

Variation of Duties: Provision of cover and associated costs

Context: variation of duties

1. The scheme for [variation of duties](#) is intended to meet the needs of academic staff holding joint appointments (i.e. Associate Professorships in the University held in conjunction with College Tutorial Fellowships) in order to support their career development as optimally as possible while also maintaining proper teaching provision, safeguarding both university and college interests, and being capable of providing any relevant external bodies with confidence as to the arrangements for academic duties at Oxford.
2. The scheme provides for periods normally of up to three years 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.
3. 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 and also emphasises the importance of ensuring proper provision for replacement teaching.
4. This paper sets out the new framework that has been agreed for making good any reduction in duties under the scheme for Variation of Duties (with an emphasis on replacing teaching and related duties). The arrangements for such cover and any associated costs should be agreed by all parties before the variation itself can be agreed.

The Senior Tutors' Register of Approved Payments

5. The rates for use when one employer (University or College) needs to reimburse the other in respect of the cost of replacement teaching have been agreed by the University and Colleges and are published by the Conference of Colleges and updated from time-to-time (see the [Senior Tutors' Committee Register of Approved](#)). The principles underlying the design of the new rates to be applied in the case of teaching buy-outs agreed from Michaelmas Term 2015 are set out below.
6. Any arrangements for teaching buy-outs to which commitments were made under the system in use prior to MT 2015 (using the 'old buy-out rates') will run throughout their duration according to the old rates with allowance for nationally agreed cost-of-living salary increases. The old rates, adjusted for cost-of-living increases, will continue to be published in the [Senior Tutors' Register of Approved Payments](#).

Principles for provision of cover and its costing

7. In order to minimise the financial constraints on the application of the scheme, every effort should be made to make optimal use of teaching capacity that is already available under contract at no (or minimal) extra cost ("provision in kind"). This will involve some effort on the part of departments, faculties and colleges to discover available resource suitably matched to the teaching need amongst staff such as APNTFs, DLs, senior research staff, and externally funded research fellows who have teaching obligations – a change in practice which, it is accepted, will take time to embed.

8. Where it is necessary to employ replacement teachers, the buy-out rates are intended to cover fairly all the major additional costs incurred whilst at the same time aiming for relative simplicity (for example, by using an approach based on an estimate of typical costs). To improve transparency in buy-outs of college teaching, there will be three rates (instead of the two that applied previously):

- a basic capitation rate;
- a rate to cover the employment of a retained lecturer;
- a rate to cover the employment of a stipendiary lecturer.

How the teaching is to be replaced and the appropriate buy-out rate will be agreed in advance. Whilst the less expensive routes are likely to be most appropriate when the amount of teaching to be covered is low and the duration of the variation short, the rate should be chosen to meet the particular needs in each case. Any of the three rates can be used regardless of the type of post (e.g. 'APTF-U', formerly 'ULTF'; or 'APTF-C', formerly 'CUF') whose duties are to be replaced.

The highest rate (that for employing a stipendiary lecturer) has been substantially increased to reflect the costs. Less expensive options for providing adequate cover should be investigated before opting to use this rate, but it is accepted that there will be cases where appointing a stipendiary lecturer will be essential to cover teaching and other related tutorial duties adequately.

9. In setting the level of seniority to be sought in a replacement teacher, either through provision in kind or through buying in a teacher, consideration will need to be given to any requirement to sustain tutorial exchange arrangements between colleges or through departmental or faculty-based schemes.

10. The expectations undergraduates have that they will receive tutorial teaching in College should be borne in mind (though these expectations will vary somewhat between disciplines). Colleges are encouraged to find ways of accommodating tutorials given by replacement teachers without incurring additional costs for teaching rooms. Where additional cost is unavoidable, it should be negotiated with the University as part of the variation package (see para. 20).

11. In the case of buy-outs of university teaching, new rates simply relating to tutorial capitation rates will be used to cover lectures, seminars, classes, and practical demonstrating in the sciences in order better to reflect the costs incurred. In addition, the possibility of a higher rate has been introduced for use when a fixed-term appointment is needed to make up for university duties extending beyond the delivery of teaching. (This will rarely arise, and the rate has been left open to negotiation in the context of a couple of examples.)

12. In the case of the most extensive variations, the opportunity might arise to provide replacement duties through appointing a Career Development Fellow (CDF). This would be much more expensive than any alternative, but it would bring additional benefits to both University and College as well as providing a valuable opportunity for the CDF. This would need significant additional funding, and it might be appropriate to investigate the possibility of cost-sharing between University and College. Such arrangements will necessarily be ad hoc, but this approach is commended for consideration where it is appropriate and affordable.

13. The [Record of Agreement for Variation of Duties](#), which is to be deposited in each case with the Division and the College, will be used to monitor the balance of approaches

employed for the provision of replacement teaching, in particular for quality control and to inform all parties as to the affordability of the new arrangements as the new scheme beds in. Feedback collected at the end of each period of variation should be used also to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme for the staff involved in order to check the extent to which the full advantage intended was actually achieved. The Scheme for the Variation of Duties includes a small oversight group to undertake this monitoring and to advise on the use of the scheme. The scheme may be modified in the light of experience.

Detail

Provision of replacement teaching to Colleges

N.b. The rates for financial reimbursement in connection with Variation of Duties are published in the Senior Tutors' Register of Approved Payments (see paras. 5 and 6 above).

14. Teaching supplied as provision in kind

This possibility should be the first to be explored.

