly instalments paid on the last day of the month .

5.1 Salary scales

Current salary scales are available at www.port.ac.uk/intranet/humanresources/payrewardandbenefits/ .

5.2 Placement on scales

On first appointment to any scale, the incremental point will be determined by the University .

5.3 Incremental progression

Academic staff, whether full-time or part-time, will be entitled to one increment on 1 September following appointment and each year subsequently . This will continue until the maximum of the grade is reached .

No increment will be withheld unless performance has been deemed unsatisfactory by the University .

The University may count periods of secondment, sabbatical or unpaid leave from a post as 'continuous service' where appropriate .

5.4 Progression, regrading and promotion

The career grade for academic staff is Senior Lecturer and, subject to roles and responsibilities undertaken, all academic staff should have a reasonable expectation of attaining this grade .

Where there has been a substantial change in duties discussed and agreed by the line manager, posts will be evaluated in line with academic role profiles and processes . More information is available at www.port.ac.uk/intranet/humanresources/gradingofroles/ .

Academic staff with a *prima facie* case for promotion to a Readership or Chair can submit a case for consideration by the University . Guidelines for promotion are available at www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/humanresources/filetodownload,64583,en.pdf .

5.5 Sick leave and sick pay

If you are sick your line manager must be informed as soon as possible on your first day of absence, indicating the likely length of the absence and outlining the reasons for it . It is your responsibility to ensure that your manager is kept well-informed . Your manager is also responsible for maintaining contact with you during a period of absence . If you are absent on grounds of sickness for up to and including seven consecutive calendar days, you are able to self-certificate this period of absence by completing the relevant form, copies of which should be held within your Department/Service . Should you be absent for more than seven consecutive calendar days, you will be required to submit a doctor's fit note to cover your absence from the eighth day onwards . Further information, including sick pay entitlements, is given at <http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-038.pdf> .

5.6 Family friendly entitlements

For information about maternity, paternity and parental leave and pay, adoption leave and pay and your right to request flexible working arrangements, follow the relevant links from www.port.ac.uk/intranet/humanresources/conditionsofemployment/familyfriendlyentitlements/ .

Other policies and procedures can be found via the A to Z on the HR website at www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/humanresources/atoz/ .

6. Annual leave arrangements

The University of Portsmouth's holiday year runs from 1 October to 30 September. In addition to statutory Bank Holidays, local discretionary holidays and days when the institution is closed in the interests of efficiency, you are entitled to 35 days paid holiday (*pro rata* for fractional contracts) during the course of the holiday year.

A maximum of five days' leave may be carried forward to the following leave year for both full- and part-time employees. All leave not agreed as carry over leave will be lost. The University will not pay employees for leave untaken as an alternative to carrying it over to the next leave year. If there are exceptional circumstances to carry forward leave in excess of five days, approval must be obtained by the Dean of Faculty or Head of Professional Service.

In the holiday year in which your employment commences or terminates, your holiday entitlement will accrue on a *pro rata* basis for each complete month of service; on the termination of your employment, holiday pay will be worked out on a similar basis.

The timing of all leave is subject to the agreement of your Head of Department. Subject to the organisational requirements of the institution, you may request that up to six weeks of your normal holiday entitlement be taken in one continuous period, and such a request will not be unreasonably refused.

Wherever possible, detailed holiday schedules for individual lecturers will be made as soon as reasonably practicable after the beginning of each academic year; in determining holiday schemes, special regard will be given to lecturers with family responsibilities and those who wish to attend conferences or courses that are held in normal holiday periods.

On leaving employment with the University, any outstanding leave entitlement to date of leaving should be taken. If this is not possible, outstanding leave entitlement will be paid with the final salary. Leave already taken that is in excess of entitlement will be deducted from the final salary.

7. Undertaking paid external work

When considering the principle of paid external work it is important that the legitimate interests of the University and the member of staff can be fairly balanced within the terms of the contract of employment.

The majority of externally funded work undertaken by academic staff is administered either through faculty/departmental (University) accounts or through a subsidiary company of the University of Portsmouth: subsidiary companies are used for activities that do not conform to the primary purposes of The University of Portsmouth Higher Education Corporation. Determination of whether or not a specific activity falls within the definition of a primary or non-primary purpose requires detailed knowledge of the scope of the activity itself, the terms and conditions that apply to its performance and a sound understanding of HMRC rules and Charity Commission guidance.

The decision as to whether an activity should be undertaken via the University or a subsidiary company must be made by the Finance Department in consultation with faculties and contract specialists in Research and Innovation Services. It should be noted that activities routed through a subsidiary company of the University of Portsmouth do not necessarily result in staff being eligible for additional payments. Further information is available from the Research Team in the Finance Department.

The procedure described here only covers paid external work that is agreed not to be undertaken under the auspices of either the University of Portsmouth or through a subsidiary company of the University.

