

Academic administration and service workloads in Australian universities

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This paper addresses the important and linked questions of how to manage academic performance and workload effectively. It highlights the need in a modern, corporatised university to consider the nature of academic work and optimal ways to develop workload allocation and performance management processes. This paper complements two previous papers on time associated with teaching and research components of academic work by exploring service/administration workloads. Data were collected from 665 academics with recent administration experience through a nation-wide survey in 2016 and 2018. The data were analysed to understand the median annual work hours for a range of internal and external service activities, and for a range of formal administrative roles. The analysis showed a further categorisation of academic service into operational and strategic activities. Together, the three papers underpin holistic academic workload model development using empirical annual hour allocations from a large and representative national sample of academics. This article provides an essential basis for any future consideration of performance assessment based on output measures such as research expectations, impact or quality.

Keywords: academic workloads, workload models, service teaching, academic administration

Introduction

Universities and their middle managers face increasing demands for improved efficiency and accountability (Stensaker, Frølich & Aamodt, 2018). These internationally relevant economic drivers have led to quality assurance measures (Song, 2018) and diminishing university autonomy (Eastman *et al.*, 2018). Performance-based metrics have emerged, most notably in research, such as Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA); Research Excellence Framework (Britain) and elsewhere (Kwok, 2013). These metrics purport to measure output quality at an institutional level yet have direct impact for individual academics (Kwok 2013, Kenny 2017). To date, little research has been done on the level of inputs (in terms of time) required for academic staff to undertake key

components of their work. Without this information, the staff costs associated with conducting research, teaching, administrative and service duties remain opaque, making planning for efficiency gains nearly impossible.

Academic work is notoriously difficult to quantify (Boyd, 2014), but the rationale for managing academic workload stems from the notion of accountability as one of the 'tenets of new public management' (Bryson *et al.*, 2014, p. 446). Through performance management and workload allocation processes, accountability for institutional performance has been increasingly transferred onto individual academics (Franco-Santos, Rivera & Bourne, 2014; Kenny 2017). This further underscores the need for effective processes to manage academic workload and performance. However, the resolution of these issues carries deep political and power undertones in

universities (Kenny, Fluck & Jetson, 2012; Kenny & Fluck, 2014; Kenny & Fluck, 2017; Soliman, 1999; Vardi, 2009).

Boyd (2014) reported mistrust giving rise to scepticism and anger if workload models were perceived as imposed by management to control staff; they highlighted 'the need for enhanced collaborative endeavours and transparency from managers within all sectors of the university' (p.320). Moreover, workload models were perceived 'as a means of restoring trust between academics and management' (pp. 321-2).

Boyd (2014, p.317) also noted that '(p)ublished literature dealing with workload models within the tertiary sector is scarce'. Further, drawing parallels between academics as workers and those working in creative industries, Gill (2014) linked exploitation to the increasingly casualised workforce, 'spiralling overall demands' (p. 20) and a surveillance culture driven by technology and external performance metrics. She pointed out the dearth of research into the actual experience of academics as workers:

to date there has been very little research on the experiences of academics, a marked reluctance to examine our own labour processes, organisational governance and conditions of production. Despite the growing interest in reflexivity in recent decades, the experiences of academics have largely escaped critical attention. (p. 17)

We concur with these views and argue that, in a managerial environment this issue is of such fundamental importance, that it must be addressed with thoroughness and credibility. Otherwise, it will not only continue to damage the career aspirations and welfare of many academics, but also the performance and effectiveness of their institutions.

Background to the study

This is the third in a series of papers, in which we have addressed this gap in the literature by examining academic work from the perspective of individual academics in Australian universities. This paper complements our two previous papers in which we explored the time associated with activities for the teaching and research components of academic work (Kenny & Fluck, 2017; 2018). Those papers proposed credible time-based allocations for a range of activities related to teaching and research based on median reported values from a national survey of over 2000 Australian academics.

