

Report of the taskforce educational workload

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1. Introduction

The workload among (academic) staff is high. This has been signaled more than once in the last couple of years. A recent inventory by the FNV has indicated that this is a problem in all universities in the Netherlands.

The University council (U-council) has put this issue on the agenda in 2016, in relation to investments in advance of the compensation for the social loan systems. These investments are targeted at increasing the educational quality and alleviating the educational workload among academic staff. The University council has an important task in this issue, since they have to approve the budgets for this additional funding. To accomplish this task a clear insight in the budgetary allocation and the effects on student/staff ratio is required. In 2016 it proved to be very difficult to get a clear insight in the situation of workload of staff. To gain more insight in the effects of the measures taken the taskforce educational workload is put in place for the first half of 2017. In the taskforce representation of the U-council, Faculty-councils (F-councils), deans and Faculty directors is present, as well as the vice-rector for education. The taskforce is supported by Academic Affairs. The taskforce aims to get agreement on the methods used to give the U-council insight in the educational workload of staff and the development of the workload in relation to the (pre-investment of the) compensation for the social loan system. This report presents the information that should be presented on student/staff ratio as an important indicator of educational workload. It does not, however, address the issue of accountability of the complete system of accountability for the means 'compensation social loan'. In this respect, the taskforce will take the opportunity to give substantiated advice on measures that could be taken to alleviate the educational workload. These measures are not necessarily financial in nature and can concern organizational and managerial aspects.

Workload- current situation

The FNV (Netherlands Trade Union Confederation) has held a survey among university staff in the Netherlands in January 2017. The survey aimed to get insight in the workload among university staff. The results showed that 67% of the respondents experiences high or very high work pressure. When this is split up between academic staff and support staff, it is clear that the work pressure is highest among academic staff (79% high/very high). The majority (75%) sees that the work pressure has increased in the last 3 years. For this survey, the specific results for the UM are available. The overall results show a similar picture; 67% of UM staff (127 respondents) experiences high or very high workload.

Furthermore, UM has a survey every two years on the work perception of UM employees. The last survey was held in 2015. The results show that in general the work satisfaction and general satisfaction of UM employees are good. Employees are very involved with the UM, like to work at UM and are enthusiastic about their work. Three-quarters of the respondents stated that they have a lot of variation in their work and that they can do their work independently. However, academic staff feels more attached to their work and work with far more pleasure than the support staff. Large numbers of academic employees state that they contribute new ideas and can contribute to solving problems. Academic staff also feels pressure: a large proportion of them experience a high workload, a high emotional load and consequently more tiredness and a greater need to recover after work.

The latter are all aspects related to a high workload. Both the FNV and the UM survey substantiate the claim of (very) high workload among academic staff.

This report is a reflection of the discussions within the taskforce and consists of two parts. Part one deals with the information required to get insight in the quantitative situation, and primarily student/staff ratio's are discussed. The second part discusses the possible causes and effects of a high educational workload, based on case descriptions that were gathered from UM staff members of different faculties.

PART ONE

2. Quantitative insight in workload

The pre-investments for the compensation of the social loan system (2015-2017) and from 2018 on the Government funding labeled as Social loan are and will be used for the improvement of educational quality. At this point, neither the VSNU (Association of Dutch Universities) nor the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) has developed a framework for the accounting of this funding. UM is developing a framework that will be ready for the budget 2018 preparations, and this will be attuned with the representative bodies of UM. Should a national framework become available in the next few months UM will adopt this framework for the budget 2018 and further. The taskforce has focused the discussion on the numbers that are needed to get insight in (the development of) workload among academic staff in the faculties.

In 2016, the U-council received several overviews of student-staff ratio of the different faculties of UM. These overviews varied substantially since there was no clear agreement on how to calculate the student-staff ratio. Furthermore, there was not much detail available explaining the calculations underlying the numbers. This implied that the numbers were difficult to compare between faculties or over time within one faculty. The taskforce educational workload was therefore put in place to create clarity and understanding on the numbers to be used by the U-council to monitor the development of educational workload among academic staff over time.

Finance Committee University

In 2016, the Finance Committee University has developed a model to gain more detailed insight into the money flows for research and education in the different faculties. Faculty councils, the U-council and Finance were represented in this committee.

The taskforce educational workload has agreed that this model should be used for the calculation of student-staff ratios. The model clearly illustrates the complexities that come with comparison of these ratios between the faculties. The assumptions underlying the calculation of the ratios differ quite substantially between faculties; however these assumptions remain constant over the years for each faculty. Hence, while a trend line within a faculty is a reliable and meaningful outcome of the model, the model does not permit comparing faculties with each other. Furthermore, the organisation and management of education differs per faculty, sometimes even within faculties (especially the larger ones).

The model gives insight in the costs and revenues of regular education and other activities. Each faculty reports twice a year, using the agreed model. Since this model is now stabilised it allows for analysis over time within faculties. The model has already been filled for 2015 and is currently being completed for 2016. The following timeframe applies for the information that will be gathered using the model:

- in April 2017 with realisation figures 2016
- in October 2017 with budget figures 2018

