



NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS

Teachers' workload and working time policy

for Sixth Form Colleges



**GUIDELINES FOR NUT
MEMBERS IN
ENGLAND AND WALES**

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INTRODUCTION

The NUT has campaigned tirelessly over the years to reduce workload, establish limits to working time and improve work-life balance for teachers in schools and in sixth form colleges.

It is against the background of continuing concerns over workload and the NUT's campaign to reduce workload that the NUT is issuing this guidance to its members in sixth form colleges.

This guidance sets out long-standing NUT policy and practice with regard to sixth form college teachers' workload and working time. The NUT is ready to offer full support to sixth form college teachers in situations where working practices in colleges are not in accordance with these guidelines.

Should discussions with college principals not result in satisfactory outcomes, NUT members and college representatives should seek support from the NUT division secretary. Where further approaches fail to secure satisfactory resolution of those areas of the greatest concern in colleges, the NUT is willing to support members including through ballots for industrial action up to and including strike action.



STEVE SINNOTT
NUT General Secretary

February 2007

SECTION 1

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR SIXTH FORM COLLEGE TEACHERS

The pay and conditions of service for teachers employed in sixth form colleges in England and Wales are set out in the national sixth form colleges agreement known as the “Red Book”. All colleges are expected by both sides of the NJC for Sixth Form Colleges to abide by these and incorporate them in teachers’ contracts using the model contract drawn up by the NJC.

The Red Book is supplemented by a number of other national agreements such as the NJC’s Professional Standards Manual and the NJC’s agreed performance management framework. The NJC has also issued nationally agreed joint guidance specifically on bureaucracy and this is attached to this NUT guidance.

The provisions of the Red Book agreement and the other documents apply to all teachers on the Main Scale, PSP Range and Management Ranges. **This NUT advice deals with those documents and applies to all such teachers.**

Principals and Vice Principals and other senior postholders employed on individually determined contracts are not covered by the scope of the Red Book agreement or by this NUT guidance. **The NUT will, however, advise and support any members in these categories individually and offer appropriate support.**

All NUT college representatives should have a copy of these documents. The NUT has previously circulated copies of the Red Book and the other documents to all NUT college representatives. Further copies can be obtained from NUT headquarters or downloaded, together with a wide range of other information and guidance on pay and conditions issues, from the Sixth Form Colleges section of the NUT website www.teachers.org.uk

SECTION 2

TEACHERS' WORKING TIME OBLIGATIONS

This section sets out the working time obligations of teachers in sixth form colleges. As noted above, these provisions apply to teachers on the Main Scale, PSP Range and Management Ranges but not to senior postholders on individual contracts.

Advice on how these working time obligations can be allocated, in particular in respect of contact hours, non-contact hours and attendance at meetings, is set out in Section 2.

Standard working time: working days and working hours

The Red Book agreement provides at paragraph 10 that *a teacher may be required to work for 195 days in any year of which 190 will be days on which the teacher may be required to teach in addition to carrying out other duties; and that within this 195 days, 1265 hours a year will be allocated reasonably by the principal.*

It also provides at paragraph 10 that *the balance between teaching and non teaching duties and the length of the teaching day are all subject to the reasonable direction of the principal.*

Teachers may be required to work for 195 days in any college year. The agreement does not state that teachers must be present at college for 195 days. There is room for principals to exercise flexibility.

The 1265 hours are to be *allocated reasonably* by the principal. The 1265 hours is a maximum. Teachers do not have to be required to work right up to that limit.

Teachers cannot be required to make up any time not worked as a result of absence through illness or absence for any other reason.

Additional working time

The Red Book also provides at paragraph 12 that teachers should work *such reasonable additional hours as may be needed to enable them to discharge their duties effectively.* This includes, in particular,

marking students' work, writing reports on students, preparation of lessons, teaching materials and teaching programmes and such other duties as may reasonably be required.

The Red Book provides that the amount of such time *shall not be defined by the college*. It is not included within the 1265 hours. The teacher should decide the number of additional hours necessary and where and when such duties will be performed. The duties undertaken, which may include marking and preparation, should relate solely to the teacher's own teaching. They should exclude activities requiring the involvement either of staff or students. Duties undertaken at a time determined by the principal should be part of the 1265 hours.

