

## SOLVING PROBLEMS OF INEQUITY IN ACADEMIC STAFF WORKLOAD DISTRIBUTION

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### **Abstract**

*The main goal of the paper is to elaborate recommendations on academic staff workload schemes, ensuring fair workload allocation, efficient use of academic personnel resources and promotion of professional development of academic staff.*

*The regulation of the academic workload has become a key management issue for quality assurance departments of Higher Education Institutions because it is one of the main regulatory mechanisms for educational quality enhancement. The quantitative survey of academic workload schemes for 2011 year in 19 public Georgian Higher Education Institutions has been carried out. The data about the components of the faculty work – Teaching, Research, and Service was analysed and summarized in the form of charts, tables, percentages and averages, showing the general principle of distribution of time between these components of the workload at the institutions. The analysis revealed a number of inequities, discrepancies and problems. On the basis of survey findings the relevant conclusions were made and recommendations for overcoming the existing problems of inequity in academic staff workload allocation and distribution were prepared.*

**Keywords:** *academic workload, components of faculty work, research, service, teaching.*

### **Introduction**

Increase in demand for higher education in today's world and increasing number of students require the development of more efficient mechanisms for educational quality assurance in order to make higher education more student- and outcome oriented. As a result the traditional systems of management based on self-regulation of institutions have changed and moved to systems that require more accountability to government, particularly in spending state finances. One of the largest parts of expenditures of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) is the remuneration of the academic personnel. So it is very important to know the real situation dominating at Higher Education Institutions with regard to the distribution of the academic workload and to give them recommendations that will be helpful for more productive and fair allocation of the faculty time.

#### *Problem of the Research*

Educational reforms that have been on-going in Georgia for the last ten years: involvement of Georgia in Bologna process, actualization of systems for internal and external evaluation, implementation of such effective mechanisms for educational quality enhancement as the authorization of education institutions and accreditation of educational programs led to new challenges for these institutions. At the same time the competition in higher education “internal market” has considerably increased. In order to respond to these challenges the HEIs need to refine the mechanisms of educational quality improvement and to develop new methods and approaches to this end. In this context a lot of institutions give preference to the recruitment of more qualified academic staff, but the management of more efficient use of academic staff resources is no less important for the improvement of learning and teaching quality. Thus, the regulation of the workload has become a key management issue for quality assurance departments of the HEIs. In order to manage more efficient use of academic staff resources, the HEIs have to elaborate

academic personnel workload distribution schemes that will be fully compatible with the interests of the HEIs, promote the attainment of missions and goals of the Institutions and at the same time ensure academic personnel's professional development.

### *Research Focus*

The regulation of the workload has become a key management and problematic issue for quality assurance departments of HEIs, because there are only a few professions with as complicated and multifarious job description as job description of academic personnel. The workload of higher-education teaching personnel should be fair and equitable, should permit such personnel to effectively carry out their duties and responsibilities towards their students as well as their obligations [1].

Often the workload scheme does not capture the whole range and complexity of activity undertaken by academics and only formal teaching time is implicated under academic workload. In fact focusing workload only on teaching hours and neglecting research and service is not proper, because this type of schemes is not perceived as equitable and do not result in the most effective use of staff. Faculty must do more than just teach and do research work in order to successfully fulfil their job obligations [2].

Of course teaching is the most important part of academic staff activity, but teaching means much more than only the hours spent by lecturer and student in an auditorium during lectures and seminars. Teaching is a complex process and a multiparty task. It includes the preparation of syllabi, group consultations, preparation of lectures and assessment materials, assessment. Teaching also covers individual consultations of students, guidance of master's and doctor's thesis that demands not only the time, but also the patience, love of this job and existence of adequate competencies. The teaching, research, creative endeavours, community involvement, professional service, and academic decision making – the work of university or college – is carried out each day by committed faculty members [2]. The proportion between teaching and research, as two main components of faculty work, varies according to the tenure status of faculty and the type of institution. Other professional and administrative activities are also necessary to accomplish required tenure status and to satisfy external pressures for accountability [3]. Professors as well as any other professionals need sufficient time to develop better professional competencies. For this reason they look through advanced scientific literature in the fields of their activities, participate in conferences and symposiums, and publish scientific articles. The academic personnel also participate in public activities and different services on behalf of the university: academic board meetings, university commission's work, organization of conferences and workshops, activities of quality assurance department.