→ outcomes will be discussed in the faculty councils of October 2017

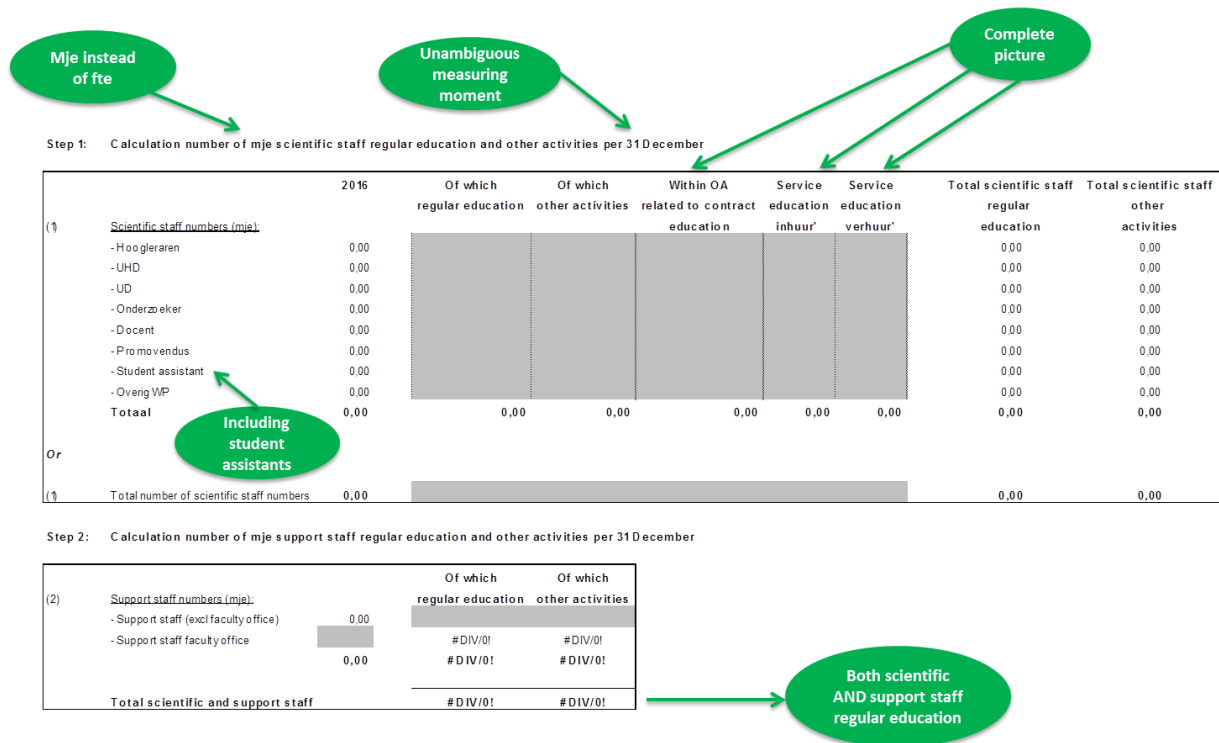


Figure 1. Example of table containing information on staff composition and student/staff ratio's

Based on the model, the U-council will be presented with the following information to get insight in the development of educational workload among academic staff within each faculty. These numbers are available from 2015 onwards.

- Student/staff ratio including education support staff
- Student/staff ratio excluding education support staff
- Student/support staff ratio
- Overview of composition of academic staff in mje (man-year equivalent)

The definition of education support staff is set by the faculties. In the educational process there are direct tasks, the educational activities in itself and indirect tasks, such as coordination and facilitation. The way in which this is organised differs per faculty. Furthermore, the composition of staff and the development over time can also be highly informative. Especially the F-councils should be able to assess whether not only student/staff ratio's but also the composition of the staff show a development that fits the needs and ambitions of the faculty.

PART TWO

3. Qualitative Insight

The workload experiences among UM employees has been measured in surveys (see above). These surveys give little insight in the actual day-to-day experience. To gain more insight the taskforce has gathered descriptions of academic staff of their daily experience with educational workload. Academic staff was approached by the taskforce members, each for their own faculties. For the faculties not represented in the taskforce, the faculty councils were asked to gather descriptions among their colleagues. Hence, this gathering of descriptions was not intended as a systematic research endeavor. It is mainly intended to get more insight in the day-to-day experience of workload by academic staff in different position within UM.

The descriptions are not necessarily covering all causes of a too high workload; however, they provide an opportunity to analyze (some of) the causes of work stress. This analysis will be used to formulate advises for both managerial and organizational practices that might help alleviate the (stress related to) high educational workload.

Case descriptions were gathered by members of the U-council and the F-councils. The case descriptions show similarities as well as substantial differences. These differences are seen between faculties, but also between positions. In this report the findings are discussed per positions. Some general remarks based on the cases are that staff seems to experience high fatigue, always work (a lot of) extra hours, do not feel they are appreciated and feel as if they have to do everything alone. For junior staff, the job insecurity appears to be a major source of stress in itself.

Analysis of the case descriptions

Junior staff

Among junior staff work related stress is very high. There appear to be several causes for this, of which workload is one. Another important cause of work-related stress has to do with job insecurity. Junior staff is either in a teaching position with an ambition to get a PhD position or in a post-doc position, trying to get tenure as an assistant professor. While the post-doc position comes with low educational workload, the position is very stressful, mostly due to the low chances of getting a more permanent position.

The junior teaching staff, with teaching loads up to 80%, has no career perspective within the university, other than through a PhD position. In most cases, external funding is required to acquire a PhD position, for which a research proposal has to be developed. This has to be done on top of the teaching load. Junior staff experiences high pressure to perform in research, acquisition of funding, teaching and managerial tasks. While they feel that their career is mostly dependent on their research performance, their workload mainly consists of teaching.

Assistant/Associate professor

This group, mostly assistant or associate professors usually have no stress about job security. They do, however, seem to be caught in the middle. Usually their teaching task include coordination of courses, tracks or even programmes as well as more operational roles such as tutoring, work lecturing, project work, grading etc. These tasks consequently take more time than the hours

allocated for it. What strikes in the descriptions of this group is the lack of support they experience from colleagues and management.

(Full) Professor

The educational workload among full professors is in general regarded as acceptable. The workload experienced by senior staff has other causes. Administrative duties, such as participation in accreditation procedures, joining strategic discussions about possible new collaborations with others and think tanks for the national government are mentioned. These are not always strictly educational, but they do add to the workload and usually carve out research time.

Organizational issues

From the descriptions gathered it appears that organizational issues are frequently mentioned. Lack of alignment between different support units (such as library and education institute) is often mentioned. Some feel that the staff that is put in place to alleviate the educational workload is a cause of stress in itself, since more people involved in a process means more people to coordinate with. It increases the complexity of the organization which, in a dynamic environment, can lead to more uncertainty that leads to misalignment and stress. On the other hand, some explicitly mention positive effects of increased support staff. Reallocation of tasks to (other) support staff increases the organizational complexity

In general, remarks have been made about the many administrative tasks that have to be done by academic staff. Some administration following from rules and regulations is of course unavoidable and related to auditing or accreditation processes. However the impression is that this has gotten somewhat out of hand. This can happen when rules and regulations become rigid and tight. Staff members point at fragmentation of tasks. While there are, in some cases, good reasons for certain organizational choices, some are the result of cultural aspects, historically grown habits, etc. Furthermore, a dominant view on organizing that prescribes a functional division of labour is applied at UM. Staff feels that things are organized unclear or inefficient and the tone in the descriptions suggest there is quite some annoyance. This is also relevant from a student perspective; sometimes it is very unclear whom to contact for what queries, problems etc. This leads to loss of satisfaction among students, but also increased overall workload by receiving questions that are not yours to answer, solve etc.

