Guidance on the Operation of Indeterminate Hours

Introduction

1. The University is committed to ensuring that its policies, procedures and practices facilitate the achievement of a proper balance between work and other interests and commitments, recognising that staff who are able successfully to align the various demands on their time are generally more productive.

2. The provisions of this guidance apply to all staff in Grade 6 and above. Appointments to posts in these grades involve a full commitment in their working lives to the University, and staff have professional responsibilities towards their colleagues both in their Departments/Divisions and the University generally. It is expected that members of staff will be available to undertake duties commensurate with their grade at such times as may be reasonably required for the fulfilment of those duties. It is recognised that staff working at this level generally have considerable autonomy in the organisation of their workload and have a professional responsibility for the organisation of their own time.

3. It has not been considered either necessary or helpful to indicate minimum and maximum hours of work, as this would be inconsistent with the autonomy and professional orientation of the staff covered by this Guidance.

4. Part-time staff (that is, those whose appointments are less than 100% FTE) have similar responsibilities and obligations commensurate with the full-time equivalence of their appointment. However, it is probable that a higher proportion of part-time staff than full-time staff have fixed commitments that limit their flexibility in respect of hours of attendance but the professional delivery of the role will, from time to time, require additional input beyond their customary hours of attendance. Part-time staff should not (and should not be expected to) consistently work in excess of their contracted proportion of FTE. If this occurs, the situation should be reviewed. In some cases, and subject to the availability of funding, it may be appropriate to consolidate the extra hours by way of an increase to contracted proportion of FTE. For the sole purpose of calculating pro rata salaries and other pay-related benefits, the working week for staff in Grade 6 and above is regarded as 37.5 hours.

5. It is recognised that working arrangements based on indeterminate working hours have operated successfully for many years and that mutuality of flexibility is implicit in these arrangements. It is also noted that members of staff are entitled to reasonable
time off during working hours to take action necessary in connection with one or more of the following:

- when a dependant falls ill;
- when a dependant is injured or assaulted, or gives birth;
- to make longer-term arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured
- the death of a dependant;
- an unexpected incident involving a child of the employee when the child is at an educational establishment;
- when there is an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements for a dependant.

### Hours of operation and attendance

6. The main period when office-based functions are operational is typically between the hours of 8.30 am to 5.30 pm on Monday to Friday each week, whereas teaching normally takes place between 9.00 am and 6.00 pm on Monday to Friday during University semesters. Depending on the nature of the work involved, staff may be required, from time to time, to commence work earlier and/or to finish work later than the above times.

7. Hours of attendance are not rigidly fixed and may vary according to operational requirements and may extend as necessary for the performance of the members' duties and include evening and weekend work. The Head of Department/Division will agree with staff adjustments to their normal hours of attendance in order to achieve an overall balance of workload over a reasonable period of time, for example, one or two months or an academic term. (It is recognised that such arrangements already operate successfully in a number of departments). The arrangements referred to in this paragraph do not apply when the agreed pattern of work is predominantly in the evenings and/or weekends.

8. From time to time, it may be necessary for staff to work continuously for extended periods, for example on field trips, overseas work assignments or on distance learning programmes. In these instances, the Head of Department/Division will agree with staff adjustments to normal hours of attendance in order to achieve an overall balance of workload over a reasonable period of time, for example, one or two months or an academic term.

9. The duties of some staff are not confined to a single department or office. In such cases, it is incumbent on the member of staff's Head of Department or Division to
liaise with colleagues in other areas in which the member of staff works to ensure that the total workload is not unreasonable. This will normally involve agreeing a reduced workload for the member of staff in their ‘home’ department or office to offset work undertaken for another department or office.

Flexibility

10. It is recognised that, in many areas of the University, the peaks and troughs of activity that characterise the academic year lend themselves to a flexible approach to achieving an overall balance in hours of work over a longer period of time than is available in other types of employment.

11. Flexible arrangements are made to provide staff with reasonable free time in lieu of hours worked beyond the normal call of duty, and staff will not be expected or required to work prolonged or excessive hours. It has always been understood that the 37.5 hrs are to be the nominal week but, given the indeterminate status, it is understood and accepted that this will vary given the departmental needs. To adopt a more formulaic approach (such as accounting for every 15 or 30 minutes worked, or enhancing the time worked to arrive at a specific amount of lieu time) would be inconsistent with an indeterminate hours’ contract.

Working from Home

12. It is acknowledged that some roles have greater flexibility than others in relation to where the duties associated with the role can be carried out (for example, particularly, but not exclusively, academic roles). However, it is the normal expectation that all staff shall attend on campus and have a visible presence within their Departments/Divisions (in order to be readily available for consultation by staff and students, and to participate fully in the life and work of the University), within a framework agreed by the Head of Department/Division.

13. It is acknowledged that, in some cases, duties of the role may be, from time to time, more effectively discharged by working from home or in another location. Such arrangements must be agreed in advance with the Head of Department/Division and the member of staff must provide the department/office with a contact address, phone number and, if possible, email address and must be readily available to respond if contacted in the event of urgent issues arising which require their attention. It is noted that arrangements may vary according to the type of role. For example, a general overarching arrangement may be appropriate for academic roles whilst, for other roles, approval on an instance by instance basis may be appropriate.
Monitoring and Review

14. Departments and Divisions will keep under review the working patterns of all staff to ensure that the hours worked are not excessive. In this regard, Heads of Departments/Divisions and other managers should be mindful of the University’s statutory obligations with regard to health and safety, employment legislation and its Policy on the Management of Stress, which includes helpful advice on identifying the symptoms of stress. Staff in the Division of Human Resources are available to provide advice and support in cases where working patterns and/or hours are giving cause for concern.

15. If a member of staff has concerns regarding their overall workload they should raise them with their line manager or Head of Department/Division. Additionally, staff in the Division of Human Resources are available to provide advice and support, which may include working with the member of staff and their line manager and/or Head of Department/Division to find a satisfactory resolution.

16. Anonymised data on reports of concerns regarding the operation of indeterminate hours will be provided to the JNCs/JCC on a termly basis.

17. Human Resources, in consultation with the recognised trades unions, will review the operation of the guidance one year after promulgation, or earlier if necessary.