

PERSONNEL SERVICES

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Director of Human Resources

PERS(15)06



To: heads of division, divisional secretaries, heads of departments and institutions, faculty board chairmen, departmental administrators and faculty board secretaries

Ref. EMS/5,
EMS/6

12 October 2015

cc. Director of Conference of Colleges Secretariat, Mr Morgan, Ms Killick, HR Business Partners

Variation of Duties Scheme

A new scheme for Variation of Academic Duties has been approved by Council and the Conference of Colleges to take effect from Michaelmas term 2015. The scheme is designed for academic staff holding Associate Professorships jointly with college Tutorial Fellowships and allows for periods of variation in the balance between college and university parts of a joint appointment

A new website is available www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/academic/vod/ which describes the scheme in detail and provides a pro-forma for use in recording agreement to Variation of Duties

1. Background

In Trinity term a new scheme for Variation of Academic Duties was approved by Council and by binding vote in the Conference of Colleges to take effect from Michaelmas term 2015. The Scheme was developed by a broadly-constituted Joint Working Group (including the Pro-Vice Chancellors for Personnel and Equality and for Education, two Heads of House, the chair of the Senior Tutors' Committee, a college Finance Bursar, and representatives of all the University's academic divisions) and is the result of detailed consultation with key stakeholders.

2. Detail

The new scheme takes effect from Michaelmas Term 2015 and is designed for academic staff holding Associate Professorships jointly with college Tutorial Fellowships. It provides for periods with variation in the balance of duties between the college and university parts of joint appointments, so enabling academics to focus on different aspects of their work at different stages in their careers. For instance, individuals may wish to focus for a period on developing their research or establishing a new taught course; or they may wish to reduce their teaching and protect their research while they take their turn in an administrative role either for the University or for their College.

Variation of duties may involve a temporary reduction in almost any aspect of contractual duties (with the exception of the duty to serve as a university examiner). The variation available to any one member of staff necessarily has to be limited on grounds of fairness to others, both in terms of the opportunities available to all and the equitable distribution of the academic workload. For this reason, the maximum duration of a period of variation is normally limited to three years. In addition, variation has a financial cost and it is not anticipated that it will be possible to agree to all requests, and some may need to be deferred. The scheme is intended as a framework embodying agreed norms to provide for greater transparency in decision-making.

A reduction in either university or college teaching is commonly a major aspect of variation, and, given the importance of teaching for the collegiate University, the scheme sets a maximum to the permissible reduction of duties: the duties owed to one employer cannot normally be reduced under the scheme by more than 50% (e.g. in the case of college teaching, the limit is 50% of the college teaching stint and its associated duties). The scheme also emphasizes the importance of ensuring proper provision for replacement teaching.

The scheme assumes that, over the long term, postholders will remain committed to the breadth of their joint appointment. Over an individual's career, the time allowed with maximum variation of duties should not exceed one half of the time spent working to standard contractual duties.

Variation of Duties is strictly subject to tripartite agreement in each case between the individual and the individual's faculty or department and College. A pro-forma is available to record the agreement.

3. Action required of Departments

The Personnel Committee asks divisions and departments to draw these new procedures to the attention of academic staff holding joint appointments in academic departments in their divisions.

4. Further information

Full details of the scheme are available at:

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/academic/vod/

MR J DUXFIELD

Director of Human Resources.

*Replaces existing circular: No
Copy for noticeboards: Yes*