Effects of high educational workload

Even though it was not specifically asked, quite some people indicate the effects they see of the high workload. A decrease in educational quality is feared as a consequence of things like untimely and sloppy preparation of teaching materials and non-attendance of teachers in preparatory meetings. Some staff feels that colleagues consciously adopt a strategy of minimal effort in educational tasks to avoid being asked to do more education. This behavior obviously undermines collegial support in sharing the workload. Furthermore, teachers feel discouraged to try-out innovations in education. Innovation usually leads to extra work which is not always compensated.

In the next paragraph a description of some of the possible root causes is given, distilled from this analysis and the input of the taskforce members and the discussion in the taskforce meetings.

4. Exploration of root causes

The taskforce has had some elaborate discussions about the underlying causes of the high education workload, to get to the root(s) of the problem. When looking for possible root causes of a high educational workload, characteristics of the organization, such as structures, cultures, systems, people and leadership are relevant. These aspects are interrelated and can enforce each other. Ideally, leadership serves the role of connecting the structures, cultures, systems and people within an organization, expressing the values and beliefs that form an organization. The root causes that were discussed are discussed below in line with those organizational characteristics.

The balancing act between research and education is a challenge for most staff members. What is pointed out first and foremost is the imbalance between the two tasks in terms of esteem, reward and career perspective. This is essentially a **cultural** aspect, which is engrained in structures and systems in academia in general; not just UM. This system is self-maintaining. Most of the strategic decision making in the field of education is in most cases carried out by staff that has climbed to such a position because of research achievements. This is then the frame of reference that is used to decide upon careers of those who come next. Safeguarding the balance between research and education for every employee is primarily a matter of leadership at all levels. The PI's, group leaders or heads of department are in the best position to have an overview of the total workload of an individual staff member and therefore play the most important role.

In terms of **structure**, the fragmentation of tasks and roles in education is a problem. It can easily lead to spreadsheet management where the hours and allocated task add up correctly, whereas interests, talent and passion do not fit. There is no team structure in place where tasks and responsibilities can be shared. It comes down to the leadership of the specific unit where an employee is situated. Furthermore, the length of the academic year in the Netherlands is very long and the close planning of the study-units at UM allows for very little 'education-free' time slots.

Furthermore, some departments have a **system** in place where high achievements in research are rewarded with a reduction in teaching load. This will inevitably lead to a perception of education as a load and research as a reward. As such, this view is reflected in the organizational culture where education is secondary to research. Systems, mainly those that are used to support the administrative procedures in education, such as registration of attendance in tutor groups and registration of grades, are not always optimized in terms of efficiency and user friendliness. Scattered leadership, the administrative processes are led by different people than the primary process in education, can be the cause of this mismatch between structures and people. There is a general feeling that with the technological possibilities these tasks should require minimal effort. In this systems there is a primary focus on the needs and wishes of students – and rightfully so- this however, should not lead to extra burden for staff.

In terms of **people**, the following should be noted on staff and students and their interaction. The more feedback is given, the more feedback is asked. This is natural spiralling up and is not necessarily a bad thing. However, it does imply that when an additional action is being taken in an educational program, it is not just the action that has to be taken into account when determining workload, it is also the consequences of those actions that can cause more workload. Or maybe more in general, it

is not just the contact hours and the preparation for those hours, it is also interacting with students about their education in general. This latter could be a source of inspiration and connectedness, however, in an overfull schedule it becomes a nuisance and an unwelcome disturbance. As mentioned earlier, the leadership, at all levels, from team leaders and PI's to Deans and directors should be the ones taken care of the people within the organisation, since they are the ones who perform the tasks.

All in all, work stress related to educational workload is a multifaceted problem. The causes appear to differ somewhat between faculties and between positions. This illustrates that, most likely, there are no simple or uniform solutions. The measurements taken will have to be tailor-made for the situation at hand. For instance, where additional support staff might be a welcome alleviation of workload for some, for others it can be a source of stress in itself with a detrimental effect on the work stress. Furthermore, the taskforce does not plea for harmonization between faculties. A one-size-fits-all approach to decrease workload could very well lead to additional problems, friction and frustration.

5. Recommendations

The information gathered from the case descriptions as discussed above was extensively discussed in the taskforce. In this discussion, the personal experiences provided additional color and insight. This has led to quite some recommendations and suggestions. These recommendations cannot be regarded as stand alone. They should be embedded in the context of the university and its surroundings. Overarching developments as the strategic programme and the upcoming Institutional Quality Assurance Audit provide a framework for the directions and strategies that can be applied to alleviate educational workload. In the strategic programme, the ambition is set to develop CORE education, where research and education is more integrated. This rethinking of educational strategies can offer a good opportunity to reconsider allocation of educational tasks and organizational models that are used for education. Possibly measures to decrease workload, such as minimizing contact hours, can be at odds with high educational quality. These kinds of measures are therefore not recommended by the taskforce.

Rather, the leading theme for the measures regarding educational workload should be 'the person at the center stage'. This goes for proposed measures, but also for newly developed policy, procedures and regulations. Always, the effects on the individual have to be taken into account.

The taskforce has a list of advices and suggestions for the Executive Board and Faculty Boards to help alleviate stress related to a high workload.

Organizational aspects

- Critically assess the division of educational roles over the different staff positions
The case descriptions show a striking difference in educational workload between professors and other academic staff members. It seems that the highest burden is on the mid-career positions that have to balance education, research and managerial responsibilities.

