

Academic Workloads in Australia

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Workload clauses
included in university
collective agreements



Long standing processes for
allocating teaching workloads at
Department level

Workload clauses agreed in
collective agreements in 1990s to
ensure equity and manage
perceived overwork and stress.

By 2017 workload systems likely to
be complex with links to university
strategy, performance, workforce
planning, productivity and funding

What is common to Australian academic workload models

- Workload management initially as an academic matter
- Enabled by clauses in collective (enterprise) agreements, but each university has developed a separate model
- Specify maximum hours over which work can be allocated
- Work allocation is measured in hours or proxies for hours, eg. percentages, points
- Definitions of teaching, research and service
- EBA clauses enshrine as a core value 40/40/20 percentage of time split of academic duties
- Teaching time allocations limited by stated upper limits on hours for face to face teaching or by employment type.
- Consideration of work allocation in promotion process

Each university has a different approach

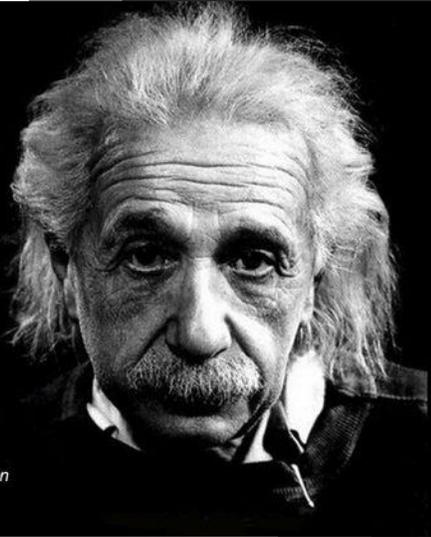
- Maximum hours allocation range between 1585 and 1710 per annum
- Definitions of teaching ,research and service vary, particularly how teaching is described.
- Extensions of the definitions of what is comprehended by academic work
- Local (Faculty /Department) vs single enterprise system
- Spreadsheet or on-line system linked with other university systems, eg research data base, timetabling
- Detailed break down of time allocations to elements of specific tasks vs broad allocations for a complete task
- Forecasting tool for number of sessionals and casuals
- Transparency in work allocation
- Alignment of workload allocation discussions to performance review processes.

Issues with workload models

- 40%40%20% split of time
 - Restricts allocation of resources, particularly to teaching
 - Limits specialisation
 - Adds to costs
 - Not a realistic measure of what every academic does
- Great detail in complex models
 - May drive defensive behaviours in staff
 - May limit staff willingness to accept unplanned requirements.
 - Hard to administer

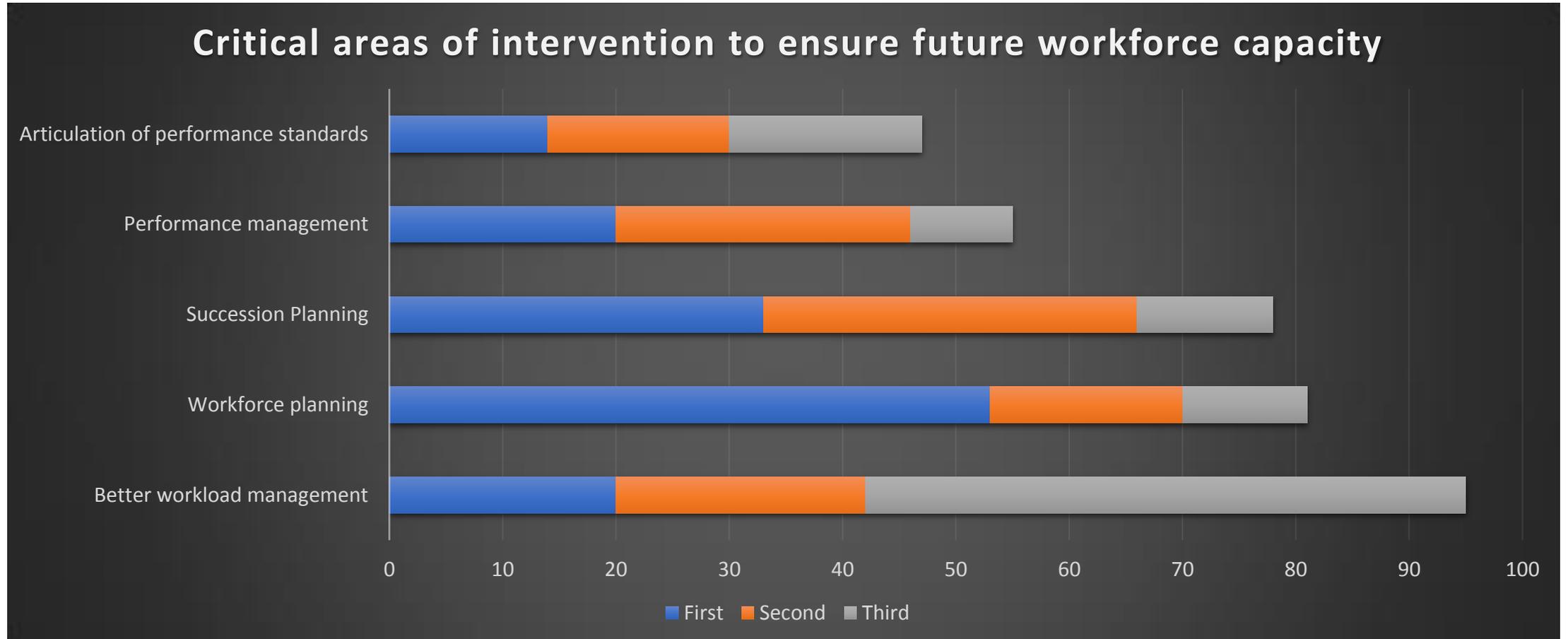
"If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask, for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than 5 minutes."

- Albert Einstein



AHEIA Higher Education Workforce of the Future

(2016) p.45



Examples of responses to increase flexibility

Eliminating specification of timing split and requiring work to be allocated according to requirements, career stage and individual preference.

Percentages of time which can be allocated to core duties broadened

- Teaching 20% – 60%, Research 20%- 60% Service 10% – 40%

Developing staff profiles which dictate time allocations. Staff may be allocated to the profile for fixed agreed periods.

- Research Intensive 60/40/20%
- Balanced 40/40/20%
- Teaching intensive 20/60/20%
- Teaching scholar 40/40/20%

Examples of responses to improve institutional outcomes

- Research intensive profiles allocated based on performance
- Time allocation for research based on research outputs aligned to articulated research performance standards (averaged over 3 years).
- Mandating the order of time allocation for duties, eg teaching first to ensure all teaching time is allocated.
- Staff agree and sign an individual workload agreement.
- Attempts to use workload allocation models to measure productivity.

What are the HR implications of these responses

- Increased flexibility in allocating work
- Creation of de facto academic career streams
- Future of a teaching intensive career stream
- May strengthen workforce planning
- Institutional research outcomes incentivated by time allocation away from teaching
- Are workload models the right way to measure productivity

