

Work-based Learning Practitioners National Education Workforce Survey 2021 Analysis of open text comments



1. Workload

Overall themes from open text comments - workload

- reduced caseload;
- reduce the amount of administrative duties;
- employ extra staff;
- further consideration of non-teaching workload.

Total number of responses: 582

Total number of open text responses: 125

In response to:

Question 5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you are able to effectively manage your existing workload within your contracted working hours?

Analysis of comments relating to the main workload themes:

1.1 Reduced caseload (55 comments)

- Increased caseload is unmanageable under current working conditions.

Examples

Cap caseloads, reduce caseloads according to other roles such as IQA, mentoring etc.

Smaller caseload to help maintain quality and more focused learner support.

1.2 Reduce the amount of administrative duties (45 comments)

- Administrative duties have increased during the pandemic i.e. considerably more emails and meetings to deal with.
- Administrative support has decreased.

Examples

Looking at working practices which generate less administration.

To take away the large administration put on tutors and given to the administration support team allowing tutors to focus on their prime goal to teach, support and develop a learner needs.

1.3 Employ extra staff (19 comments)

- There is a lack of qualified staff – which has increased the workload of the remaining qualified staff.
- Types of staff requested include assessors, tutors and administrative support.

Examples

More staff to be able to manage caseloads and skills.

Employ more qualified assessors, difficult within engineering due to the salary.

1.4 Further consideration of non-teaching workload (13 comments)

- Lack of clarity regarding the specific duties of each role.
- Recognition of how long certain duties take so that it can be reflected in the working hours.

Examples

A clear distinction on roles and expectations. Set time to develop teaching and learning resources and to undertake professional development tasks and preparation.

To only do the role I am employed for, as I am paid as an assessor but am expected to also be an IQA in my assessor role with no extra pay. Stop putting learner allocations up.

2. Workload - Delivering blended / remote learning

Overall themes from open text comments - delivering blended / remote learning

Additional work:

- challenges of online/blended learning delivery and resource development;
- administration requirements and / or paperwork;
- ICT - design and reliability of IT systems;
- learners requiring additional support (one-to-one/pastoral/welfare);
- high learner caseloads;
- challenges of introducing new qualifications and course/assessment changes;
- pressures of performance targets;
- impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

Practical suggestions for improvement:

- reduce paperwork and streamline reporting systems;
- reduce assessor caseload to:
 - free up time for planning, marking, assessing and support;
 - recognise time required for additional roles such as IQA and mentoring new members of staff;
 - recognise the differences in travel time for different individuals (depending on whether they deal with local employers or have to travel further afield);
- dedicated staff to deal with admin, learner enrolment, marketing, preparing resources and schedules;

Total number of responses: 582

Total number of open text responses: 222

Total practical suggestions for improvement provided: 30

In response to:

Question 9. If your workload has increased slightly or significantly, please explain what the additional work has been and any practical suggestions on how this could be improved.

Analysis of comments relating to the remote / blended learning themes:

2.1 Challenges of online/blended learning delivery and resource development (89 comments)

- Preparing or converting resources for online use.
- Difficulty getting learners to engage digitally.
- Delivering practical courses online is very limited in scope.

Examples

Creating digital content a lot of what I taught was practical.

Significantly increased due to developing new materials to deliver blended learning.

2.2 Administration requirements and / or paperwork (65 comments)

- Filling out and receiving forms takes much longer digitally, i.e. risk assessments, time logging, contact logs.
- More time spent writing reviews and answering queries.
- Lack of face-to-face contact has led to more emails and video meetings.

Examples

More emailing and phone calls as opposed to face to face conversations at site. Administrative duties are increasing especially "red tape" admin. Improve by looking at admin tasks

There has been more administrative paperwork and logging required to ensure that our funders can see that we're still providing service. Time Logging, weekly report per trainee, contact logs etc.

2.3 ICT - design and reliability of IT systems (44 comments)

- IT infrastructure and guidance was inadequate when blended learning began.
- Funding isn't there to provide technology for learners who don't have access to it – creates inequality.

Examples

A lot of learners do not have access to computers/laptops etc, don't have the time in thesector as it's widely affected, some do not know how to use technology

Delivery virtually has not been as effective for me due to the lack of IT collaboration with my major client

2.4 Learners requiring additional support (one-to-one/pastoral/welfare) (28 comments)

- More support and communication is required due to lack of engagement and mental toll of the pandemic.
- Support is often provided outside working hours to avoid clash with learners' working hours.

Examples

Spent more time chasing learners for work and to help them engage. Many of who are front line workers and have children at home during lockdown times. Many learners out of funding and trying to prioritise those so more meetings with them on a one to one basis rather than cohort delivery.

Apprentices are working on their usual day in college so progress has reduced dramatically and if they do log in and do any work its in the evenings and weekends and most of them need my advice and assistance with computers and the work required - and my hours of work are 8.30 to 5.00

2.5 High learner caseloads (21 comments)

- 'Carry over' of learners from previous years due to the pandemic.
- The removal of travel time has encouraged higher caseloads.