- Critically assess the norm hours set for the different educational tasks on fairness and feasibility
The gathered cases give a mixed signal on this issue. While some feel that the hours are appropriate, quite some cases indicate that the allocated hours are too few. It might be an option to differentiate in hours for a task for different functions. E.g. an experienced teacher who is tutoring a course for the third time will probably need less preparation time than an inexperienced teacher for whom everything is new. Another solution could be a maximum number of educational hours for inexperienced teachers.
- Consider an organizational structure and culture where the education is managed in self-organizing teams to reduce fragmentation of tasks and allow more autonomy for professionals.
What strikes in the case description are the remarks on feeling let alone to deal with the workload. The responsibility for educational tasks is apparently highly individualized. Some describe the difficulties that arise when a colleague is ill, the coordinator then has to find a replacement, which is very difficult when everyone feels overloaded with work. An organizational structure where a team of people, composed with junior staff, ud/uhd's and professors would help alleviate this problem. Working in a team, where the responsibility is shared can be beneficial in more than one way. There is more flexibility to share the work. Working together enables collegial learning and critical reflection which helps increase performance. This can be applied to educational modules, but also on year or program level. Education is a transformation process which offers options for organizing connected teams and that is more than just meeting on a programme level occasionally.
- Give more autonomy and ownership to (teams of) staff regarding their teaching. In assigning educational responsibilities, a more personalised approach would be beneficial, where competencies, talent experience and ambition is taken into account. This could be done in connection with the previous recommendation, composing balanced teams based on personal characteristics.
- Analyse the whole primary process of education, from beginning to end to get a clear and complete overview of everything that is required in terms of separable tasks, both academically and in the support staff. This can lead to a re-assessment of the allocation of tasks, to ensure that they are allocated logically with people who have the most affinity for the task. This recommendation is also related to the allocation and division of tasks.
- Consider changing the schedules to enable staff to have 'education free' periods.
This might be done already at some faculties, there are some staff members who indicate that this would be helpful. It should be noted here that at UM the academic year is longer than most (in international perspective). In the current schedule modules seem to blend into one another in a continuous stretch.
- Critically assess all administrative procedures regarding teaching on efficiency and necessity
Although some procedures and coordination will remain necessary (for accreditation and auditing purposes) all procedures should be critically evaluated.

Managerial aspects

- Importance of education performance for career development should increase, it should be valued more and be acknowledged as equally important as research performance.

This issue is already taken up in the new HR policy, however, this policy has not been implemented yet.

- Consider allocating additional time for educational innovation
While this is being done in some faculties, the case descriptions show that staff feels that there is insufficient time to really innovate education. In this long run, a lack of innovation can have a detrimental effect on educational quality.
- Monitor the development of the composition of the educational staff and the student/staff ratio over time per faculty. The means that become available for as compensation for the social loan system should have a positive effect on the student/staff ratio and/or the composition of the educational staff within a faculty. This information is also part of the procedures regarding the funding for the compensation of the social loan system.
- Ensure that in the managerial academic positions, such as department heads, there is relevant HRM competence
The department heads are often in the position to signal and manage situations where too high workload leads to problems (both work-related and personal problems). Nevertheless, these positions are not always filled by people who excel in HRM skills, more often the appointment is based on the research performance of the academic.
- Enable people (aspiring or) in academic leadership position to continuously develop their leadership skills. Coaching and development programmes are relevant to achieve and maintain good leadership. As leadership is the combining factor between culture, structure, system and people within an organization, the importance cannot

Obviously, rules and regulations and with that an amount of bureaucratic procedures is inevitable, if only for the sake of external audits and accreditations. Nevertheless, it appears as if there are also rules and regulations in place from internal managerial needs. These should be scrutinized on necessity and added value. The organizational culture should be one of trust with only accountability on necessary indicators. For those necessary procedures, more clarity as to the why and how will be helpful. It is easier to accept and comply when it is clear what aim is served. Obviously, in a culture where education is experienced as a load, administrative procedures related to this will be experienced as an (extra) load.

Suggested Plan of action

All faculties should be asked to review these recommendations and design feasible solution and adequate implementation plans. The plan should then be exchanged, explicitly not with as an attempt to harmonise, but to enable to learn, inspire and exchange best and worst practices. We suggest that the Executive Board takes the lead in this process of exchange and interaction, to ensure the organisation-wide efforts that this problem of workload requires.

Appendix 1. Workload case descriptions

In this appendix, the input of the members of the taskforce educational workload are reflected.

1. Experiencing Educational Workload

Docent 4/lecturer 4

Task: 90% teaching or teaching related tasks, i.e. 1332 hours (including preparation, coordination, assessment etc.). Usually a contract of 2 to 4 years.

Employee: just graduated, ambition to do a PhD, aiming for an academic career.

There is no research time included in the position, so it is virtually impossible to work on a research proposal let alone doing research leading to a PhD. Faculty policy is that lecturers 4 without a PhD are not eligible for a tenured position, so there is no career perspective whatsoever.

What should be done:

- From the start of employment be very clear about perspectives; manage the expectations of the person so that they know what kind of job they accept.
- Provide the opportunity to at least get a BKO/BTQ.

What did we do in summer 2016:

Appoint lecturers 4 for a period of 4 years with a 75% teaching task and a 25% research task for the first 2 years to give them the opportunity to work on a research proposal and acquire funding for a PhD position either internally or externally. If successful the lecturers position will be changed in a PhD position, if not the lecturer position will be changed to a 90% teaching position.

2. Experiencing educational workload

Assistant professor 2/UD2

Task: 65% teaching and 35% research. Duration of contract varies depending on work history.

Employee: just finished a PhD, aiming for an academic career.

To further his or her career (and get a tenured position) in the current situation (UFO and appointment criteria) performance is needed on many terrains: teaching, research, management, valorization/fund raising. This puts a lot of stress on the starting UD2. Assessment of performance is often based on quantity rather than quality. It would be wise to make individual arrangements and performance agreements that are realistic and doable. The appointment criteria should be changed and should focus more on quality than on quantity. Teaching should be higher valued than at present and teaching careers should be made possible.