Evening teaching

The Red Book provides at paragraph 11 that *as part of the 1265 hours, teachers may be required to teach for up to 6 hours over two evenings per week*. As with other working time within the 1265 hours, such evening teaching must be allocated reasonably. The Red Book provides, further, that any evening teaching beyond this should be voluntary; and that, whenever possible, evening teaching should be undertaken by volunteers. In the majority of colleges where evening teaching takes place, teachers take part on a voluntary basis and under separate contracts of employment for additional payment.

Additional days

The Red Book states at paragraph 17 that *colleges may well find it necessary to ask teachers to undertake additional working days in excess of the 195 days*. It provides at paragraph 7 that, in such cases, teachers should be compensated either through additional payment or time off in lieu, whichever the teacher prefers. The NUT believes that such requests should be subject to the test of reasonableness and, therefore, only made in cases of genuine necessity.

Breaks during the teaching day

All teachers *shall be allowed a break of reasonable length either between college sessions or between the hours of 12 noon and 2 pm*

(paragraph 14). The NUT believes that teachers should have an entitlement of at least one hour when they are not required to undertake duties, attend meetings or remain on the premises. This break cannot be included in the 1265 hours.

Teachers are also entitled, where they teach in the afternoon and evening sessions, to a *reasonable break ... before commencing evening teaching* (also paragraph 14).

Morning and afternoon breaks are not mentioned in the Red Book. They should, however, be included in the 1265 hours. A small proportion of the staff might be on duty on a rota basis but, in an emergency, staff would be expected to respond and clearly they are available for work at such a time.

Travel to/from work

Time spent in travelling to or from home to the place of work is not included within the 1265 hours (paragraph 13). Where teachers work at a split-site college, however, time spent travelling during the day between sites should count as part of the 1265 hours.

Sundays and bank/public holidays

The Red Book provides at paragraph 16 that no teacher shall be required to work on these days.

SECTION 3

ALLOCATING TEACHERS' WORKING TIME

Directed time budgets

All days and hours where teachers are directed to undertake professional duties qualify as directed time and count towards the overall limits which must not be exceeded.

It is essential, therefore, that colleges keep accurate records of the directed time demands upon teachers. Some colleges provide, in advance of each academic year, directed time calendars setting out teachers' time commitments to teaching hours, non-contact hours,

meetings etc and a cushion of time reserved for emergencies and unplanned events.

Examples of such calendars can be found in the NUT guidance for school teachers, available on the NUT website at www.teachers.org.uk

Contact hours and non-contact hours

There are no specific provisions in the Red Book agreement either on contact time or on non-contact time. The provisions on reasonable direction by the principal, however, apply to the allocation of directed time both for teaching and for planning, preparation and assessment purposes.

Where members believe that the teaching hours for teachers collectively or individually are excessive and unreasonable; or that there is inadequate and unreasonable allocation or availability of time for planning, preparation and assessment purposes, they should contact the NUT for advice and support.

The NUT does not prescribe any specific maximum level of contact time. Where support is sought, each situation will be assessed according to the particular circumstances and in consultation with the members concerned.

The average level of contact time found by a recent national survey was 23.5 hours, with over two-thirds of colleges setting contact hours between 22.5 and 24.5 hours. The overall workload of teachers is, however, influenced not only by the number of contact hours. It is further influenced by matters such as the number of different groups allocated, the number of students taught and the levels of the courses taught. Some colleges operate a system of "case-loading" which takes such matters into account when determining individual teachers' contact and non-contact hours compared to their colleagues.

The NUT believes that all teachers should receive an adequate allocation of non-contact time within directed time for planning, preparation and assessment purposes. This will serve to protect non-contact time against inroads due to other competing uses. The time

involved should be set at a level at least equivalent to the statutory entitlement to 10 per cent of total timetabled teaching hours in schools. Even in colleges which do not allocate non-contact hours within the timetable for any specific purpose, teachers should have adequate time for these purposes.

The NUT believes that the level of non-contact time allocated as directed time should be appropriate to the other responsibilities of teachers, given the need to maintain a balance between teaching and non-teaching activities.