In this paper we complete the analysis of inputs by exploring activities associated with the administrative

(or service) components of academic work as presented by the respondents to the survey. While the term has had different interpretations over the years, Macfarlane (2007) identifies service as fundamental to the notion of a University. He talks of 'academic citizenship' to describe how academics are expected to serve various groups in the community. The notion of academic citizenship also implies a moral obligation to contribute to the academic community through service. Based on what is rewarded by the institution's performance systems, he claims academics perceive service, in relative ascending order of importance, as their students, their colleagues, their institution, their discipline or profession and the public. However, Macfarlane (2007, p.266) noted that many academics felt 'their service activities went unrecognised' as their universities tended to undervalue many service aspects of their roles relative to research and teaching.

Clearly, in a performative culture, if Service is a fundamental aspect of academic work, it needs to be examined, properly acknowledged and accounted for. Service encompasses a broad range of activities, including formal administrative and leadership roles, and the many informal or discretionary activities academics may be required to undertake.

Methodology

The online questionnaire that forms the basis of this study, was circulated in early 2016 to 8000 academics across the Australian university sector, including both union members and non-members. The questions asked individual academics to estimate the time they spent on a wide range of teaching, research and service-related activities. Responses were received from academics at each of the 39 Australian universities. The respondents included a spread of academic levels, years of experience, disciplines and gender which broadly reflect the general academic population. In the section of the survey on Service, the preamble stated:

'You are asked to provide an annual estimate of the time (in hours) each of the roles below actually takes to do competently. This group of questions is concerned with formal leadership or administrative roles. Please include all aspects of the role such as chairing/ attending meetings, managing staff, travel, reporting, etc, to determine the annual time spent (in hours). In responding to these questions please draw on your own recent experience in undertaking a specific administrative role.'

In comparison to teaching and research, a relatively small proportion of the initial survey respondents provided

Table 1: Internal Service – median annual workloads for common internal service roles

	<i>Elected staff representative on Academic Board (or Senate)</i>	<i>Formal school or cost centre review</i>	<i>Service & training as OH&S representative</i>	<i>Member of disciplinary board</i>	<i>Member of ethics committee</i>	<i>Other</i>
N	74	43	29	44	57	227
median hours	40	30	30	40	50	50

data on their service and administrative activities, so this section of the survey was circulated again in early 2018 to increase the sample size. The combined data set from 665 respondents related to their experience of administrative roles. The results below are presented in two sections: the first relates to time spent on informal service and the second relates to formal administrative roles.

Results – Informal service roles

The survey suggested a number of common service roles (e.g. service on ethics committees), but the open text questions invited respondents to suggest other service-related duties and roles they had undertaken. These were later categorised to include roles internal to the university and those which were external. The term ‘internal’ refers to university-based committees and roles whereas ‘external’ refers to roles involving official representation on behalf of the university on external bodies, or official interactions with outside stakeholders such as industry, professional accreditation, community or governmental bodies. Table 7 provides examples of committees and roles under these categorisations.

A large variety of informal service-related roles were reported, with 278 respondents providing examples of other internal service roles and 230 providing examples of other external service roles. While there was variation in language across institutions, some of these roles clearly overlapped with those already recognised within the survey or performed similar functions. In many cases committees fulfilling similar roles were described with different terminology across different institutions or different disciplines. For example, faculty higher degrees committee, research higher degrees committee, higher education coursework committee, school research committee and school research management committee appear to perform similar functions.

Internal service

The annual workloads of respondents performing types of informal service for their universities was categorised and tabulated in Table 1.

The median time values provided for these types of internal operational service varied between 30-50 hours per annum. A range of other internal service activities were mentioned, and these tended to have a median time of 50 hours. Only those identified by more than 5 participants were included in the estimate. Examples included teaching and learning committee, disciplinary administrative committees, promotions, equity committee, working parties, research committee, marketing and outreach (curriculum committee). A number of these committees/roles were clearly established at the local, work unit level such as an ethics committee or work, health and safety representative.