3. The case of unsurpassed workload: senior staff with education and research tasks

In the last couple of years, my jobs as chair of the SBE assessment committee and Edlab liason brought me in contact with many UM staff, often SBE but including all other faculties, typically course or program coordinators. In these contacts, I was always in the 'asking position': according to the new assessment policies, coordinators need not only to hand in an exam, but add to that an assessment matrix, a report of students' comments, a four-eyes report, and so on. Or with my other hat: we urgently need coordinators willing to test a new peer feedback tool It is quite seldom that I meet incomprehension in these contacts: staff acknowledges the importance of sound testing procedures, appreciate contributing in innovating the teaching. The honest answer is in 90% of the cases: I would love to do so, but where do I find the time? In terms of work stress, this category may not score highest: they are quite experienced, tenured, manage their own agenda's most of the time, so are privileged in this respect compared to junior staff. But in terms of workload, they are by far the champions. Faculty who try to combine teaching with taking their fair share of administrative duties and next strive for an academic career that requires being on the frontier of research, typically work with two, complementary working schedules. During office hours, they teach, meet and discuss with colleagues, do their administrative work, up to about 40 hours a week. In the evening hours and weekends, the second schedule is at work: doing research in a relatively undisturbed environment. Another 40 hours per week, at least for those who do not give in with regard to research ambitions. A major task in the 'first job' is the coordination of courses and programs. Different from tutoring and lecturing, for which most faculties have clear and mostly fair workload norms, norms for coordination are not that well-established, and if available, determined in a far past. They do not include time for many relative recent tasks, such as:

- The much stricter organization of course assessments, including prior reviewing all tests, documenting students comments and responses, assessment blueprints, second graders in oral exams and theses;
- Recommendation and reference letters. A somewhat silly task, but grown exponentially over time: for every grant, study abroad, internship, master program, students now need a reference letter, signed by staff in senior rank (my own estimate: 120 letters/year, 2-4 hours/week);
- Accreditation (and of similar level: strategy work groups). They were kind of 'fun' at the time it happened once in four years, but have become too frequent repetitive administrative duties.

In our taskforce, we discussed the lack of 'innovation hours' in coordination norms, which gave rise to the argument: 'that is the fun part of your job, for which you do not count hours'. The above tasks are definitely not in that 'fun part', and for that reason staff have a point answering 'from which hours?' when asked to do additional coordination tasks. In my contacts with staff, I cannot resist asking them if they have profited in the personal portfolio of tasks from the inflow of new teaching personnel. But I am still waiting for the first to provide me with a positive answer.

4. Experiencing Educational Workload

I experience the following educational workload (max 1 page) ...

I have a 0.3 FTE teaching load. For me it is quite easy to reach the number of hours needed to fulfil the 0.3 FTE teaching. By coordinating a track in a bachelor, coordinating a training, being a tutor in a course, and supervising some students for their thesis, I usually surpass the required nr of hours. If I look at the norm hours for FHML I find that most roles are quite sufficiently rewarded (10 hours for a 2 hours lecture, 1.5 times contact time for tutorial groups, same for practicals, a bit more than 100 hours for coordinating a course/module (blokcoordinator). Except the coordinating roles for bachelors and masters. For running a bachelor track, with more than 150 students, I now receive 0.25 FTE, but that will be reduced next year to 0.15 FTE. Coordinating a master in GW will give you 0.1 FTE. To run and maybe innovate a master or bachelor, much more time should be invested.

I see the following causes for mentioned workload (max 1 page) ...

Workload is the sum of teaching and scientific work. To succeed as a scientist a lot of energy is needed. It is highly competitive and to raise funds and publish enough papers is very difficult. If all your energy is needed to compete in the rat race of Veni-Vidi-Vici, I can imagine that you experience every teaching load as too much. However, if I look at FHML, I find the norm hours correct, except for the coordinating roles.

5. Experiencing Educational Workload

Age group : 40-50

Gender : Female

Work Ratio : Full time

Position : UHD

Faculty : FHML

I experience the following educational workload (max 1 page)

Many colleagues including myself feel more fatigued. Sometimes mistakes are made due to lack of concentration, particularly in the administrative tasks. Colleagues respond weeks later or even too late on requests because of the high work demands and because of the competition between education and research demands. It seems that everybody, particularly those at lecturer and assistant professor level, is always in a survival mood. The most problematic consequence of the teaching workload are the decrease of the quality of teaching. Potentially staff could do much better than they do now. This is particularly the case when new education (course, modulebook, practical, lecture) have to be developed. First, it is hard to plan a meeting attended by all involved because everybody is too busy. So this is delayed. Next, nice ideas are put forward but flaws take place: ideas disappear and ideas are often not developed into plans due to lack of time. Limited, sloppy plans are delivered or too little time has been taken to make the idea into a really innovative, creative plan. Or a thorough plan is developed. But all these plans are always too late for a next round of checks and discussion, or staff lacks time to do so. This means plans are not thoroughly checked for mistakes, feasibility etc. This leads to sloppy education materials (manuals, modulebooks, lecture slides etc.),

which only represent a small part of the initial idea, does not link to existing education or even contradicts it. Further, there is too little time to communicate the new education, e-mails about it are not read, meetings about it not attended. Or people, including myself, are so busy with the various tasks that they just not explain the new education well enough to students while teaching. In combination with sloppy education materials reflecting only half of the original plan, we can conclude that implementation fails and education goals are not met. Teaching staff involved feels stressed and unsatisfied with the new education. Another frequent phenomenon is hiding for replacing a colleague or for taking new education tasks. If a tutor/trainer is ill, it is very difficult to find replacement. Everybody is busy. Or is afraid of becoming too involved in education. The latter anxiety also relates to taking new education tasks. A group of staff members will never apply for new education tasks, only if forced by their department head, who hardly will force people. So, new tasks end up in the laps of the usual suspects, who already have a high education load. This reinforces the idea that one certainly should stay away from education. As a result, teaching gets a bad image, and I start to doubt about investing so much effort in teaching, which is a cause of stress in itself. Finally, we all perform a lot of volunteer work for teaching during evenings and weekends and even then are not able to take the granted number of holiday days. During the whole previous year, I could not take more than 3 weeks holiday due to the teaching.

I see the following causes for mentioned workload (max 1 page) ...

1. Demands are too high and autonomy is too low. We lack resources to control our demands:

- Education is not organized in a way that it is workable for the teaching staff but rather for the students and Education Institute. In many other countries universities have long breaks between modules / semesters. In our system all modules overlap regarding preparation-teaching-correction of exams- evaluation. Deadlines are thus not workable. The system of hours per role and a total budget for a module adds to the workload (filling in the excelsheets....)

- Developing multidisciplinary education requires more time than education for which handbooks are available. I experience a difference in workload between Medicine and Health (I have teaching tasks in both), with Health requiring more time because of its innovative multidisciplinary character while for Medicine, more hours are available.

- The norms for lower level roles are not related to the real time investment, even not for very experienced staff members. E.g. as tutor you have to attend a preparatory meeting; read the modulebook/tutorial instructions; walk to the reception for the key and walk to the room and back; check catch up assignments and e-mail with the student / coordinator in case of irregularities. This takes more than 1 hr per 2 hr tutorial meeting.