As we see, activity of the academic staff implies quite a number of components. The research focus of our study was the clarification of the real situation dominating at Georgian Higher Education Institutions with regard to the distribution of the academic workload in particular to gather the information about the components of the faculty work – teaching, research, and service, showing the general picture of distribution of these activities and their components, as well as time distribution between these components of the workload at the institutions.

*The purpose of our study* was to show the discrepancies and problems in academic workload distribution at Georgian HEIs and preparation of conjectural ways for their solution. The research questions are as follows:

- What kind of academic workload schemes are Georgian Higher Education Institutions currently exploring?
- What are the basic principles through which the Higher Education Institutions will introduce fair and equitable workload schemes of academic personnel that will allow the latter to efficiently carry out their duties and responsibilities with respect to their students?

- What kind of approaches have to be used for the development of a fair and transparent process of allocation of the workload which will ensure the fulfilment of the above mentioned principles and promote professional development of the academic personnel?

### **Methodology of the Research**

The research focuses on academic staff workload schemes elaborated by Quality Assurance Departments of HEIs that have been in use at all (twenty) authorized public HEIs in Georgia since 2011. In order to gather the data the heads of Quality Assurance Offices of these twenty authorized public HEIs operating in Georgia were requested to submit academic staff workload schemes used at their institutions. Nineteen out of twenty higher education institutions have submitted official documents indicating the very schemes. Three out of nineteen higher education institutions participating in the study represented Conservatory, Apolon Kutateladze Tbilisi State Academy of Arts and Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgian State University.

A detailed study of the structure of submitted workload schemes has been carried out; their major features, shared components as well as differences have been emphasized that lead to elaboration of common structure for academic staff workload scheme. The major activities of academic staff workload comprised of components and sub-components, variations of which frequently occur in academic staff workload allocation schemes used at public HEIs in Georgia, served as the basis for the structure. Later a quantitative analysis of workload allocation for academic staff was carried out on the basis of this structure; namely, we have investigated frequency of occurrence of major activities as well as their components and sub-components incorporated in the workload at Georgian HEIs and also, a quantitative analysis of time allocated to each major activity as well as its components and sub-components has been implemented. The average value of allocated time has been defined and the relevant charts and tables have been developed on the basis of the results of quantitative analysis.

### **Results of the Research**

Investigation of workload schemes dominating in Georgian public HEIs demonstrated that the surveyed universities had “university” schemes. Also, major activities as well as their essential components have been defined. Almost all these schemes consisted of 3 core activities as follows:

1. Teaching
2. Administrative and public work
3. Research and professional development

All these core activities are represented in the schemes of 17 of 19 HEIs.

As to components of these core activities, they vary across HEIs. We have generalised the evidenced situation and revealed those components of core activities which are more frequently included in these schemes. Furthermore we consider that all these components should be necessarily incorporated into academic workload schemes in order to describe the whole range of professors' everyday work.

1. Teaching - consists of the following 3 components:

- a) *Formal scheduled teaching;*
- b) *Formal non-scheduled teaching;*
- c) *Teaching related administrative work;*

Let's discuss each of these components.

a) *Formal scheduled teaching workload* means lectures and seminars. The analysis of the Research findings demonstrates that full professor's lecture/seminar workload in all 19 universities varies from 120 to 660 hours per year. Lecture/seminar workload of an associate professor varies from 90 to 600 hours per year and lecture/seminar workload of an assistant-professor varies from 120 to 630 hours per year.

We have analysed all offered schemes and excluded the minimal and maximal workload data from *Formal scheduled teaching workload*. We have calculated average meanings of *Formal scheduled teaching workload* at Georgian Public HEIs (see **Table 1**).