Yet other service was performed at the institutional level (e.g. elected representative on academic senate, university teaching and learning committee). Some service roles existed at two levels (e.g. there was also a university-level human research ethics committee to oversee and set research policy frameworks). While some roles were clearly operational in nature (e.g. discipline committee, ethics), others were more strategic in nature (e.g. academic senate). We can only assume that the existence of a committee indicates the tasks it fulfils are necessary for the proper functioning of the university.

Many staff also reported they served on several committees and provided annual estimates of their time commitments. The anonymous coding identifies respondents by a unique identifier, their gender (male / female, M-F), academic level (A-E), role (e.g. teaching and research-T&R) and employment status (e.g. full-time, FT):

- a) Workload committee work: 100 hours
- b) Member of Academic Staff Consultative Committee: 100 hours
- c) Member of School Research Committee: 40 hours
- d) Attending to and responding to official university correspondence: 120 hours
- e) Administrative aspects of course convenorship: 80-100 hours
- f) Attending school meetings and events: 30 hours
- g) Union delegate (advice to members on performance review matters): 40 – 50 hours (4386279315, M. level B, T&R, FT)

8 meeting groups which meet an average of monthly for 1 hour each. Academic staff must attend university open days and various professional exhibition days in their own time. (4441698047-M, level B, T&R, FT)

Table 2: Other internal service roles

<i>Role/Committee</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Median hours per year as a member</i>	<i>Median hours per year as a chair/leader (n)</i>
Faculty board	6	20	
Course review	12	60	
Teaching and learning (curriculum)	21	50	100 (6)
Research committee	13	25	140
Working party	22	50	
NTEU (union) elected representative	9	100	
Marketing outreach, professional experience organiser, industry liaison	80	40	140 (10)
Confirmation, promotions, selection, misconduct	15	60	
Deputy head of school	9	200	
University human research ethics committee	5	130	

Where a person was chairing a committee, this necessarily involved more work than someone who served as a member of the committee. As was the case for teaching or research data, there was significant variation in the individual estimates for service-related activities. In order to reduce the effects of any outliers, the median values were determined for a range of internal service and are presented in Table 2.

A wide variety of other internal service roles were mentioned without workload estimates. These included Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) coordinator (40 mentions), Indigenous liaison (100), postgraduate committee (20), workload committee (20), graduation, orientation, open days (30), staff forum (50), staffing (175), practicum supervision (40), and academic misconduct (integrity) (30).

For staff not in formal recognised roles, it would seem reasonable to account for this work by awarding 40 hours per annum (average from Table 1) for each committee on which they serve.

Staff who hold formal administrative roles (as outlined in Table 4), may be on some of these committees as ex-officio members. This should be acknowledged and built in as part of the overall time allowance for their substantive service role. For example, an associate dean (teaching and learning) would be expected to attend

teaching and learning committees at both their local (operational) level and at institutional (strategic) level. Therefore, for the associate dean, the time associated with these duties should be clearly built in to the overall time allowance for their formal role, not as an additional allowance on top.

External service

The survey identified activities, such as peer reviewing and editing for journals, as service to the discipline. We note that Seaberg (1998) also categorised peer review as a service-related activity. Within our own institution, the rationale for this was that research activities focus on tasks that might lead to measurable research outcomes and productivity. By contrast, while activities such as peer review and editorial work do not result in direct measurable research outcomes, they are important activities that provide prestige for the individual academic and their institution; and help academics stay abreast of developments in their field. This form of service to the discipline underpins the scholarly endeavours of a university and is an essential service performed by academics. Critical peer review provides the ‘grease’ which enables quality research scholarly activity. Research would soon grind to a halt if academic staff did not engage in these activities, so they, and other important service work, need to be acknowledged and supported in any consideration of academic work.