- Lack of social fund for long-term sickness. As a social fund for long-term sickness absence is lacking, we all suffer from long-term sickness of colleagues. As a result, staff turns on the survival mood which does not improve quality.

- Why do we experience it now more than before? Increased bureaucracy is one, a second are the limited norm hours, third students requiring faster replies on requests (spamming your inbox), and finally: for years one could use research time for education but research targets are also monitored more strictly (which is actually good)

2. As a consequence of all being so busy, there is a lack of social support that could help one through demanding times.

3. This is combined with an institutionalized lack of appreciation for teaching:

- Lack of acknowledgement for teaching in general, it is often expressed that research has a higher status than teaching (and that we have to get used to that)

- Lack of leadership regarding teaching and the combination of teaching and education at department level and research institute level. Employees are left alone in their struggles with lack of time. This lack of appreciation/understanding is partly due to those in management do often not

have an extensive track record in teaching and particularly not in the time consuming lower level tasks (training, tutoring, developing training manuals etc.). Also, higher level management overestimates chances for lecturers and assistant professors (with often temporary contracts these days) to change their working conditions. Generally, this generates an atmosphere of 'survival of the fittest' and opportunism. Some colleagues are very good at picking the (high status) roles for which you get a relatively high amount of hours and let others do the demanding work. Some just do education lousy and are very negative about the careers and qualities of those really involved in teaching.

4. Finally, there is a lack of attention for teaching staff development. I truly believe that investment in high quality training/coaching could contribute to staff vitality and to quality of education. Teaching staff should be supported to step out of the vicious circle of doing their tasks mechanically, exhausting themselves. Which is not good for quality of education!

6. Experiencing Educational Workload

Age group : 40-50

Gender : Male

Work Ratio : Full-time

Position : UD

Faculty : FHML

I experience the following educational workload (max 1 page) ...

My labelling in education is 0,6 FTE. This equates to three days per workweek of education and 990 educational hours per year. I have taught at university level for more than 20 years and fulfilled tasks at all levels from tutor to programme coordinator. Generally, I estimate that it requires about 125% of the estimated time to complete educational tasks at a level of minimum acceptable quality. Hence, I must work 3,5-4,0 days (3,75 average) per workweek in order to deliver education at a level of quality I feel is consistent with the standards of a university that is ranked as the 94th best university in the world (2017 Times Higher Education ranking). My work is well-evaluated by students (grades of 7, 8, 9), but not always at an 8+ level which I see as appropriate. I certainly do

not feel that I am providing the maximum quality of which I am capable because the workload is simply too high. Nor am I or many of my colleagues able to innovate or modernize in teaching as much as I would estimate is necessary in order to sustain the current level of quality indefinitely.

In summary, I experience the workload in education as:

- Very intense for the hours allowed/credited
- Often requiring me to 'pull a rabbit out of a hat' (e.g. last-minute preparation of lectures, content materials, etc.)
- Not allowing for sufficient innovation or modernization of content to be sustainable indefinitely in terms of quality

I see the following causes for mentioned workload (max 1 page) ...

There are many causes for the workload in education. In my opinion these include:

- No port selection in most academic programmes leads to high numbers of students who are sub-optimally motivated and in some cases possibly even academically underqualified. I believe in the Dutch model of open access to university education, but it creates enormous inefficiencies because of this fact. Much time is spent dealing with poor students who require exceptions and greatly intensified communication.
- Government compensation and paid tuition per student are not high in the Netherlands. This means that a bachelor or master education must be provided on fairly scarce resources. Staff experience this as a very high number of students in terms of advising, grading, and any other activity that is sensitive to the number of students involved. Universities need to continually look at their fundamental business model in education to assure that revenue is as high as possible.
- Low education-hour compensation for some educational tasks, most specifically tutorial work and grading. Both of these are basically compensated at a 1-1 ratio with actual hours worked, or even less. By the time I prepare for a tutorial of two hours, walk over to the room (and back), answer student questions afterwards in person and by email, I have spent well over the 3 hours allotted per two-hour tutorial session. I believe tutorials should be compensated at a factor 2,5 instead of the current 1,5.
- High level of direct student access to staff email accounts. Any student can email any staff member under current rules and access. I believe there is a place for more spider-in-the-web functionality among academic staff—that is, perhaps the allotment of hours for just being an academic contact point for students with questions for staff. Please note that I do not mean an expansion of Educational Institute functionality, but the awarding of hours to academic staff to act as a 'portal' for students to other academic staff.
- There is a high degree of matrix activity in Maastricht University's educational system. At some universities, staff teach their own course for 16 weeks (a semester) and give most of the lectures themselves. Here, a module coordinator is expected to interface with parallel trajectory

coordinators, have guest speakers, integrate skills and practicum trainings, etc. Additionally, Maastricht modules run for only 8 or 4 weeks, creating a continual culture of run, run, run.

- Without lecturers (docenten), the University has no business model in education. Docenten create the value. This needs to be made more clear in the management structures of the faculties. Too often docenten are being 'managed' by support staff instead of the other way around. Additionally, a great deal of money is channelled to planning and control, facilities and security, IT, etc. etc. which means fewer resources for teaching which is the core business.

7. Experiencing Educational Workload

Age group : 20-30, 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60+

Gender : Female - Male

Work Ratio : Full, or Part Time (... %)

Position : AIO, PostDoc, Docent, UD, UHD or Prof

Faculty : SBE, FaSoS, FHS, FdR, FPN or FHML

I experience the following educational workload (max 1 page) ...

As a fulltime assistant professor (UD), I spend half of my time on education, mostly in one of the master programmes Health but also in the bachelor. Educational responsibilities come with a major workload, which is not always sufficiently rewarded. In particular, I feel there is limited 'pay' for innovation and renewal of a course: annually, courses need updates of cases and literature, which requires a considerable amount of time investment from coordinators and planning groups members, but which is difficult to get back in 'paid hours'. More in general, I feel that within the current payment system for education, it is almost not doable to effectively balance education and research, as the number of hours that one actually needs to invest to be able to 'earn' 0.5fte in education hours is so much higher than those 0.5fte. That means that by default, either research (or, more likely, your personal life) suffers. For me personally, an important aspect of the high workload in education relates to the timing of educational activities during the academic year, which for me are highly clustered within several periods. The pressures of education are very high during those periods and almost make it impossible to simultaneously meet research deadlines and do so in an adequate way.