**Table 1. Average Formal scheduled teaching workload**

Academic Position	Workload per year	Workload per week
Full professor	240 hours	8 hours
Associated professor	300 hours	10 hours
Assistant-professor	360 hours	12 hours

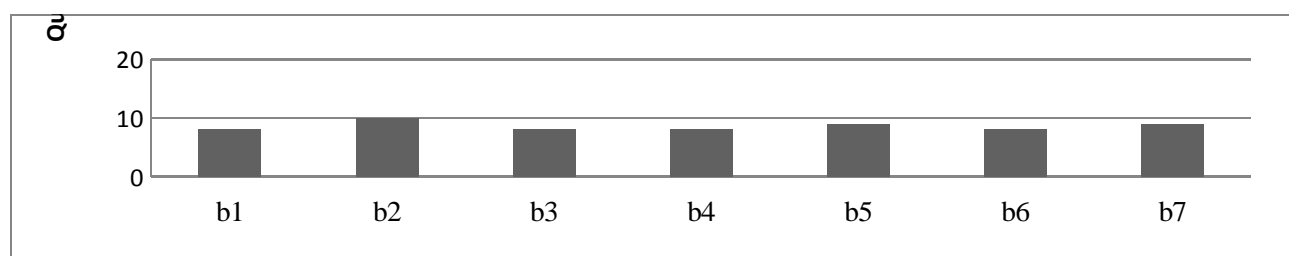
It should also be emphasized that quite often the Art universities employ the other types of workload distribution schemes along with the above mentioned scheme. According to these schemes Formal scheduled teaching workload is calculated as time spent on each student because in these HEIs the teaching process is mostly individual. For example, in case of some courses at the Conservatory, the *Formal scheduled teaching workload* is calculated not by distributing class hours throughout a year or a week, but by allocating 10 hours per student in an academic year.

b) *Formal non-scheduled teaching workload* is in direct connection with *Formal scheduled teaching workload* and consists of 7 subcomponents:

- b1) Development/renovation of educational programme;
- b2) Development/renovation of syllabi;
- b3) Preparation of lectures, seminars, practical works;
- b4) Consultations;
- b5) Supervision of practice;
- b6) Elaboration of tests, examination materials, situation tasks for assessment;
- b7) Guidance of undergraduate and postgraduate student's theses;

**Figure 1** demonstrates whether how many HEIs have included each of these subcomponents in their workload schemes.

**Figure1: Formal non-scheduled teaching workload subcomponents distribution in HEIs**

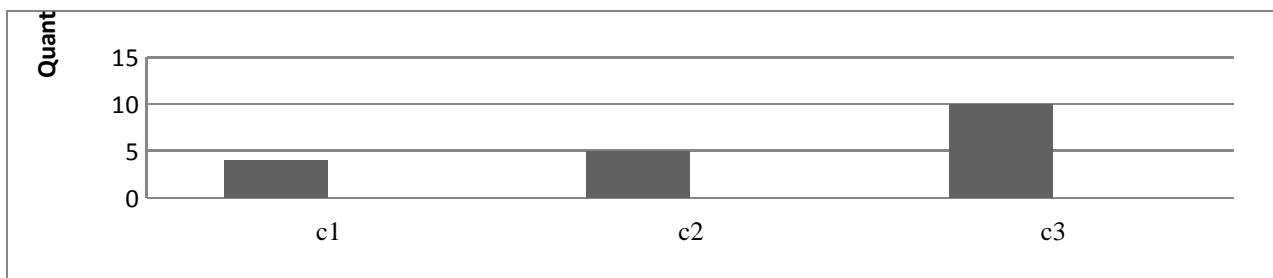


c) *Teaching related administrative workload* is also in direct connection with teaching process. It consists of 3 subcomponents:

- c1) Elaboration of teaching plans, time-tables, schedules;
- c2) Programme and subject leadership;
- c3) Assessment, participation in examination boards;