On analysing the data from the initial survey, it had become evident there was confusion amongst respondents about where certain roles fitted in their academic duties. In constructing the survey, we had placed peer review and editorial roles into the service-related section. However, 89 respondents had added peer review and 23 had added editorial roles with journals as activities within the ‘other research’ section, with median values of 50 hours per annum and 200 hours per annum respectively, as published in Kenny & Fluck (2018). Other activities for which this confusion was evident included serving on ethics committees and peer reviewing grant proposals. Table 3 summarises annual workloads for the range of external service roles from the second survey respondents.

External service roles tended to be associated with an average median workload of 50 hours per year. As the discussion above implies, individuals who work on several such committees should be provided with time (50 hours) per external committee unless their presence is part of their official role, in which case it should be built into the time allowance for that role.

Table 3: Median annual workloads for external service roles

	<i>Office holder on professional body associated with your role</i>	<i>Editor of a journal</i>	<i>Member of an editorial board</i>	<i>University rep. on a state or national board</i>	<i>Examine theses</i>	<i>Formally reviewing articles and course materials</i>	<i>Other external service activities</i>
N	153	76	129	62	294	321	190
median hours	50	100	40	40	30	40	50

Selected representative on industry partner projects – 1 hr / week. Provision of education resources and workshops to industry partners – 1 hr / week (4387752188, F, Level B, T&R, FT)

Seaberg (1998) found smaller academic units had fewer committees than larger units. Our data show little real variation by discipline. However, responsibilities such as chairing or coordinating duties associated with service duties clearly required more time. These roles generally fell to more senior staff (level C and above).

Chairing accreditation review: 200 hours (4339337280, F, level D, T&R, FT)

Member and chair of School outreach and marketing committee = 120 hrs per year (4333062505, F, level C, T&R, FT)

Coordinator of a sub-discipline where I am the only academic. Expectations here include attending conferences to market the sub-discipline, be ahead of trends, support Course Director re policy and enrolment matters (4332229041, F, Level C, T&R, FT)

It is clear that while many academics volunteer for these committees, they feel professionally obliged to engage in such activities, and therefore these tasks should form a legitimate part of any conversation about their workload. The danger of a focus on outcomes alone to measure performance is that these activities may be seen as unproductive and therefore devalued by the university.

Results – Formal Administration Roles

To complete the analysis, we then explored the data specifically related to formal administrative roles. As with the earlier teaching and research roles, the language describing the title of these roles varied across universities. A range of common administrative roles were provided as examples for comment, such as dean to honours supervisor with provision for distinction between large, medium, and small work units.

Again, considerable variation was evident in individual responses, so the same statistical process was followed for the analysis as for the teaching and research data: the median figure was used to minimise the effects of

any outliers. For example, three of the records suggested a dean’s role could be done in 50 hours a year, and another suggested all roles could be done in 400 hours a year each. These records were deleted to maintain the highest level of credibility in the database. Other entries ascribing zero hours to administrative roles were treated as a non-response. Table 4 presents the initial analysis for the range of common service-related roles. Respondents were asked to estimate the time required to undertake these roles based on their recent and direct experience. The frequency, mean, standard deviation, number of respondents and median values are reported.

As expected, the number of respondents for some of these roles was very small. Generally, the patterns in the reported median annual work hours in each role made relative sense. The workload reported for Deans of larger centres was greater than for medium or smaller centres. Workloads reported for sub-deans or deputies were less than deans. Associate dean workloads are smaller again, with broad equivalence between research and teaching & learning positions. There was an anomaly detected for course coordinators, with the estimated workload in small centres reportedly about three times higher than for medium or large centres.

The data did not meet the assumption of a normal distribution, so non-parametric methods were employed to analyse the data.

Investigations of differences

In our analysis we explored possible correlations between formal administrative workload by a range of factors:

- Academic Level.
- Discipline (using groups from Cannizzo & Osbaldiston, 2016) .
- Years of experience as an academic.
- Years working in the current institution.