Teachers with additional responsibilities, whether or not employed in Management Range posts, should have adequate additional non-contact time within their overall directed time for those responsibilities as well.

Staff meetings

The nationally agreed NJC joint guidance, included in this NUT document, includes guidance on meetings. It applies to management convened meetings other than those arranged for the purpose of communicating with and consulting parents and students.

The intention of the NJC joint guidance is to reduce bureaucracy by enabling teachers to make more effective use of their time. Meetings are the main consumers of directed time outside the student day. It follows that effective management of time allocated to meetings will be of significant benefit to teachers.

The NUT's own long-standing guidance in respect of meetings is set out below.

- Attendance at meetings should be within the 1265 hours annual maximum of directed time and within the 195 days when the teacher is required to be available for work.
- College managers should consult their teaching staffs on the pattern and number of meetings. The pattern and number of meetings should be agreed within the limits explained below.
- Meetings should last no more than 60 minutes, being held on no more than one evening per week on average during a term with a maximum of two evenings in any one week.

- Meetings, in the context of evenings, may be conducted in a single session or sub-divided sessions for teachers in pre-defined groups but the total duration should not exceed 60 minutes on that evening.
- Where the pattern of meetings includes two meetings in a week, there should be one week without meetings to ensure the average of no more than one meeting a week is maintained.
- Attendance at meetings should be required only of staff who are involved in or affected by the business at hand. If evening meetings involve movement between groups or venues, the time for movement should be included within the 60 minute maximum.

Teachers cannot be required to attend meetings during their lunchbreak or during the break to which they are entitled before commencing evening teaching.

Briefings held before the start of the college day (“pre-college briefings”) have become a feature of the pattern of meetings at some colleges. NUT members have mixed reactions to them. Some consider them intrusive and not supportive of their preparation for teaching. Others consider them helpful in ensuring good internal communication with limited disruption.

NUT members should decide at college level whether they wish pre-college briefings to form part of the pattern of meetings of their college. If so, pre-college briefings should be subject to the same provisions as other meetings with regard to procedures and limitations upon the length and overall number of meetings. The NUT will support members where they wish there to be no pre-college briefings.

Parents’ evenings, open days/evenings, careers evenings

Meetings such as the above have a structure and purpose different from other evening meetings. They cannot be limited to a maximum of 60 minutes; but should be few in number during the college year and included in any agreed pattern of meetings.

If, in any one week, there is one such evening meeting, then in that week there should be no more than one further evening call on

teachers for whatever purpose. Such evening meetings should be taken into account in the same way as other meetings when calculating whether there will be more than one evening meeting per week averaged out over a term.

SECTION 4

PROFESSIONAL DUTIES

The Red Book agreement sets out at Appendix 4 a list of professional duties. Teachers may be called upon to perform any of these duties as *may reasonably be assigned to them by the principal* (paragraph 21). This part of the NUT's guidance considers in particular what should and should not be regarded as a reasonable direction.

Cover for absent colleagues

The Red Book agreement provides, in summary, that teachers may be required to cover for absent colleagues, except where those colleagues have been absent for three or more days or where it was known in advance for two or more days that they would be absent for more than three days.

A 2005 survey by the teachers' organisations showed that cover is not routinely required at all in half of colleges, while in other colleges the level of cover averages around 30 minutes per teacher per week. Anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that the burden of cover is increasing.

The NUT believes that covering for absences is not an effective use of teachers' time. In those situations where students genuinely cannot undertake self-directed study, colleges should seek to minimise the extent to which teachers are required to cover for absent colleagues. Any requirements on teachers to provide cover should be limited to where the absence is not known in advance and should be for no more than the first day of such absence. Where problems arise with regard to cover, support should be sought in the same way as on other issues.

Schemes of work and lesson plans

Requirements regarding lesson planning can generate excessive workload in colleges. The NUT's workload guidance for teachers in schools, available on the NUT website at www.teachers.org.uk, contains advice on lesson planning and applies equally to teachers in sixth form colleges.