**Figure 2** demonstrates whether how many HEIs have included each of these subcomponents in their workload schemes.

**Figure 2: Teaching related administrative workload subcomponents distribution in HEIs**

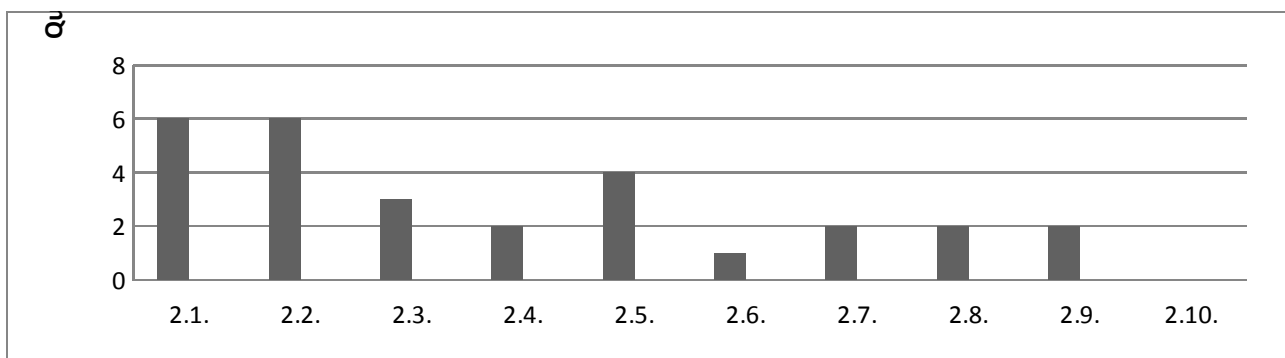


2. Administrative and public work consists of highly diverse components. We have generalized them and fixed the following 10 components:

- 2.1) Participating in department/faculty sessions;
- 2.2) Participation in sessions of the academic board;
- 2.2) Participation in degree awarding boards;
- 2.3) Tutorials;
- 2.4) Holding permanent administrative position (if this position is without compensation);
- 2.5) University-wide board membership;
- 2.6) Participation in activities planned by Quality Assurance Departments;
- 2.7) Membership in scientific journal’s editorial board;
- 2.8) Organization of scientific conferences , symposiums on behalf of the HEI;
- 2.10) Public work associated with reach out HEI in the field of activity;

Figure 3 demonstrates whether how many HEIs have included each of these components in their workload schemes.

**Figure 3: Administrative and public workload components distribution in HEIs**



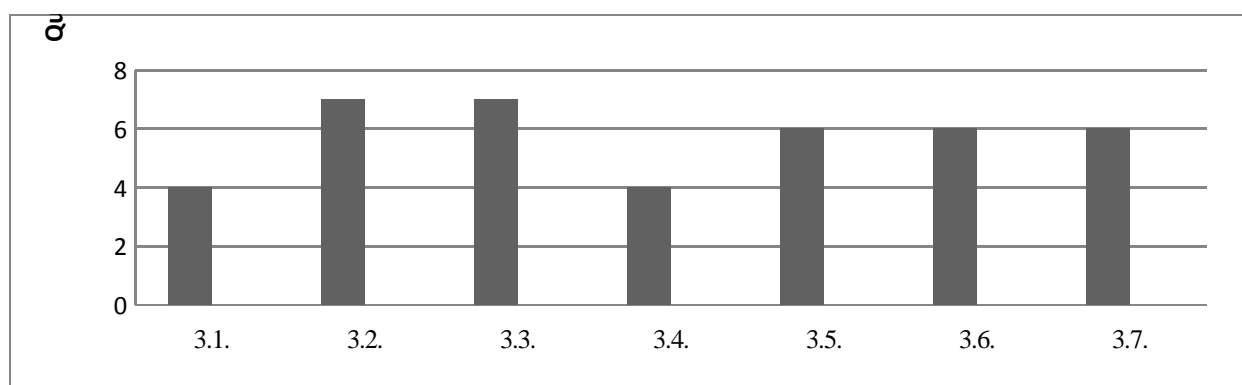
1. Research and professional development

Research and professional development consists of the following 7 components:

- 3.3) Guidance of student’s scientific work;
- 3.4) Production of books/manuals/textbooks;
- 3.5) Publishing of scientific articles, conference papers, contribution to books;
- 3.6) Make references to scientific papers;
- 3.7) Translation of scientific papers;
- 3.8) Implementation of grant projects;
- 3.9) Participation in conferences;

Figure 4 demonstrates whether how many HEIs have included each of these components in their workload schemes.

