



Secondary Schools: Tackle Excessive Workload Now!

The Stand Up for Quality Education campaign is committed to reducing teachers' workload; a key aim is to do so by facilitating greater teacher empowerment and teacher agency.

This approach has support from the Scottish Government and Education Scotland as they are also committed to reducing excessive teacher workload, freeing up teachers to focus on what is important - teaching and learning.

The purpose of this advice is to enact the contractual position of a 35-hour week; to maximise the benefits of previous workload gains and, further, to make Working Time Agreements (WTAs) fit for purpose as tools to control excessive workload.

Your Contract

Members are reminded that you have a contractual 35-hour week which breaks down into:

- A **maximum** teaching commitment of 22.5 hours per week
- A **minimum** preparation and correction time of 7.5 hours (1/3rd of teaching hours) per week
- A **maximum** of 5 hours per week for collegiate activity covered in your school Working Time Agreement (WTA).

Working Time Agreement

Your WTA (including the calendar) needs to have been negotiated, agreed to, and signed by both the headteacher and a representative of the EIS branch.

Do not just agree to the same terms as last year's WTA without having discussed it as a branch. Reflect on the previous year's experience and whether the allocated hours on the WTA were appropriate. Note any activities that required more than the allocated number of hours, and the number of hours exceeded in each case.

For the year ahead, calculate the amount of time required for each activity to ensure:

1. There is enough time given to each aspect of the agreement, especially for any activity for which not enough time was allocated in the previous year's WTA.
2. That the actual number of hours that would be required for all tasks in each section of the WTA does not exceed the contractual maximum. If it does exceed the contractual maximum, some activity must come out of the WTA and the calendar.

Everything in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) needs to have been quantified in terms of staffing and time and this should match the agreed allocation of time in the WTA.

For advice on WTAs contact your Local Association Secretary or EIS Organiser. More information can be found on the EIS website- www.eis.org.uk

Failure to agree the WTA and calendar at school level should be brought to the attention of the Local Association Secretary who will advise on the local processes for handling 'Failure to Agree' a WTA. Collective grievances could also be considered where schools are failing to address workload concerns and such failures should also be reported to the Local Association Secretary for raising at the LNCT.

Specifically, members and branches are advised to continue to:

- **Ensure** that all SQA-related workload is properly calculated and accounted for within Working Time Agreements.
- **Ensure that departmental and school NQ presentation policies align** with the national guidance re-issued by the Scottish Government, SQA and Education Scotland in January 2024; specifically, **under no circumstances** should cohorts of pupils be dual presented at both N4 and N5. Any individual dual presentations would be exceptional, and involve dialogue with the learner and parents/carers. The guidance can be found online (Please use the QR code above).

- Further **ensure** that pupils are appropriately coursed at the beginning of the Senior Phase, based on reliable tracking and monitoring of progress throughout the BGE, to avoid mid-session changes.
 - **Seek the removal** of over-elaborate internal verification processes and ensure that moderation processes in schools for both BGE and Senior Phase are proportionate and fully accounted for in Working Time Agreements.
 - **Challenge and reject** any new workload demand or new workstreams not in the school's improvement plan; and ensure that school and departmental planning and working time take account of the reintroduction of full course assessment, following the removal of modifications to NQ courses.
 - **Audit and review WTAs** against the actual demands made on teachers' time, applying the terms of the 35-hour week contract: maximum teaching commitment of 22.5 hours; minimum preparation and correction time of 7.5 hours (1/3rd of teaching hours); and a balance of 5 hours per week for all other duties covered in the school Working Time Agreement.
 - **Ensure** that school internal quality assurance procedures are light touch, consulted upon collegiately with appropriate working time allocation; and challenge any efforts to replicate HMIE Inspections at local level.
- **Avoid** duplication and keeping evidence of every detail within the Benchmark within the BGE;
 - **Avoid** spending too much time collecting a wide range of evidence for moderation purposes;
 - **Do not** track and record progress against individual Es and Os;
 - **Do not** over-assess learners or assess the same knowledge and skills repeatedly in different ways;
 - **Do not** create large portfolios of evidence; and
 - **Do not** spend time writing unnecessarily long reports for parents which describe lots of classwork or use professional jargon.

Action: As an EIS branch, think about the different ways that you report to parents especially if you regularly use IT systems like Seesaw, Google Classroom, etc. Can you achieve your reporting requirements within the time allocated in your WTA? If not, remove areas where there is duplication.

Tackling Bureaucracy

The Scottish Government has supported the empowered schools system, giving teachers the agency to concentrate on what makes a difference to pupils' learning. The EIS welcomes this commitment and is keen to work with the Scottish Government to realise in practice the promise contained within the policy rhetoric.

The EIS would reiterate the key messages issued on planning, assessment and reporting and would urge members to say a collective "No" when practice in your school conflicts with these actions.

Key Points

- Everything in your School Improvement Plan (SIP) should have an identified time and staffing resource attached to it – if it can't be done within a 35-hour week; it can't be done.
- The SNCT national agreement on workload indicates that every school's improvement plan should have a workstream aimed at controlling workload – if your SIP doesn't, demand that it should.
- The Scottish Government has committed to reducing excessive teacher workload, freeing up teachers to focus on what is important - teaching and learning. We should accept the Scottish Government's word and challenge at every level the drivers of excessive workload: paper trails; excessive auditing; tasks which duplicate work; clunky IT systems; over-elaborate planning and reporting; and bureaucracy in all its forms.

Key Messages – What to Avoid

Planning

- **Avoid** writing overly detailed plans for the year/week/day ahead which limit your flexibility to respond to children's and young people's needs, interests and progression;
- **Do not** treat planning as an accountability tool but as a support to you as a professional in delivering quality learning and teaching for the young people that you work with, and as a basis for professional dialogue with colleagues as appropriate;
- **Do not** plan for individual Experiences and Outcomes (Es and Os) in the BGE or spend excessive time writing detailed descriptions of learning activities; and
- **Do not** 'tick off' all of the Es and Os separately.

Action: If your school's planning activities do not accord with the points above, contact your LA Secretary for advice.

Assessment and Reporting

- **Avoid** spending time on assessment activities which do not help to identify children's and young people's next steps in learning;

Act Now! Act Together! Take Control of Workload