

## Materials EDIA Work/Life Balance Discussion Group

21<sup>st</sup> January 2021

### Action Points

#### Working hours

- HOD has an email disclaimer saying I do not expect a response outside of core hours. But by sending it outside of core hours re-establishes the idea that to get ahead you need to put in the hours. Can she (and other senior staff) have a delay send added to messages?  
**Action: Ask HOD and senior staff to use delay send option – DOM Level**
- Staff can use Auto Response on emails as a way of managing expectations of response time.  
**Action: Managers in Department to send this message out to all staff – DOM Level**
- There is an expectation that the more hours you work the more serious you are about your work, academics especially are told this. Expectation that they should work 50 hours a week. Needs to be a change in culture. If you want to get ahead and do lots of research by putting lots of time into it that is ok, but academics should not have to put in 50 hour weeks just to keep up with compulsory, non-research activities.  
**Action: In P&DR process there should be a non-judgemental chance to say what you do not want to do, where you feel you are wasting your time. Line Managers should actively encourage staff to reflect on what they could do less of/stop doing – DOM Level**  
**Action: Request senior staff change the way they talk about working long hours – they should not act like this is the norm and is expected – DOM Level (and feedback to SoNS EDI committee)**  
**Action: Develop/promote courses on saying no and negotiating to help promote a culture that can say no to extra work – UNI Level**
- PS Staff also under pressure. In “normal” times not allowed to work flexibly, need a presence 9 – 5. Not able to work from home until a grade 6. Told that deadlines need to be completed – expected to work late to achieve this. Do not even have the pretence of a workload model to check that there is not too much work per person etc.
- Covid working has shown that PS staff working at home can work and in many ways video-conferencing has made it easier to communicate. E.g. team of 30 “Ops” staff from across the school able to meet once a week for an hour.  
**Action: Ask what is being done to ensure that lessons learnt about working flexibly during pandemic are not forgotten when we return to “normal” – UNI Level, and investigate whether we can allow DOM PS staff to work more flexibly – DOM level**

#### Workload Model

- Need a more open Workload Model. Not just putting non-teaching/research work in to generic “Academic Services”. Need to take into account what does take up time.
- Can the workload models therefore be worked through with more involvement from the PS. To see where PS skills can be offered? If done at planning stage more chance to shift PS staff/recruit more/train up.
- A Faculty Workload Model for Academics is currently being developed.

**Action: Feedback to SoNS EDI committee on Academic Workload model and enquire about PS staff involvement**

**PS Assistance**

- Academics often unaware of the help that is available from PS.

**Action: Put details of what help is available from PS on the intranet site – DOM Level**

**Culture**

- We have to foster a culture that's more mindful of language that trivialises disrespectful behaviours. We all fall into the trap of excusing behaviour that is fundamentally disrespectful by saying "oh, that's what academics are like", "they're so disorganised!", "they're so annoying", etc
- Academics behaviour can make PS staff's work life more stressful. e.g. not sticking to deadlines for marking etc. Appreciate that Academics have busy workloads (maybe if more of above actions taken into account it wouldn't happen) but it puts an enormous amount of pressure on PS staff. PS feel powerless to change the situation if the above attitude is prominent in teams. Some people do it time and time again without being challenged.
- Some academics deliberately not do things well so it is taken away from them – people who have done the work get it added to their workload. Being uncooperative seems to be rewarded.

**Action: Think of ways that this culture can change, repercussions for non-cooperative/rude staff and staff who repeatedly miss deadlines –raise with DLT and SoNS EDI Committee**

**Action: If Academic staff cannot meet a deadline they should provide as much notice as possible to PS staff – DOM Level**

**Life**

- A lot of the discussion is around reducing/improving the work side of the work/life balance but perhaps more thought/focus should be given to increasing and improving the life side of that balance.

**Action: Encourage more of a discussion about the Life side of the balance – DOM Level**