SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM ATHENA FORUM WORK ALLOCATION MODELS SURVEY

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2016 ATHENA FORUM WAM SURVEY

- Undertaken by the Athena Forum during Oct-Nov 2016

- 1087 HODs for STEM departments contacted

- Survey Monkey survey with 25 multiple choice questions and 10 open ended comment sections

- 265 total responses (24%), of which 172 were complete

HOW COMMON IS USE OF A WAM?

- 174 out of 265 responding departments reported using a WAM
    - 80% of these at the department or school level
    - 20% of these at the university level
- 60 of remaining 91 departments had plans to implement one.
- *Informal evidence that staff viewed WAM as an improvement on previous (informal) systems for allocating workload.*
- *Views of the WAM were more positive when the WAM was implemented at the departmental or school level than when it was implemented at a university level.*

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN WAMS?
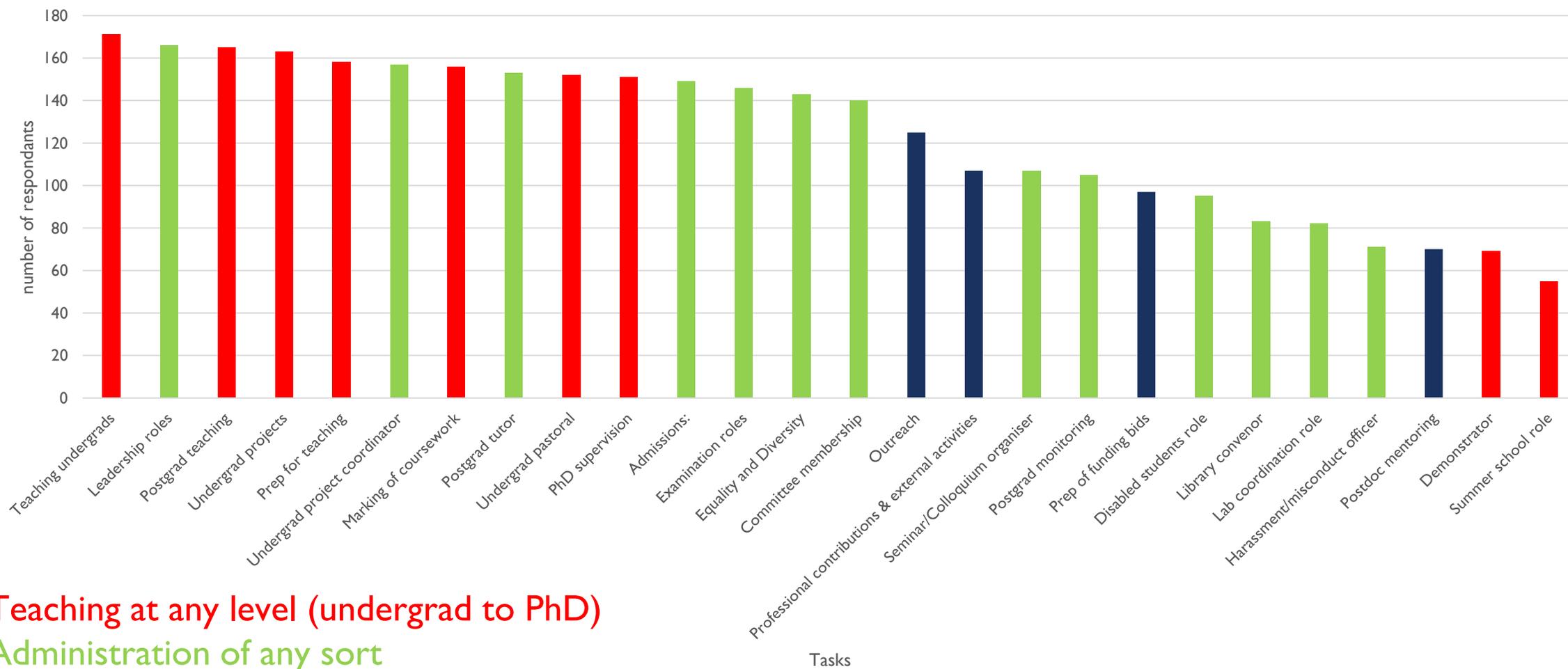
Teaching at any level (undergrad to PhD)
Administration of any sort

RESEARCH AND WAM

80% of responding departments with WAMs included research. In 9% of these, the tariff was fixed. For the departments in which it was not fixed, the most common factors were

Factors	No. of responses out of 172
Numbers of PhD/PDRAs supervised	69
Research income	66
Grant success	58
Number of outputs	38
Grant applications	36
Quality of outputs	28
Rank	11

HOW ARE WAMS CREATED?

In 45% of cases the tariffs are discussed and agreed by everyone they affect

In 37% of cases the tariffs are set by senior management

Responses were more positive when everyone was involved in the WAM development than when they were not.

HOW ARE WAM RESULTS DISSEMINATED?

- 47% of departments share individuals' work allocations between staff so everyone can see what their colleagues' allocation are.

- 16% share the allocations anonymously, with some enabling staff to assess their allocation against average allocations of colleagues (broken down by grade and gender in one case) or against an anonymous summary for the whole department.

- 28% of departments keep the allocations confidential to each member of staff

- 9% did not reveal the allocations or were not sure of the answer to this question

- *Responses were more positive when all results were disseminated in either anonymised or named lists than when each individual saw only his or her own results.*

GENDER AND WAM

- 92% of models automatically included an additional allowance for career breaks and for new staff. *This was criticised when this allowance had to be covered by already overburdened colleagues.*

- 69% of cases, the reasons for reduced work allocations for some staff are not made publicly available.

- ASSET survey found opinions of gender bias in work allocation were dependant the gender of the respondent. Some women thought men were advantaged in the allocation of tasks relating to professional development and markers of esteem and other evidence showed that female respondents had more teaching, administrative and pastoral responsibilities compared with male respondents.

- 51% of responses said that they had already or were planning to test their WAM for gender bias.

GOOD PRACTICES CITED FOR WAMS

- transparency
- flexibility
- not too fine grained
- broad recognition of tasks (e.g. outreach, citizenship etc.)
- ability to balance of workload across years
- review of allocations during the year
- automatic additional allowances for parental leave, returners and new staff
- ability to audit bias (e.g. gender bias)
- account taken of individuals' preferences and skills
- giving staff ownership of workload
- highlighting of overload.

NEGATIVE ASPECTS CITED FOR WAMS

- too rigid and crude

- not flexible enough to accommodate changes

- promoting a 'bean counting' approach

- encouraging laziness in staff

- overly dependent on who implements the model

- unable to take account of differential working speeds

- disruption of model due to student factors

- university not responsive to repeated overload.

FOR THE FULL REPORT

The full Athena Forum WAM report is available online at:

https://athenaforum.org.uk/media/1144/athena-forum-wam-reportjanuary2018.pdf

Thanks!