It may be possible to find teaching from experienced, well-qualified staff employed by the University with an obligation to teach: such teaching could be made available to a College without further expense falling to the department or faculty. The kinds of staff who might be involved include APNTFs, senior research staff, other researchers, departmental lecturers, and certain kinds of research fellow. (Where there is a broader university need justifying additional expense, it might be appropriate for the University to appoint a departmental lecturer and involve the College(s) in the appointment.)

Where the college duties to be covered extend beyond teaching alone and include the broader tutorial duties that might otherwise have necessitated the use of a stipendiary lecturer, then the department/faculty would reimburse the College for modest additional costs as appropriate. Agreed costs under this heading are a tutorial responsibility allowance, meals, and an academic allowance. In such cases, care will be needed in the case of the use of a college Fellow (such as an 'APNTF') for any but the shortest arrangements to avoid issues of lack of parity of total emoluments with Tutorial Fellows within the College (though it can be noted that the maximum duty being replaced is 50% of full tutorial duties).

15. Provision of a Director of Studies

In some cases, tutorial duties other than teaching itself might be provided by appointing a Director of Studies, which could involve similar additional costs to those in the preceding paragraph. This provision acknowledges that some applicants for variation of duties might wish to continue teaching but to be relieved of other administrative and pastoral roles in College. While this option represents a radical departure from the expectation at Oxford, it is included as a possibility which might be considered if there were a suitable person, perhaps already providing teaching in the College, who was willing and able to take on the role of general oversight: in such a case, this option could be an attractive route to maximise the delivery of teaching by the Tutorial Fellow.

16. Teaching at tutorial capitation rates: Rate A

For simplicity, one rate will be used, that for teaching paired tutorials, and the amount set to cover the number of contact hours needed.

17. Use of a retained lecturer: Rate B

For simplicity, this rate is the capitation rate, Rate A, multiplied by 1.5. This is intended to address the wide variety of practices in respect of retained lecturers across the Colleges.

Rate B should be used only where it is needed to obtain a teacher of sufficient expertise or to secure the availability of a teacher over the desired period.

18. Use of a stipendiary lecturer: Rate C

This is the most expensive of the three rates and should be used only if no suitable alternative can be found (see para. 7). The duties to be covered would probably include most of the following: tutorials, setting and marking collections, arranging out-of-college tuition, guidance of students, oversight of their academic progress in the long-term, pastoral oversight, attendance at Tutors' committees, open-day and access work, admissions selection.

The rate will comprise:

- a salary component (based on the Stipendiary Lecturer scale: Grade 5.3 – 5.5) with on-costs;
- a pro rata meal allowance;
- a pro rata academic allowance (as an upper limit for reimbursement against expenditure);
- if unavoidable, a contribution towards the cost of a teaching room.

19. Tapering the introduction of the new rate for use with stipendiary lecturers

It has been agreed that the new higher costs applying in the case of stipendiary lecturers will be phased in. This will encourage the exploration of less expensive alternatives whilst giving colleges an immediate uplift in cost-recovery and an agreed timetable for reaching full cost-recovery. It will cushion the departments and faculties to some extent from the increased costs that might arise should it take a while to establish routine use of the full range of less expensive options for replacement teaching.

The phasing will be achieved by a straight-line taper using an annually rising multiplier (see the table below) to be applied each year to the full Rate C.

The multiplier will rise each year according to the following schedule, and the multiplier for the year should be applied to all variations in process under the scheme. The 100% level is reached in 2018.

Scheme for tapering in Rate C

Year	Multiplier
2015-16	0.78
2016-17	0.85
2017-18	0.925
2018-19	1.0

20. Cost of a college teaching room (in the case of Rates B or C)

In the case of either a retained or a stipendiary lecturer, if a cost-free solution cannot be arranged to provide suitable teaching space in a college, there will be an additional cost to be agreed based on the opportunity cost after taking full account of how that room might be shared by a number of lecturers

Buy-out arrangements in respect of university duties

21. For replacing lecturing and demonstrating, the rate will be based on Rate A (the capitation rate for tutorial teaching) with the following equivalencies:

- Lectures, seminars or classes without marking:
1 lecture or seminar = 4 tutorials

A higher rate for classes may be negotiated to take account of any marking load.

- Demonstrating in a practical class without organisational responsibility:
1 hour = 1 tutorial
- Demonstrating in a practical class with responsibility for organising the class:
1 hour = 2 tutorials

Where the buy-out of university duties is (or approaches) 50%, it may be necessary to replace more than just teaching (e.g. research support and organisational/administrative duties). If this requires the use of a part-time fixed-term DL-type appointment, then it will be necessary to cover the related costs, and these should be agreed in each specific case.

The following is intended as a guide to the kinds of consideration that will be pertinent in the case of such major buy-outs and to indicate the levels of cost that could be identified. Assume that it is decided to employ a DL to replace the University duties of a joint appointment holder, then it can be argued that the salary cost relating to the university side of those duties would not exceed 40% of the costs of a full-time DL when replacing an APTF-C, or 84% when replacing an APTF-U. The costs for replacing 50% of the postholder's duties would then be 20% or 42%, respectively of the DL's salary. To these costs, using 2014-15 rates, there is a further £1k to add in the case of an APTF-C to cover the university infra-structure charge, or £2k in the case of an APTF-U. For 2014-15, this model gives a cost of £9.4 – 10.4k for employing someone to cover half the university duties of an APTF-C (according to whether an appointment is made at Grade 7.5 or 8.1). The equivalent cost for covering half the university duties of an APTF-U is £19.4k - £21.6k.