For each of these investigations, an independent samples Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to explore any relationships between the range of academic administrative roles and each of the factors in the list above. Confidence intervals were set to 95%, and cases were excluded test-by-test.

Table 4: Estimated annual work hours for academic administrative duties

<i>Role</i>	<i>Centre size</i>	<i>Mean annual hours worked in this role</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Median annual hours worked in this role</i>
Dean or director of a budget centre	Large ^a	2027.50	1155.26	8	1860
	Medium	1248.57	904.51	14	1250
	Small	1011.67	815.25	18	825
Sub-dean or deputy director of a budget centre	Large	1178.00	904.28	10	1000
	Medium	849.17	682.98	12	700
	Small	798.00	653.39	17	700
Associate dean of teaching and learning	Large	1096.43	741.70	7	700
	Medium	555.38	442.01	13	450
	Small	476.36	409.59	11	400
Associate dean of research	Large	1114.29	696.25	7	700
	Medium	649.00	528.32	10	550
	Small	1235.71	1696.25	7	400
Graduate research coordinator	Large	558.89	489.22	9	500
	Medium	376.56	290.30	18	300
	Small	230.16	173.97	25	200
Course (program) coordinator	Large	406.87	589.02	43	150
	Medium	300.89	408.07	56	150
	Small	356.87	528.67	159	200 /145 ^b
Discipline coordinator	Large	453.67	505.40	15	180
	Medium	325.65	349.11	26	180
	Small	218.83	222.34	93	140
Honours, year level or campus coordinator	Large	317.45	393.98	20	150
	Medium	232.52	238.45	31	150
	Small	187.64	251.51	89	100

^aLarge: Large faculty or cost centre (approx. 151 staff² or more); Medium: Medium faculty or cost centre (approx. 51-150 staff); Small: Small faculty or cost centre (less than 50 staff). ^bSee comment below under 'Academic level'.

Table 5: Median estimated hours spent working each year as Course Coordinator in a small centre

<i>Academic level</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Median hours</i>
A	5	500.00
B	70	275.00
C	54	155.00
D	19	160.00
E	11	120.00

Academic Level

With only one exception, the null hypothesis was retained, meaning there was no difference in the median workload estimates for the roles by academic level, discipline, years of experience or years working in an institution. The exception was for course coordinators of small centres which had an unusual distribution where the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test gave a result of .250 (p=.000) showing it did not follow a normal curve. Course coordination was the most mentioned service role in survey returns (n=159). A closer analysis revealed that level A academics were outliers with an estimated 500 hours spent annually performing the role (see Table 5).

The Minimum Standards for Academic Levels (Fairwork Australia, 2018) state that level A academics 'undertake administration primarily relating to their activities at the institution', so they would not usually be coordinating other staff or looking after a course. Given the relatively small number of level A academics responding and the

Table 6: Median estimated annual hours worked as course(program) coordinator in a small centre by discipline

Discipline group #	n	Median		Median
Arts, Law and Humanities	41	200		
Science, Technology & Engineering	39	200		
Health and Medicine	35	150		
Social and Behavioural Sciences	11	250	Professional Disciplines	350
Business and Economics	15	160		
Education and Related	17	500		

See Cannizzo & Osbaldiston, 2016

unlikely event that they would be asked to undertake such a role, this data was excluded. Therefore, it can be argued the workload allocation should be the average of the median figures for levels B and above (210 hours per year), scaled in the same proportion as the discipline coordinator for size of academic unit.

Discipline

A further analysis was conducted to see if there were any statistically significant differences in annual workload by discipline. The course coordinator role in small centres once again showed great variation, with the median allocation for 'Education or related' discipline estimated at more than three times the workload compared to Health & Medicine (see Table 6). Given the considerations above, and the relatively small number of respondents for the professional disciplines of Education, Business and Economics and the Social and Behavioural sciences, in comparison to Health and Medicine, these data were combined into a new category called professional disciplines and re-analysed to obtain the data in the final column of Table 6.

