UNIVERSITY WORK PLAN COMMITTEE

UNIVERSITY WORK PLAN POLICY FRAMEWORK

This paper is based on the outcomes of discussions that have taken place at meetings of the University Work Plan Committee (hereafter the Committee). It should be read in conjunction with Clause 19, Workloads, of the UWS Academic Staff Agreement 2009 – 2012 (hereafter the Agreement).

The Agreement charges the Committee with the following tasks:

1) developing a University Work Plan Policy Framework aimed at providing collegiality, equity, transparency and comparability, which allows for adaptation at a School or Unit level that does not contradict the University Work Plan Policy Framework;

2) establishing general procedures to ensure consistent standards of workload allocation having regard to:
   (i) the mix of major areas of academic work;
   (ii) maximum targets for different types of teaching in either face-to-face hours or EFTSL or both;
   (iii) the impact of alternate modes of delivery; and
   (iv) equal opportunity principles and employee development needs;

3) monitoring the implementation outcomes of the University Work Plan Policy Framework at the level of individual Schools and Units; and

4) ensuring that Schools and Units adhere to Clause 19 of the Agreement.

The Agreement also expects that the Committee will make decisions by consensus and will be transparent in its processes.

The Committee is well aware that academic units, disciplines and groups have different needs and that it is difficult to anticipate all contingencies in such a process. In this spirit, this University Work Plan Policy Framework sets out the broad aims of the work plan process; principles and general procedures to guide School and Unit Work Plan Policies; scholarship and research work plan profiles; and other work plan elements.

Feedback on the University Work Plan Policy Framework can be forwarded to Jeanine Parsons (j.parsons@uws.edu.au). The University Work Plan Policy Framework will be subject to review over the life of the Agreement, to assess its implementation and deal with requests for clarification.

Newly formed School and Unit Work Plan Committees should now develop their Work Plan Policies within the context of the Agreement and this University Work Plan Policy Framework.
1. **BROAD AIMS OF THE WORK PLAN PROCESS**

1.1 Work plan processes should be applied in a way that takes account of, and positively promotes, quality educational experiences for students and the career aspirations of academic staff.

1.2 In accordance with the Agreement, work plan processes should be equitable, transparent and collegial. Processes should be understood by all parties and be clearly articulated in School and Unit Work Plan Policies.

The Committee will play a key role in monitoring the various work plan policies to ensure that comparative justice is achieved across Schools and Units.

1.3 Work plan negotiations within Schools and Units will be conducted in an open, collegial manner in designated groups, based on disciplinary or teaching and research concentrations, to be known as ‘academic groups’. They will also provide the security of Individual Work Agreements co-signed by supervisors and staff. This aims to provide a balance between the professional autonomy of academic staff and the ability of Heads of Schools and Heads of Units to manage staff resources and operational needs.

2. **PRINCIPLES AND GENERAL PROCEDURES TO GUIDE SCHOOL AND UNIT WORK PLAN POLICIES**

2.1 The key elements of Individual Work Agreements, including teaching, honours and research higher degree supervision, scholarship and research, should be established in collegial discussions at the level of academic groups, as defined in Clause 1.3 above. The governance and special project responsibilities, and the workload allocations attached, of individual members of academic groups will be advised by Heads of Schools and Heads of Units, and will inform the collegial discussions. Any approved PDP Leave and Long Service Leave will also be advised.

Heads of Schools and Heads of Units will consult with the relevant School or Unit Work Plan Committee before designating academic groups and defining their respective teaching responsibilities.

2.2 To ensure equity, transparency and compliance with School and Unit Work Plan Policies, School and Unit Work Plan Committees will review the general work plan allocations emanating out of the collegial discussions referred to in Clause 1.3 above. Approval of Individual Work Agreements rests with Heads of Schools and Heads of Units.

2.3 Schools and Units should have clear processes in place for resolving disagreements about Individual Work Agreements. Clause 19, Sub-clauses 52 to 56, of the Agreement empowers School or Unit Work Plan Committees to resolve a range of Individual Work Agreement disputes which are ‘not major enough to
require resolution by a formal Individual Work Agreement Dispute Resolution process’.

2.4 Global limits on teaching, as set out in Clause 19 of the Agreement, rather than ‘micro-counting’, should be the broad measure of an acceptable workload. School and Unit Work Plan Policies should define, and provide discipline-specific explanations for, the number and type of units to which a staff member contributes over the academic year, as well as a reasonable assessment load defined in some numerical form (such as hours or EFTSL). Such discipline-specific explanations should be provided in a form which enables the University Work Plan Committee to compare work plan allocations across Schools and Units.

2.5 School and Unit Work Plan Policies should recognise the distinction between School or program-level resourcing issues and work plan issues.

2.6 Quality of student learning, and the opportunity for staff to develop their scholarship in related areas, should be explicit considerations when developing Individual Work Agreements. This includes taking account of staff disciplinary expertise, promoting a strong nexus between teaching and research, and also the need for time to provide feedback to students. All staff should have an opportunity to develop their scholarship as part of their all-round professional development, subject to the approval of a plan and reporting against same.

2.7 Academic staff in Schools (except for Heads of Schools) and Associate Deans in Deans’ Units will complete at least 20% of their work in teaching, including honours and research higher degree supervision. The teaching of undergraduate and/or postgraduate coursework students must represent at least 10% of their work. The minimum 20% total teaching allocation cannot, under any circumstances, be replaced by other duties.

3. SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH WORK PLAN PROFILES

3.1 School and Unit Work Plan Policies should include broad scholarship and research profiles for the purpose of allocating scholarship and research work plans. These profiles should be negotiated between individual staff and their academic-group colleagues, within a framework established by the School or Unit Work Plan Policy. They are intended to be general enough to avoid the necessity for ‘micro-counting’.

3.2 School and/or discipline-specific descriptors for these profiles should be devised in such a way as to be able to be compared across other areas of the University. While Schools and Units will be able to specify the content of the profiles, to allow for the specific types of scholarship and research in their areas, this should be done within the framework of the following profiles.
Scholarship or Developing Research Profile

The University expects all academic staff to engage in scholarly work beyond teaching. It also recognises the diversity of ways in which staff can develop and disseminate their scholarship and research beyond the teaching relationship.

Academic staff in this profile would have few, if any, recognised high-order publications over the previous three years. However, if they do not, they should be engaged in scholarship and the scholarly dissemination of ideas in other ways, as defined by the School or Unit Work Plan Policy and implemented by the academic groups.

Most of the staff in this profile should be thought of in developmental terms. A large number may be early career academics, or staff attempting to develop their research profile, as well as those who are returning to more active research. Their supervisors and academic-group colleagues should assist their research development by encouraging synergies between their teaching and research, and by allocating their teaching in such a way as to aid this. School and Unit Work Plan Policies should define the discipline-specific research outputs required for developing researchers, including, where appropriate, the completion of a PhD for which a workload allocation may be granted. It is envisaged that staff in this profile would be allocated a scholarship/research workload of between 15% and 20%.

Substantial Research

Academic staff in this profile would have a substantial research profile within the context of their discipline area, and, depending on the character and methods of their research, would generally aspire to achieve national and/or international publication as well as external funding. School and Unit Work Plan Policies should define “substantial”, recognising that research output at this level will be characterised by quality, including impact, as well as quantity. School Work Plan Committees should also develop School-specific protocols in terms of adjudging non-conventional research for the purposes of this profile. It is envisaged that staff in this profile would be allocated a research workload of between 20% and 40%.

Research Leaders and Mentors

Academic staff in this profile would have an advanced research output in their discipline area, usually including significant external income and a well above the average publication output. Also, they would be expected to play a research leadership and mentoring role for staff in the other profiles. School and Unit Work Plan Policies should define the “advanced” and “leadership/mentoring” components of this profile, recognising that research output at this level will be characterised by quality, including impact, as well as quantity. It is envisaged that staff in this profile would be allocated a research workload of between 40% and 60%.
3.3 Academic staff appointed to research units located outside of Schools, except for those exempted by the DVCAR, will complete some teaching of undergraduate and/or postgraduate coursework students, in order to support the University’s commitment to the nexus between teaching and research. This teaching will be in the staff member’s area of expertise and will consist of either a) responsibility for one unit per year, which would involve preparation of material such as the unit template and learning guide, the delivery of lectures and the conduct of tutorials (or equivalent), and assessment for a maximum of 60 students, or b) preparation of material such as the unit template and learning guide, and delivery of lectures for two units per year, or c) an equivalent engagement in teaching preparation, delivery and assessment. These teaching arrangements will be negotiated between the staff member and the relevant Head of School, in consultation with the relevant academic group.

3.4 Clause 19, Sub-clause 36, of the Agreement specifies a process according to which: ‘where an employee has had opportunities to produce research outcomes and, over a period of time (e.g. the previous 3 years), without good reason, has consistently not produced evidence of reasonable productive engagement in research consistent with the expected outcomes for their academic level, discipline and personal career plans, their entire work plan may be allocated to activities other than research’. In addition, academic staff who do not wish to pursue a program of scholarship or research may opt voluntarily to be placed under Clause 19, Sub-clause 36. This Sub-clause also specifies a process whereby staff can return to the research work plan process, when they have ‘shown signs of positive research engagement’.

3.5 For the purposes of this policy, Clause 19, Sub-clause 36, of the Agreement is taken to describe special cases falling outside the research profiles in Clause 3.2 above. Hence Heads of School should also be able to allocate individuals in this situation a research allocation of greater than zero, but less than 15%. It is also open to staff who do not wish to pursue a program of research or allied scholarship to opt voluntarily to be placed under this sub-clause of the Agreement. Note that the same sub-clause provides a mechanism for such staff to return to the research profiles structure, once they have ‘shown signs of positive research engagement’.

4. OTHER WORK PLAN ELEMENTS

4.1 School and Unit Work Plan Policies should include an appropriate work plan allocation for the Associate Heads of School, for Heads of Program, and for other positions as determined by the Head of School or Head of Unit. Factors such as the number of staff being supervised, the student load in a program, and the nature of the work being undertaken, should be taken into account when determining such work plan allocations.
4.2 School and Unit Work Plan Policies should include an administrative work plan allocation of 10% for academic staff not engaged in special administrative responsibilities of the kind described in Clause 4.1 above. This should cover the normal range of administrative responsibilities connected with unit coordination and student enquiries, along with the regular discharge of collegial responsibilities, such as Open Day, careers markets, academic advising sessions, and graduation ceremonies. There should be recognition of the additional administrative responsibility involved in the coordination of large units, particularly at first-year level.

University Work Plan Committee
9 December 2010