The University's principal objectives are to:

- encourage external work where this is supportive of a member of academic staff's responsibilities;
- ensure that this external work enhances teaching and/or scholarship and/or research;
- ensure that external work does not conflict with the University's interests.

Permission to undertake external work will not normally be withheld for the following activities:

- external examining
- acting as an assessor or moderator
- occasional lectures or seminars
- occasional media appearances
- occasional newspaper articles.

For all other paid external work, academic staff must ensure that they do not give the impression that they are acting for or representing the University through, for example, the use of University letterheaded paper or a University of Portsmouth email address. Furthermore, staff undertaking private work should ensure that they have obtained the appropriate insurance indemnification, as the University's provisions do not cover such activities.

An obligation to undertake any external work, including consultancy, must be approved by your line manager and might necessitate a contract variation . To inform this decision, members of academic staff seeking to undertake external work should provide the following information to their line manager:

- the nature of the work;
- the person(s) or organisation(s) for whom it is undertaken;
- the relationship, if known, of the above person(s)/organisation(s) to the University or its clients;
- the amount of the time the work will take, including the phasing;
- any proposed use of University resources;
- a statement about whether or not the work was obtained through the agency of the University of Portsmouth .

Where the use of University of Portsmouth resources is necessary for the proposed work, prior approval must be obtained from your line manager and appropriate charges will be levied by the University .

Should your line manager decide that the proposed work will either interfere with the performance of your professional duties, or improperly compete or conflict with the interests of the University of Portsmouth, permission for you to undertake the work may be refused. You will be informed of this decision within five working days of submitting the original request, or an alternative mutually agreed timescale . Agreement will not be withheld unreasonably, and only after consultation with you: the reasons for withholding permission (see Appendix 2) will be provided in writing and will be subject to appeal. Any appeal must be made in writing to the Dean (or equivalent) within ten working days of the original decision.

Approval for external work will normally be limited to a period of one year . Further approval from your line manager must be obtained before any continuation or extension of external work is undertaken.

Appendix 1

Scholarship

Examples of types of scholarly activity include, but are not restricted to:

- Activities necessary to maintain the currency of course content and delivery.
- Active involvement with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, and other professional practice relevant to HE (policy development relating to professions/disciplines, officer of professional body or learned society, fellow of professional body or learned society, some kinds of consultancy, National Teaching Fellowship).
- Engagement in Continuing Professional Development.
- Links with the business, public and voluntary sector (consultancy, some kinds of industrial research, product development, skills audits).
- Contribution to the local, regional and international economies (development plans, incubator units, environmental assessment, market assessment, urban regeneration projects, economic impact studies).
- Leadership in the community (active membership of local strategic partnerships, Health Authority).
- Knowledge Transfer (Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, patents, learning hubs).
- External educational partnerships (partnerships and access schemes, summer schools, progression frameworks).
- PhD/MPhil examiner/assessor, both internal and external.
- Acting as an adviser to another institution/organisation in terms of academic discipline or other educational development (validation, curriculum development adviser, external examining, adviser on management and delivery of an HE programme, including teaching and learning strategies).
- Work for external bodies, such as QAA (subject reviewer, institutional auditor).
- Reviewer of research bids and evaluator of projects for Research Councils, European Commission, charities.
- Conference organisation (referee of papers, membership of organising committee or programme committee, production and/or editing of proceedings).
- External speaker (HE events, conferences, national and international media presentations/appearances as expert).
- Participant at international, regional and national level in consideration of a subject discipline development or other educational matter relevant to modern higher education (invitations to and active membership of working groups, enquiries, networks, subject associations, related published reports and policy recommendations).
- Development of peer esteemed pedagogic devices, software and texts.
- Writing textbooks.
- Editorial and refereeing activity (member of Editorial Advisory Board, editorships, editor of journal, journal referee, reader of submitted manuscripts, production of critiques of creative/performance activities).
- Book reviewer (invitations and published reviews).

Appendix 2

Withholding permission to work off-site, take annual leave or undertake paid external work

The following list provides examples of circumstances that could lead to line managers turning down requests to work off-site, take annual leave at a particular time or undertake paid external work. The list is indicative rather than exhaustive.

- Where granting permission to be absent would reduce overall staffing levels such that core activities could not be safely delivered.
- When the request has a detrimental impact on scheduled activities e.g. when colleagues are not available to cover programmed undertakings.
- Where the proposed activities would create a conflict of interest.
- When pre-scheduled undertakings, such as accreditation events or exam boards, require staff to be present on a particular day.
- When the request is made on the basis of University policy/guidance, such as family friendly policies and procedures, but the line manager deems the request falls outside of those policies and procedures.
- Where the requested absence is detrimental to the support of students and colleagues, or the delivery of other departmental duties and responsibilities.
- For paid external work, where the requested absence would lead to an unmanageable workload on the individual member of staff or colleagues.

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