**Figure 4: Research and professional development workload components distribution in HEIs**



*Hour per year/semester Distribution of Workload*

We have also investigated hour per year/semester Distribution of Workload on each component and subcomponent of the explored workload schemes. In particular we identified the number of HEIs that have applied per hour workload calculation of main activities and their components. The findings have demonstrated the following:

**Total 90% of Public HEIs have allocation of workload on Teaching in their schemes.**

**Table 2. What percentage of HEIs are exploring hour per year/semester workload distribution on each component of Teaching workload**

Activity	%
Preparation/renovation of syllabi	31
Preparation of lectures/seminars/ practical works	53
Consultations	42
Elaboration of tests, examination materials/ situation tasks for assessment	31
Guidance of undergraduate and postgraduate student's theses	37
Assessment, participation in examination boards	26

**Total 53% of Public HEIs have allocation of workload on Administrative and public work in their schemes.**

**Table 3. What percentage of HEIs are exploring hour per year/semester workload distribution on each component of Administrative and public work**

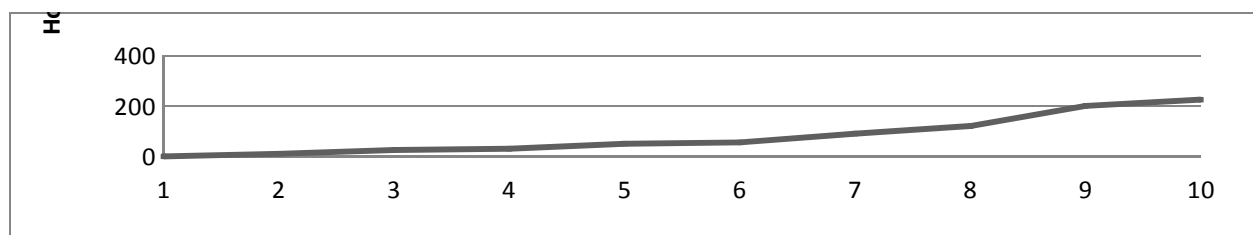
Activity	%
Participation in academic board sessions	42
Holding permanent administrative position (if this position is without compensation)	26

**Total 47% of Public HEIs have allocation of workload on Research and professional development in their schemes.**

Per hour workload distribution on components of this activity was not presented by the HEIs.

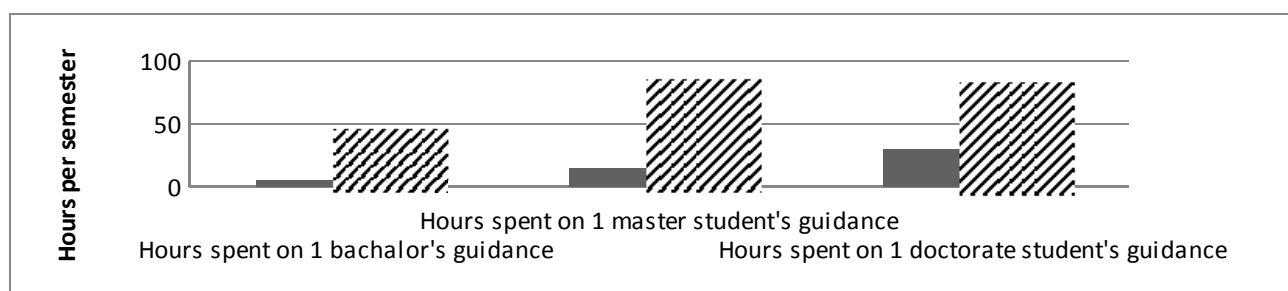
As to the range of hour per year/semester workloads in offered schemes, it is evident, that there is much difference between these schemes. For example the range of per year workloads on syllabi preparation/renovation varies from 0 to 220 hours per year (see **Figure 5**).