Another aspect of workload relates to grading of papers and exams. Especially when the number of students in a course is high (>50), it is very time consuming to grade open exams and/or papers. The short deadline set for this leads to high peaks in work pressure, which are difficult to plan and manage, especially in combination with other work – in research as well as teaching. And finally, there is a lot of organizational work and responsibility that comes with teaching – especially within the larger programmes. The help of Block Support has been very welcome, but there is still a lot that has to be done by the coordinator him/herself, as well as often a necessity to check what has been done by Block Support.

I see the following causes for mentioned workload (max 1 page) ...

Most notably, what I see as causes are:

- The 'norm uren' do not suffice as a reward for innovative, personal and high-quality teaching, that is attractive, up-to-date with academic literature and student-centred.
- The deadlines for grading are too short for larger courses, in which testing is done through open-ended exams and/or papers. This is at the expense of feedback quality.
- On the department level, something should be done about the dispersion of courses across personnel, so that there aren't such major peaks in the workload of certain individuals clustered in certain periods. This will require additional academic staff, given the multidisciplinary programme that we are running.
- Finally, the strict 50/50 rule for working in research and education that exists for academic staff creates a lot of pressure in terms of work load, especially for young people trying to build a career in academia. The pressures of education are so high, so demanding and impossible to shift, that there are months during the year that I make hardly any research progress – especially in terms of thinking of new projects, writing grants, etc. These more long-term (but for my career crucial) activities are put on a side-path at the expense of immediate educational pressures. Within a department, it should be possible to be more flexible in the number of hours of education that individuals produce, so that a better balance of education-research-personal life can be achieved.

8. E-mail on educational workload

Een bericht vanaf de werkvloer, wellicht kun je dit doorgeven aan de OC geneeskunde? Onderwijs binnen de coschappen geneeskunde verschijnen niet in My Timetable. Dat is onoverzichtelijk voor docenten. Ik voer een pleidooi voor een portal voor docenten zodat wij ons werk beter kunnen organiseren. Nu zijn we nodeloos veel tijd kwijt met alles op een rijtje te zetten, zeker degenen die in veel verschillende programma's les geven. Ik denk dat dit mede bijdraagt aan de hoge ervaren werkdruk. Het vermelden van al je onderwijs is een eerste stap richting een portal.

9. Experiencing Educational Workload

Age group : 20-30, 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60+

Gender : Female - Male

Work Ratio : Full, or Part Time (... %)

Position : AIO, PostDoc, Docent, UD, UHD or Prof

Faculty : SBE, FaSoS, FHS, FdR, FPN or FHML

I experience the following educational workload (max 1 page) ...

In general, the core education work load ('giving education') is doable at FHML. The workload, or better: work stress, is primarily triggered by working with OIFHML and UB. Fine-tuning with OIFHML and UB asks for patience. It seems that OIFHML and UB internally are non-aligned – sometimes even misaligned. For instance: planning, board of examiners, examination office, course evaluation etc. do not seem to know from each other what they are doing. Consequently, a course coordinator is confronted with different, contrary messages and requests. It is as if a course coordinator needs to align OIFHML and UB internally. Especially, when a course coordinator applies innovative education methods, which differ from the routines, OIFHML and UB seem to hit the leg and chaos strikes. This is remarkable for an organization claiming to support educational innovation.

I see the following causes for mentioned workload (max 1 page) ...

The internal organization of OIFHML and UB are based on specialization instead of on an integral service model related to programs. OIFHML and UB have difficulties with the smallest deviation from current routines. Consequently, educators are confronted with non-alignment resulting in chaos and stress.

10. Experiencing Educational Workload

Age group : 30-40

Gender : Male

Work Ratio : Part Time

Position : PostDoc

Faculty : FaSoS

I experience the following educational workload (max 1 page) ...

Probably like most postdocs, I do not at all have a heavy teaching load. I do teaching because I like it and because I actively seek to do it, but it always remains a minor part of my appointment, in the order of tens of percents. I am convinced that pressure, and even workload beyond the regular 40 hours per week, is bearable under two basic conditions: it should be sufficiently rewarding, and you need to have overview and a sense of being in control. If it's not fun, or you cannot realistically see when the big chunks of work will end, or worse: both, a burnout is looming. For a postdoc with low teaching load, these two basic conditions are easily met: if you are needed for teaching, chances are that you can negotiate to teach a course that you really like. Also, it is typically only in specific periods that educational workload piles up. In addition, you are typically experienced enough to do the courses in a realistic number of hours. Yet, postdoc life has significant sources of stress, which I would readily trade for a much larger teaching load. The point is that life is insecure, and from day 1 of your contract you will have to think about your next job. And that is not only thinking, but also actively pursuing applications (for jobs as well as research grants), which in fact drains mental energy as well as real clock time. The latter is not about a few hours per year, but about evenings per month, and at peak level evenings per week. The consequences are hard to quantify or estimate, but I dare say that my research (and education) output would be 50% higher, more energetic and more creative, if this burden were not on my shoulders. I am mentioning this source of stress that is not 'educational' in origin, even though the title of this inquiry seems to ask for that. The reason I do so

is that I think it is naïve to look specifically for teaching workload. Teaching workload is typically where things become apparent: you don't get your grading done before the next period starts (and you have had no time to take vacation). But the root cause is much more holistic, in that energy is sapped of employees through many ways, this one probably being exemplary for postdocs. True enough, it is for this reason that I sometimes indeed experience this stack of papers to grade as suffocating. But it is in the end not really about the papers that need grading. It is about the utter lack of job security that you have no feeling whatsoever of being in control.

11. Experiencing Educational Workload

Age group : 30-40 Gender : Female

Work Ratio : Full

Position : Docent, UD,

Faculty : FaSoS

I experience the following educational workload (max 1 page) ...