Writing reports

NUT policy is that teachers should not be expected to write more than one report on each student in each academic year. Reports include written documents and pro formas with tick boxes. Unless the reports are computer-generated, the targets for the maximum number of words should be 400 words for whole reports and 40 words for individual subjects.

Writing documents, policies and reports

Documents should be kept to the minimum length necessary. Professional judgement should be applied in determining the length of the document. A reasonable amount of time must elapse between requests for contributions to documents. The NUT believes that teachers should not be expected to write or rewrite policies, unless they are provided with model policies.

Invigilation

Teachers in schools are not required to invigilate external examinations and mock examinations and other tests requiring alterations to the normal timetable, on the basis that invigilating examinations is not a productive use of teachers' time. They may be expected to be present at the beginning and possibly at the end of external examinations in their subject areas and to conduct practical and oral examinations in their subject areas. The NUT believes that teachers in sixth form colleges should similarly be exempt from the burden of invigilation.

Administrative and clerical tasks

The nationally agreed NJC joint guidance on bureaucracy calls upon colleges to examine a "common-sense approach" to allocating work to teaching and support staff.

The NUT believes that, in colleges as well as in schools, teachers should not be required to undertake tasks of a clerical or administrative nature which do not call for the exercise of a teacher's professional skills and judgment.

The NUT advises members to apply "key questions" below:

- Does the task need to be done at all?
- Is the task of an administrative or clerical nature?
- Does it call for the exercise of a teacher's professional skills and judgement?

If the answers are "yes" to the first two questions and "no" to the third, then the task should not be carried out by a teacher.

Teachers should exercise their professional judgment in deciding whether a task requires their professional skills and judgment or is one that should be transferred to support staff. Time saved by the transfer of such tasks should not be replaced by additional teaching time.

For example, an area frequently raised by sixth form college teachers is the recording and reporting of students' attendance, including issues such as registering attendance by electronic and/or manual means, chasing absences and providing reports and analyses of attendance. The above approach should be adopted in identifying the elements of this work requiring teachers' involvement and the elements which can and should be undertaken by support staff.

The STPCD now includes the following list of specific tasks which teachers in schools may not be "routinely required" to undertake:

- *Collecting money from pupils and parents.*
- *Investigating a pupil's absence.*
- *Bulk photocopying.*
- *Typing or making word-processed versions of manuscript materials and producing revisions of such versions.*
- *Word-processing, copying and distributing bulk communications to parents and pupils.*

- *Producing class lists on the basis of information provided by teachers.*
- *Keeping and filing records, including records based on data supplied by teachers.*
- *Preparing, setting up and taking down classroom displays in accordance with decisions taken by teachers.*
- *Producing analyses of attendance figures.*
- *Producing analyses of examination results.*
- *Collating pupil reports.*
- *Administration of work experience but not selecting placements and supporting pupils by advice or visits.*
- *Administration of public and internal examinations.*
- *Administration of cover for absent teachers.*
- *Setting up and maintaining ICT equipment and software.*
- *Ordering supplies and equipment.*
- *Cataloguing, preparing, issuing and maintaining materials and equipment and stocktaking the same.*
- *Taking verbatim notes or producing formal minutes of meetings.*
- *Co-ordinating and submitting bids, for funding, school status and the like, using contributions by teachers and others.*
- *Transferring manual data about pupils not covered by the above into computerised school management systems.*
- *Managing the data in school management systems.*

This list is indicative only. The nationally agreed NJC joint guidance notes that, while many of these may not be issues in colleges, they illustrate the type of tasks to be considered. The NUT believes that teachers in sixth form colleges should not be required to undertake any clerical tasks, not just those on the above list of examples.

Workload arising from inspections

Where NUT members believe that they are subject to excessive demands arising from inspections, including demands to prepare substantial documentation specifically for inspection, the NUT should be consulted for advice and support. The principles set out in the NUT's guidance on the Ofsted inspection framework for schools, available on the NUT website at www.teachers.org.uk, apply equally to sixth form colleges. Where NUT representatives or members have any concerns about this area, they should consult the NUT guidance in conjunction with the Ofsted framework for inspection of FE institutions and if necessary seek NUT support.