**Figure 5: Hour per year workload distribution on syllabi preparation/renovation in HEIs**



The similar situation is revealed with regard to other components of workload as well. For example **Figure 6** demonstrates the maximum and minimum per semester workloads on guidance of undergraduate and postgraduate students' theses.

**Figure 6: Hour per semester workload distribution on student's thesis**



The investigation of hour per year workload distribution of all other workload components also demonstrate discrepancies, therefore we do not offer detailed analysis of them. To make averages and generalize these data is not reasonable because of wide variety of approaches and great difference of models of calculation employed by the institutions.

## Discussion

The analysis of research findings revealed a number of discrepancies and problems: Data of findings show that the distribution of time amongst the components of the faculty work – Teaching, Research and Service vary very much from one institution to another. Furthermore, there are no shared vision and common principles, procedures and methodology among Georgian HEIs for elaboration of academic staff workload. These principles and procedures are necessary in order to ensure equity in academic staff workload distribution. The principles of equity and transparency have to be considered to achieve optimal distribution of workload between faculty staff [4]. To achieve these goals institutions need first of all to work out workload systems in collaboration with academic staff and training of heads to support these systems [5]. Workload distribution/allocation will normally be made in a department/academic unit of school or faculty [6], at the same time academic workload schemes should be flexible to maximum practicable extent and regularly reconsidered as well as procedures for determining workload need to be flexible and adapted to local conditions [7].

To assist HEIs and Faculties in planning equitable Academic Personnel Workload distribution, we recommend taking the following into consideration: in order for the workload scheme to incorporate the entire spectrum of academic staff activities, the workload scheme of a HEI is to be relevant to the common workload structure, developed on the bases of the research. Therefore, all three core activities as well as their components and sub-components need to be reflected in the scheme. As for the time allocation on these components and sub-components, the higher education institution has to take into account the following:

Academic personnel workload should be divided into 3 core activities: Teaching, Service (Administrative and Public work) and Research and Professional development. Furthermore the workload allocation should recognize the full range of academic demands and work areas for each academic, namely: research, scholarship and related activities; professional activities; service to the university and/or the wider community and related activities; and teaching, curriculum development and related activities [6]. We recommend HEI to determine maximum hour per year workload of academic personnel and calculate percentage of hour per year workload on each above mentioned core activities as well as on each component of Teaching. For example we consider that annual working time equals to 1600 hours and offer this type of framework:

*Full professor's workload:* a) Teaching – maximum 50%, in total it equals to 800 hours a year. It consists of Formal Scheduled Workload time, Formal non-Scheduled Workload time and teaching related administrative workload time. Formal Scheduled Workload time is maximum 10 hours per week that will make about 300 hours per year. We consider that generally for the preparation of a one hour lecture or seminar approximately 1 hour should be spent. To calculate Formal non-Scheduled Workload time we can use this formula: Formal Scheduled Workload time/Formal non-Scheduled Workload time = 1/1.2 So, if Formal Scheduled Workload time is 300 hours a year, Formal non-Scheduled Workload time equals to  $300 \times 1,2 = 360$  hours a year, and teaching related administrative workload time equals to 140 hours per year; b) Workload on Administrative and public work equals to about 20% of whole annual workload that makes about 320 hours a year; c) Workload on Research and professional development is about 30% of total annual working time and makes about 480 hours a year.

Percentage from maximum hour per year workload on 3 core activities will possibly be different for associate and assistant-professors' workload schemes, for example:

*In Associate professor's workload:* a) Teaching – maximum 65%, Formal Scheduled Workload time – maximum 18 hours per week, b) Workload on Administrative and public work - about 10% of total annual working time; c) Workload on Research and professional development - about 15% of total annual working time;

*In Assistant professor's workload::* a) Teaching – maximum 75%, Formal Scheduled Workload time – maximum 14 hours per week, b) Workload on Administrative and public work - about 15% of total annual working time ; c) Workload on Research and professional development - about 20% of total annual working time;

Percentage from maximum hour per year workload on 3 core activities and components of Teaching should vary depending on missions and goals and the number of students of the HEI.