Examples

Increase case load of learners due to not having to travel as much anymore

Working with learners that have past end date due to non completion as a direct impact of Covid-19, as these learners are out of funding they are not counted on my live learner list.

2.6 Challenges of introducing new qualifications and course/assessment changes (12 comments)

- Transition to digital work/assessment has led to delays due to poor IT literacy or communication.
- The introduction of new qualifications and assessor training has also impacted on workload.

Examples

The introduction of new qualifications has increased my work load hugely. Added together with developing assessor training and implementation of rules on mitigation this has created some mammoth tasks.

Having to adapt to deliver, train and assess online.

2.7 Pressures of performance targets (9 comments)

- Some registrants feel that employers' expectations are unrealistic and do not factor in the increased workload introduced in response to the pandemic.

Examples

Carrying out all facets of my work, plus delivering to unrealistic workloads and expectations, increases your time working in excess of paid hours.

My caseload has increased and expectations have risen from my organisation.

2.8 Impact of COVID-19 pandemic (9 comments)

- The pandemic has impacted on registrants' lives in numerous ways, such as:
 - Lack of work/life balance.
 - Having to cover for colleagues who are absent due to the virus.
 - Harder to contact and chase down learners.

Examples

Because of the pandemic, 3 colleagues have left, therefore meaning I've had to take on some of their caseload.

Just not practical with a home/work balance. I have children at home to teach and still have huge workload to manage and targets to meet.

Analysis of comments relating to practical suggestions on how blended/remote learning can be improved:

2.9 Reduce paperwork and streamline reporting systems (16 comments)

- Remove the extra paperwork introduced during the pandemic.
- Fewer meetings.
- Dedicated time for professional learning and to develop resources.

Examples

As remote reviews are carried out expected to see more learners which in affect means more assessments, marking and paperwork to complete. Cut the increase back.

The increase in administration task and surveys is unnecessary taking more of my time with the learners, if this was reduced the time could be redirected to the learners.

2.10 Reduce assessor caseload (7 comments)

- Free up time for planning, marking, assessing and support.
- Recognise time required for additional roles such as IQA and mentoring new members of staff.
- Recognise the differences in travel time for different individuals (depending on whether they deal with local employers or have to travel further afield).

Examples

The target caseload (40) for me is way too high for the qualifications I deliver. A big reduction would help be deliver a much higher QOS and assessment standard.

Learning the new qualification and implementing the IQA process has put on extra caseload - possibility of lowering caseloads for dual roles.

2.11 Dedicated staff to deal with admin, learner enrolment, marketing, preparing resources and schedules (3 comments)

- Increased administration and conversion of resources is taking up too much time and is having a knock-on effect on learners.

Examples

More support needed for assessors, having to convert everything digitally. Paper based portfolios and IQA has been a nightmare.

Administration has increased - More administration needs to move to the administration team who need to have more hands on approach with contacting learners to gather information from them and in put it to the system and not rely on tutors to do this which takes the tutors away from their teaching and development. Undertaking more than one role due to shortage of staff - Increase in staff

3. Professional learning

Overall themes from open text comments professional learning

- ICT skills including digital/blended learning;
- industry related professional learning;
- mental health and wellbeing;
- improving Welsh language skills;
- leadership and management.

Total responses: 582

Total open text responses: 323

In response to:

Question 18. In which areas would you welcome further development to help you be a more effective education professional? (please list up to three areas)

Analysis of comments relating to the main professional learning themes:

3.1 ICT skills including digital/blended learning (99 comments)

Examples

More digital delivery / learning training.

Further use of IT to make sure I am supporting others to the best of my ability.

Further digital learning.

Get more insight what additional tools are available to deliver efficient online learning, additional platforms / websites etc.

3.2 Industry related professional learning (82 comments)

Examples

I am quite happy that I am up to date as I am still involved in qualification development and maintain close contact / links to industry.

Industry practice.

Sector specific training.

Teaching and learning skills and qualifications.

More support to complete my TAQA training, CPD / training on new developments.

3.3 Mental health and wellbeing (30 comments)

Examples

Literacy support to learners, Dyslexia support.

Supporting mental health amongst learners.

I feel like I have been able to support learners I work with and if I have had issues, I have spoken to others to support me.

Keeping learners motivated.

I would like to attend a counselling course so I can further support my learners.

3.4 Improving Welsh language skills (24 comments)

Examples

Welsh to a higher level.

Training to develop my Welsh language.

Skills Circle of local employers, where feedback could be used to encourage more Welsh engagement within the community.

Continuing Welsh curriculum.

3.5 Leadership and management (23 comments)

Examples

Management experience.

Management and leadership skills.

Specific Leadership training for the WBL sector.

Webinars on specific areas such as leadership.

I have recently been promoted so my employer has offered me a management course and I think that this will be very helpful.