SECTION 5

WORKLOAD AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance management

Performance management for teachers in sixth form colleges is carried out under the terms of the NJC's agreed performance management framework.

The NJC framework, NUT guidance on performance management in sixth form colleges and an NUT model performance management policy for sixth form colleges are available in the Sixth Form Colleges section of the NUT website at www.teachers.org.uk

Lesson observation

The NJC Professional Standards Manual and performance management framework set out the role of lesson observation in performance management and in applications for pay progression on the PSP and Management Ranges. The NJC Manual advises that each college should have an agreed protocol for lesson observation. NJC advice on lesson observation is set out in the NJC Manual and further NUT advice is set out in the NUT guidance on performance management in sixth form colleges referred to above.

The NUT wishes to prevent lesson observation becoming excessive, intrusive or inappropriate. The principles of the NUT's November

2006 guidance on classroom observation, available on the NUT website at www.teachers.org.uk, apply to teachers in sixth form colleges as they do to teachers in schools. NUT college representatives should seek to ensure that the limits and protections set out in the NJC and NUT guidance form part of the college's protocol on lesson observation. Where NUT representatives or members have concerns about lesson observation, they should consult the NJC and NUT guidance and if necessary seek NUT support.

Objective setting

Joint advice on setting and reviewing objectives is set out in the NJC performance management framework, while further NUT advice is set out in the NUT guidance on performance management in sixth form colleges referred to above. Where NUT representatives or members have any concerns about objective setting, they should consult the NJC and NUT guidance and if necessary seek NUT support.

SECTION 6 GROUP SIZES

All teachers are aware of the impact of large classes on their overall workload. The 2005 teacher union survey showed that the issue of group sizes was of increasing concern to teachers in almost three-quarters of colleges.

Support is available from the NUT where NUT college representatives and their NUT colleagues seek reductions in unacceptably large group sizes. Where such approaches are unsuccessful, industrial action will be considered by the NUT in appropriate cases.

The NUT's policy on class sizes in educational establishments includes an actionable limit of 20 upon class sizes in sixth form colleges. As with contact hours, however, the NUT will consider and advise on each situation according to the specific circumstances. The situation in colleges is somewhat different to schools in that it is likely

that many groups will reduce in size as the year progresses. Nevertheless, the NUT is clear that group sizes should not be set at unacceptably high levels at the beginning of the college year or maintained at such levels throughout the year. Many colleges set maximum as well as minimum group sizes at the start of the year. NUT representatives may wish to consider such an approach in their own colleges.

SECTION 7

TAKING MATTERS FORWARD

The checklist supplied with this guidance should be used to consider the position in the college, with full consultation among NUT members, and identify any particular problems to be resolved or improvements to be gained. It also gives advice to NUT college representatives on taking matters forward and on obtaining support from the NUT where necessary.

National Union of Teachers
February 2007

APPENDIX

NJC JOINT ADVICE TO SIXTH FORM COLLEGES “REDUCING THE BUREAUCRATIC BURDEN ON TEACHERS IN SIXTH FORM COLLEGES” (DECEMBER 1999)

Dear Principal,

Reducing the Bureaucratic Burden on Teachers in Sixth Form Colleges

The Committee for Teaching Staff has a continuing concern about the bureaucratic burdens upon teachers and has been discussing the implications for Sixth Form Colleges of the DfEE’s Circular 2/98 “Reducing the Bureaucratic Burdens on Teachers”.

The attached joint advice has now been agreed and refers to the sections of the DfEE’s Circular for schools which are equally applicable to Sixth Form Colleges.

Colleges are asked to consider this advice in consultation with their local union representatives.

Yours sincerely,

SUE WHITHAM
Employers’ Secretary

BARRY FAWCETT
Staff Side Secretary

REDUCING THE BUREAUCRATIC BURDEN ON TEACHERS IN SIXTH FORM COLLEGES

Both the Employer and Staff Sides of the Committee for Teaching Staff have raised from time to time the issue of the workload for teaching staff. Both Sides are aware of the inevitable trend that there has been to increase the workload of teaching staff and this has been an issue that has been kept under review.