Years of experience as an academic

There were no significant differences found in administrative workload distributions by years of experience as an academic.

Years working in the current institution

There were no significant differences found in distributions by years working in the current institution.

Discussion

These results demonstrate the interrelated nature of academic work. Research informs teaching, service enables research and teaching, conferences enable formation of networks, etc. It is clear from the responses that many universities rely on service work by academic staff over and above their teaching and research responsibilities. A failure to include administration and service roles in workload discussions devalues them and can have a detrimental effect on other components of the work. These commitments need to be included in workload discussions and to ensure the true costs and nature of academic work are captured.

In total, 662 academics responded to the service and administration questions in the combined dataset from 2016 and 2018. Of these, 599 provided specific comments. It was clear that service-related tasks form an important part of academic work that must be acknowledged within their workload.

In the last 12 months I have given up several University service roles to dedicate more time to my research. In previous times I was on 3 University committees and Deputy Head School (Research and International) (72741790, F, level D, T&R, FT)

I took on a leadership/service role and fulfilled it to the best of my ability. After one year I was chastised during performance management for not reaching minimum expectations in research. I have since focused on research and cut corners (many, to my shame) in the leadership role. I felt as if I had no choice. (4333046177, F, Level C, T&R, FT)

The respondents to the open text questions in the original survey (2016) reported a key challenge to the fair allocation of work at their institution was the underestimation of the work they were required to undertake. Forty-nine respondents specifically reported an increase in the administrative component of their workload. Many staff (166) put these problems down to poor management where the intention was to hide the true costs of the work and a prevailing belief that many academics will work for free (53), or for as long as it takes, without the need for due recompense. Many respondents believed the increased work pressure on staff was driven by funding shortfalls (136) and a focus on balancing the budget rather than properly resourcing the work required (88).

The workload has got out of control. Every single administration task has been pushed to academics, whether teaching, research or service related. The amount of administration support has diminished,

Table 7: Academic service roles

Operational	Internal operational service	External operational service
Median Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 hours per task/committee, per year • Chair, organiser or lead: 80 hours per role per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 hours per task/committee, per year • Leading role e.g. chair, organiser, journal editor = 125 hours per role, per year
Examples	Committees and working parties: Faculty Board, misconduct, disciplinary, curriculum, research, course or program, ethics, promotion, selection committee, learning and teaching, mentoring junior staff, first-aid and fire warden, ERA submission, open day (outreach), awards, graduation, review grants and awards, academic integrity, workload committee, discipline committee, etc.	Official disciplinary, school or work unit representation, member of an editorial board, peer reviewer, liaison roles with discipline, professional or industry, marketing and outreach roles, university teaching and learning committee, university research committee, conference committee.
Strategic	Internal strategic service	External strategic service
Median Allowance	50 hours per committee per year	100 hours per committee per year
Examples	University council, academic senate, university level teaching and learning committee, sub-committees of senate, course review (quality assurance), course accreditation, new course development.	Official university representation, Industry advisory bodies, Government advisory bodies, Accreditation bodies, Industry liaison.

and a long time is spent doing tasks that would have taken a specialist minutes taker in much less time. (899372553, M, level C T&R, FT)

The institutional, bureaucratic, and administrative environment is highly erratic. New tasks will be introduced one year, only to be abandoned the next and a new different system introduced. We are increasingly responsible for reporting on ourselves – that is spending increasing amounts of time telling the university what we do and why we are worth our jobs. (6925697896, M, Level B, T&R FT)

While the study identified service roles both internal and external to the university, the analysis also suggested a second dimension: ‘operational’ and ‘strategic’. ‘Operational’ committees or roles are generally located at the school, discipline or work unit level or involve a university level role with a specific function. These service roles typically relate to implementing and monitoring university policy, such disciplinary committees or fire-wardens. By contrast, ‘Strategic’ committees or roles typically involve developing, evaluating and/or recommending strategic approaches on policy or matters of concern to the work unit or university. These committees or roles provide advice and report directly to senior managers or key university committees and would include university council members and industry liaison bodies.