It should as well be emphasized that depending on their missions and goals some HEIs do not automatically restrict the academic workload according to professors' academic positions. They can unify workload framework irrespective of the academic position and Formal scheduled workload hours are distributed amongst academic personnel without any "privileges". Various factors tend to influence appointment of staff time between teaching, research and administrative duties. They include the academic and research interests of individual members of staff, the distribution of teaching workload of the department, and the time commitments to other associated academic duties [8].

As for the calculation of workload for each separate component of Administrative and public work, Research and professional development, no relevant formula for calculation of the hour workload has been developed during our survey. Therefore, it is not expedient for an institution to indicate hour distribution for each of these components and sub-components in advance.

## Conclusions and recommendations

On the basis of research findings the relevant conclusions are made and recommendations for Higher Education Institutions for solving problems of inequity in academic workload regulations are prepared. To develop a framework model of Academic personnel workload allocation the following should be provided:



- The process of development of workload schemes should be fair and transparent. Transparent systems would counter claims of unfair treatment, discrimination and favouritism for the benefit of both heads of departments and lecturing staff [5].
- Class size for lectures, seminars, academic tutorials and laboratories should be reasonable and be determined in dependence of program's profile, type of activity, teaching equipment and resources.
- Quality of professor's performance should not be taken into account for workload planning. It will be underlined in academic personnel's or whole faculty's self-evaluation and evaluation reports and will have been taken into consideration while tenure and awarding.
- "University" and "Faculty" workload schemes should be drafted on the basis of the above mentioned common framework ensuring full implementation of academic duties, research and continuing professional development. Thus, all of three core activities Teaching, Administrative and public work, Research and professional development, as well as their components and sub-components need to be reflected in the scheme.
- We recommend the HEI to determine maximum hour per year workload of academic personnel and calculate percentage of hour per year workload on each above mentioned core activities as a whole, also on each component of Teaching. Hour distribution for each separate component and sub-component of the other two core activities: Administrative and public work, Research and professional development, should be defined by professors themselves based on individual needs and opportunities.
- A workload scheme has to be flexible and easily modifiable in case of need.
- It is desirable for the HEIs to elaborate forms for Academic Workload distribution that will be completed by academic staff at the beginning of each academic year. **Table 4** shows a sample form for Academic Workload distribution.

**Table 4. Sample form for Academic Workload distribution**

<b>Professor's name, surname</b>		
<b>Academic Position</b>		
<b>Faculty</b>		
Whole year workload - 1600 hours		
1. teaching	40%	640 hr
1.1 <i>Formal scheduled teaching</i> (lectures, seminars)		260 hr
1.2 <i>Formal non-scheduled teaching</i>		300 hr
Development/renovation of educational programme		
Development/renovation of syllabi		
Preparation of lectures, seminars, practical works		
Consultations		
Supervision of practice		
Elaboration of tests, examination materials, situation tasks for assessment		
Guidance of undergraduate and postgraduate student's theses		
1.3 <i>Teaching Related Administrative workload</i>		80 hr
Elaboration of teaching plans, time-tables, schedules		
Programme and subject leadership		
Assessment, participation in examination boards		
2. Administrative and public work	15 %	240 hr
Participating in department/faculty sessions		
Participation in sessions of the academic board		
Participation in degree awarding boards		

Tutorials		
Holding permanent administrative position (if this position is without compensation)		
University-wide board membership		
Participation in activities planned by Quality Assurance Departments		
Membership in scientific journal's editorial board		
Organization of scientific conferences , symposiums on behalf of the HEI		
Public work associated with reach out HEI in the field of activity		
3. Research and professional development	45 %	720 hr
Guidance of student's scientific work		
Publishing of scientific articles, conference papers, contribution to books		
Make references to scientific papers		
Translation of scientific papers		
Production of books/manuals/textbooks		
Implementation of grant projects		
Participation in conferences		
<b>Date of filling Year // Month // day //</b>		

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