For the last few years, Sixth Form Colleges have been trying to ensure that teachers can concentrate on their teaching duties and that appropriate administrative duties are the responsibility of support staff. The SFCEF has been running workshops identifying these developments and looking at the consequent changes in the role of support staff.

The DfEE responded in June of last year to concerns about the bureaucratic workload for schoolteachers by issuing DfEE Circular 2/98 "Reducing the Bureaucratic Burden on Teachers".

The Staff Side of the Teaching Committee referred this circular to the Employers who have been considering the appropriateness for Sixth Form Colleges of the advice provided.

It is, of course, up to each college how it organises the workload between teaching and support staff but, taking into account the developments that have been taking place in colleges, the Employers have agreed with the Staff Side that the key points of the DfEE's circular are equally applicable to Sixth Form Colleges. The paragraphs that we wish, therefore, to draw to colleges' attention are set out below and colleges are urged to consider the implications of the DfEE's advice on the management of staffing and workloads in their own colleges.

The first paragraph of the DfEE circular states:

1. *A key objective for the Government is to help teachers teach effectively and to ensure best use is made of their time. The Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett, has stated "cutting unnecessary burdens on teachers helps us to raise standards in schools, and that is our top priority".*

Under "Schools' Management and Administrative Systems" the paragraphs that could also be applicable in Sixth Form Colleges are as follows:

Meetings

6. *Well-run meetings are essential to the internal management and communications of a school. Schools need to have flexibility to determine the pattern and number of meetings. These are matters for sensible professional judgement. But schools do need to establish a pattern of meetings, which is fully justified.*
7. *All schools should regularly review the number and quality of their meetings, and should assess their existing practice against the following considerations*
 - *only hold meetings when they are justified and cancel unnecessary ones;*
 - *circulate agendas and papers in good time;*
 - *set time limits and stick to them;*
 - *ensure meetings are effectively chaired;*
 - *always set a clear purpose for a meeting;*
 - *encourage and take account of all points of view while guiding the meeting to definite conclusions;*
 - *communicate the conclusions to all with an interest;*
 - *ensure effective action is taken as a result.*

Written communications

9. *Headteachers should consider carefully whether all written communications with and between staff are necessary. A general review of working methods within the school may well suggest ways in which written communications can be made more effective. For example, the Working Group on Reducing the Bureaucratic Burden on Teachers found that some schools might benefit from reducing the number of memos and internal circulars and making more effective use of staff notice boards.*

Preparing documents

10. *Schools should review the length of all the documents which they prepare, whether for planning or administrative purposes. There can be no single guideline which applies to all the varied documents which schools need, but it is always helpful to ask whether particular papers can be condensed to a specified length. Keeping documents short is a valuable discipline for both the author and the readers, and encourages all concerned to concentrate on the essentials. Individual teachers should not be expected to draft unreasonably long contributions to documents. It is reasonable for teachers to expect concise model policies to be available prior to the writing or rewriting of policies. Schools themselves should be looking at the standards they set for the length and quality of the most common documents.*

Use of School resources

14. *The Coopers and Lybrand study for the Working Group identified a number of administrative tasks often carried out by teachers. They included collecting money, bulk photocopying, copy typing, standard letters, attendance analysis, copying out lists, preparing report sets, processing examination marks, administration of progression and acting as an IT technician. The study suggested that the administrative burden on teachers can be considerably reduced and the effectiveness of teaching increased, where appropriate administrative support is available in schools to enable these tasks to be carried out. The study went on to identify a number of areas where the increased use of IT would be a further help.¹*
15. *The availability of non-teaching staff and information technology varies between schools, and is bound to set a limit to what is possible immediately. The Secretary of State asks headteachers to consider further how to make the most effective use of the full range of resources available to the school, with the aim of allowing teachers to devote the maximum possible amount of time to raising the standards of achievement of their pupils.*

Colleges are asked to examine this common-sense approach to allocating the totality of work to their teaching or support staff. If any college wishes to discuss this further or wishes for clarification please contact the Joint Secretaries.

Committee for Teaching Staff
NJC for Sixth Form Colleges
December 1999

¹ The examples listed are not likely to be issues in Sixth Form Colleges but they illustrate the type of tasks to be considered and there might be some that are relevant in a college situation.