I was hired by FaSoS on a D3 Lecturer position (1.0 fte, 80/20). After two years I moved up to UD2 and since January of this year I have become fully tenured. The educational workload especially as an D3 was incredibly heavy and I am still not sure how I survived that. If I only had to teach, it would have been manageable but since the 80% teaching really translates into 100% especially in the first year when you have to prepare every single lesson from scratch, research had to take place in the late evenings and the weekends. I did not take any holidays and felt under immense pressure especially because I knew that nobody on the international job market was going to care about my teaching. Only the publication list counts if you want to have a job and competing against people who had comfortable post-docs seemed like an impossible task. Even compared to other lecturers in other countries, I was at a big disadvantage. In no other system do you have to teach as much as in Maastricht. The temporary condition I was in made me sacrifice every free minute I had. It felt very much like a survival game where the ones who manage get the reward of a tenure-track contract (in my year 1 people out of 7). What irritated me most in this context was the lack of understanding I received from my senior Dutch colleagues, who arrived in Maastricht when promotion was still relatively easy, who benefit from special arrangements, who have been teaching the same courses for the past 20 years and who never experienced the lack of job security young colleagues experience.

The 60/40 contract and the greater job security made a difference, however, this is relative. I still work evenings and most weekends. Competition on the international job market is tough and if you are not planning to spend the next 40 years of your life in Maastricht, you have to make sure that you keep up with everyone else. Most people in other universities teach a lot less and have more time for research. We do not only teach more courses, we also have the longest academic year in Europe and do not have a sabbatical policy. All of this puts us at a clear disadvantage compared to other colleagues. To cut out time for research, I am often not able to invest as much in my teaching activities as I wish to, something I really resent. I think our teaching performance could be so much

better if we had enough time to invest in both: research and teaching. At the moment, one always comes at the expense of the other – a vicious circle that cannot easily be broken.

I think the way forward would be to think creatively about how to reduce educational workload (in real terms this means to teach less) and to look more closely at what other universities are doing (best practices).

12. Experiencing Educational Workload

Description 12 and 13 based on two interviews carried out with professors at FaSoS.

“Experience” and “causes of workload” are related together, rather than in two separate parts.

Professor 1

Age group : 50-60 Gender : Male

Work Ratio : 1.0

Position : Prof

Faculty : FaSoS

As a professor and head of department, I do not have a very high educational workload. I do little teaching at the BA level, mostly I give many separate lectures (I am “expensive” as a tutor), I do some supervision of BA and MA theses, and I try to be involved as much as possible in the design of courses. Most of my time is dedicated to research projects that I am involved in, PhD supervision, and managerial tasks revolving around the department. However, I do experience work-related stress, mostly as a result of PhD supervision and acquiring funding, and I think all these elements need to be seen holistically. I would say that the main burden for me is endless fragmentation. Somehow, there are always people depending on little things that I need to do before they can move forward with their own tasks. A letter here, comments on a paper there, a summary of tasks over there. There is a sense of constant short-term pressure, a lot of pressing immediate obligations need to be always taken care of in order for others to be able to do their work.

Recently I was ill; a pneumonia that kept me first away from work for a few weeks, and then at a lower capacity for some time. When I returned to work, there was a clear message by colleagues and management to “please take care of yourself and allow yourself to recuperate”, but actually it felt like this was always followed by “but just do this little thing for me first”. My main fantasy regarding retirement isn’t about not working, but about not having people depend on me. One of the defining features of professorship is that it’s limitless. My entire life there was more “supply” of me than “demand” for me, now it’s the other way around. Furthermore, many of the things I am asked to do are vague. It’s often not clear what the goal is, or how much work they will entail. For example, the university may be interested in setting up a new center. As a professor, I am asked to join several general “brain storming” meetings, then to get together with a cluster of colleagues from other faculties who may have somewhat similar research interests as me and to start thinking of research projects for the center. Yet there is no clarity about what kind of funding is available for this, how much time should be spent on it, and if anything will actually come out of it. I could spend 8 hours every day just trying to keep my discipline at the forefront of the curriculum at my faculty,

and at the forefront of the university's research centers. This fragmentation and uncertainty demands a lot of self-management on my part. This said, I enjoy very much the flexibility of my job. I am completely running on output logic, I do not have to work on a 9-5 basis, there's no boss telling me when to start work. I get to choose.

13. Experiencing educational workload

Description 12 and 13 based on two interviews carried out with professors at FASoS.

Age group : 30-40

Gender : Female

Work Ratio : Full

Position : Prof

Faculty : FaSoS

Most of my education-related tasks are in educational management; I am a director of studies of a large bachelor's program. This requires an enormous amount of "juggling" on my part. There are so many urgent, little things coming at me all the time that I have to attend to, otherwise others will be harmed. Things like tutors being sick, or tutors not doing their work properly; or course coordinators falling sick or not doing their work properly. Each week, my to-do-list gets moved to the next; I am constantly tending to urgent matters that come before other things I had planned. And, if I do prioritize, this is always about things that relate to others. Taking care of PhD students, colleagues, it is always my own research that suffers. As a professor, I also feel an obligation to be present at official events. At openings, at the Dies Natalies; travelling to the Hague to speak at ministries... On the other hand, while this workload is heavy, it depends on periods. There is always some "overwhelmingness", but this is also part of the job, and I don't think it's so much more stressful than other jobs. I have had to lay down limits, certainly also because I am a mother. I do not work on weekends; they are sacred. I do, however, work evenings. But this has come at the cost of putting my research on hold, or doing less research. If I compare my situation with the situation of less experienced, and especially non-tenured staff, I think there's a big difference. I'm more relaxed. If I had to factor in more research, as non-tenured staff are expected to do, I might be headed for a burn-out.

Also, my experience and expertise, when it comes to education, means the amount of time I spend preparing for classes, and correcting papers, is about half the time of a younger, less experienced colleague. There is more work pressure at these lower levels, where there is less experience and more uncertainty about job security.

Appendix 2. Composition of the taskforce

Albert Scherpbier (chair) (dean FHML)
Philip Vergauwen (dean SBE)
Harm Hospers (Vice-Dean Education)
Marlies van Dongen (Director FL)
Dirk Tempelaar (U-council, SBE)
Mark Govers (U-council, FHML)
Lieke Franssen (U-council, FHML)
Heidi Maurer (F-council, FASoS)¹
Sjoerd Claessens (F-council, FL)
Willem Dassen (F-council, FHML)
Peter Bollen (F-council, SBE)
Hans Ouwersloot (MUO-CIO)
Hanneke Ramakers (FIN)
Janneke Hooijer (MUO-AA)

¹ Heidi Maurer has been replaced by several other members of the F-council FASoS