This suggests the typology of service roles as categorised in Table 7 and recommended time allocations for each category drawn from the discussion above. Internal service role/committee memberships took an average of 40 hours per annum each, while an external service role took 50 hours per year on average. It was common

for academics to have several such roles or committees associated with their position.

Our survey did not capture incidental service activities. In addition, based on our experience and the practice at our institution, we also suggest a standard administration allowance of 150 hours for all academics to cover a range of everyday or incidental work-related or unforeseen, but time-consuming tasks, not necessarily covered elsewhere. For example, just half an hour a day monitoring and responding to emails and phone calls over 45 weeks would amount to over 112.5 hours a year for a full time academic. Further, attending ad hoc professional development sessions and collegial meetings would add to this figure. Also, with increased casualisation, many academic staff find themselves managing small teams of sessional teaching staff, with little or no acknowledgement of the time required to administer contracts and provide new staff inductions.

When considered alongside the data in the two earlier papers (Kenny & Fluck, 2017; 2018) the suggested workload service related allocations and categorisations in this paper can form a transparent suite of credible time allowances that could be used as a guide during negotiations with individuals about their workload. If used as a standard, the allowances for the range of tasks to be undertaken in a given year, across research, teaching and service would enable individuals to build a realistic estimate of their workload that both reflects the varied roles they may undertake in a given year, but also enables direct comparison with their colleagues to ensure fairness. Aggregation of this data across a cost centre would enable cost-centres to quickly identify overloaded staff and

estimate academic staffing costs for their teaching and research programs.

If universities venture down the path of allocating the time academics put into their work, it cannot be done dishonestly. While the detailed atomisation of the complex academic role is not our aim, the time associated with genuinely important activities or roles must be acknowledged within an individual's workload to be credible. Attempts to hide important academic service, or other academic tasks, in order to reduce costs due to budget pressures, will destroy trust and could be counter-productive in the longer run for universities.

For any individual academic, work is a complex mixture of teaching, research and service related duties. The extent of each component of their work can vary considerably according to experience and seniority of the individual, but this must be accounted for, in a realistic and transparent manner, if we want to understand the true nature of and costs associated with the demands on academic time.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that academic work must be considered holistically, and that academic staff must be consulted in the development of an academic workload allocation model if it is to be considered credible, realistic and capture the work that needs to be done. As the third component to be considered, and often the least examined, service and administration roles and tasks are important aspects of academic work. These roles and tasks are not always adequately accounted for in workloads, either for formal roles but also for more discretionary tasks that academics undertake. It appears that universities have relied on staff goodwill to execute many compliance and regulatory functions as part of their administration and service work. Support for academic publications through peer review and editing is an example of expected 'voluntary' work without which the 'publish or perish' system of performance evaluation would disappear.

While the performance management process will vary between contexts, for example an esteemed older urban university may have different priorities compared to a newer regional university, this study considered the essential nature of academic work and provides some credible metrics for a wide range of teaching, research and service that can be used in workload and performance management conversations.

Within the power structures of universities there are budget pressures and political tensions that drive strategic

decision-making and efficiencies that seek to optimise the use of resources. This study provides an essential starting point for such conversations, because optimisation is not feasible without a clear idea of resource costs and staff capacities. The data in this study were obtained from involved staff from every university in Australia. The associated input times proposed for the activities are empirically based and realistic.

This study of administrative academic workload in Australian universities has provided reference levels for many formal leadership positions (Table 4). Staff take on these roles partly through 'a sense of duty' and with little training (Preston & Floyd, 2016, p. 266) and often cope with complex situations at work. The baseline annual hours for roles proposed in this paper, in combination with the results in the first two papers, may form the basis for the development of a holistic, transparent, flexible and reasonable process to guide discussions with about their workload. Consideration of how this may be done will form the basis of the next stage of our research.

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