

Academic Workload Models are not what you think: Some surprising early benchmarking outcomes

September, 2015

Liz Baré Stijn Dekeyser



The accidental history of academic workload management

- Rare to find allocation of duties in a job defined by a model or industrial regulation
- In other professions work is allocated based on
 - Skill and resource availability
 - job descriptions
 - outputs
 - defined projects
 - routine/history



Industrialisation of workload management

- Workload management processes used to allocate teaching
- Perceptions of overwork and stress lead to introduction of generic workload management clauses to EBAs in 1990s
- Initially framework approach
 - Definition of what constitutes academic work
 - Teaching, research and service (40/40/20)
 - Emphasis on fairness and transparency
 - Workload models determined at departmental/school level
 - References to OHS, work life balance
 - Grievance or review process
 - Required to take into account hidden factors, eg travel times between campuses, late finishing etc.
 - Take into account stage of academic career

In the last 20 years most universities have agreed to regulate

- Agreement on mandated formal model (increasingly one size fits all)
- Minimum allowance for research time irrespective of duties required
- Sliding scale of time allocation to teaching (20% to 80%) to reflect teaching-specialisation appointments
- Upper limit on number of hours worked in a year (corresponding to a 37.5 hour week)
- Specific limits on when work can be undertaken, and proximity of tasks
- Travel time counted as work
- Mandated attendance at the workplace
- Coefficients for use in models specified eg. Allocation for marking, construction of points/values in the model

HR professional involvement?

- Workload models seen as academic matters
- Models developed at Faculty/Department level
- HR may not always be involved in negotiating detail or constructing models
- Forgotten the Second Tier agreements



But workload models are becoming a management and productivity tool

- Single system for whole university allows modelling and consideration of resource allocation
- Links to performance management
- Promotion to take into account workload allocation
- Time allocation based on quality of output, specifically research
- Use of models to incentivate performance/activities
- New flexible forms of academic appointment to allow for greater time allocation to teaching

Workload management research

Who we are

- Stijn Dekeyser (USQ)
- Richard Watson (USQ)
- Peter Bentley (LHM)
- Liz Baré (LHM)
- Leo Goedegebuure (LHM)

What we are doing

- How universities are constructing and using workload models
- Development of a data base of workload management models

- **Survey 2013 (TEMC 2015)**
- **100 surveyed (50 Deans), 34 responses**
 - Most models use individually variable proportions for teaching, research and service allocations
 - Teaching allocations use task-based allocations (either estimated hours or points)
 - Models are mostly compliant with enterprise agreements
 - Varying perceptions of generosity
 - Systems are mostly transparent
 - Most systems are spreadsheet-based

2014- 2015 research project

Do different workload models yield the same outcome for the same work?

Create an inventory of Academic Workload Models (using USQ's WAMS)

- Analyse and compare models quantitatively
- Analyse the use of models qualitatively

Comparative study of allocation of *teaching hours* in each model:

- 19 models, from 9 institutions (named A to I)
- 3 models are institution-wide
- 7 are from science and/or engineering
- 5 are from social science / humanities / education
- 4 from other disciplines (e.g. art)
- Good spread of types of institutions: Go8, ATN, IRU, RUN

Methodology: tested and validated

We developed three 'dummy' courses (units / subjects)

Course 1 – TST1000 [80 students (20 EFTSL)]

- 1st year, undergraduate,
- 2 hours of lectures/week for 13 weeks
- Each student 2 hrs of prac/week;
- max 20 students per prac, hence 4 groups
- 3 assignments and 1 exam
- No extra development (existing material), but 1st offer of year
- Staff teaching the course had done so before

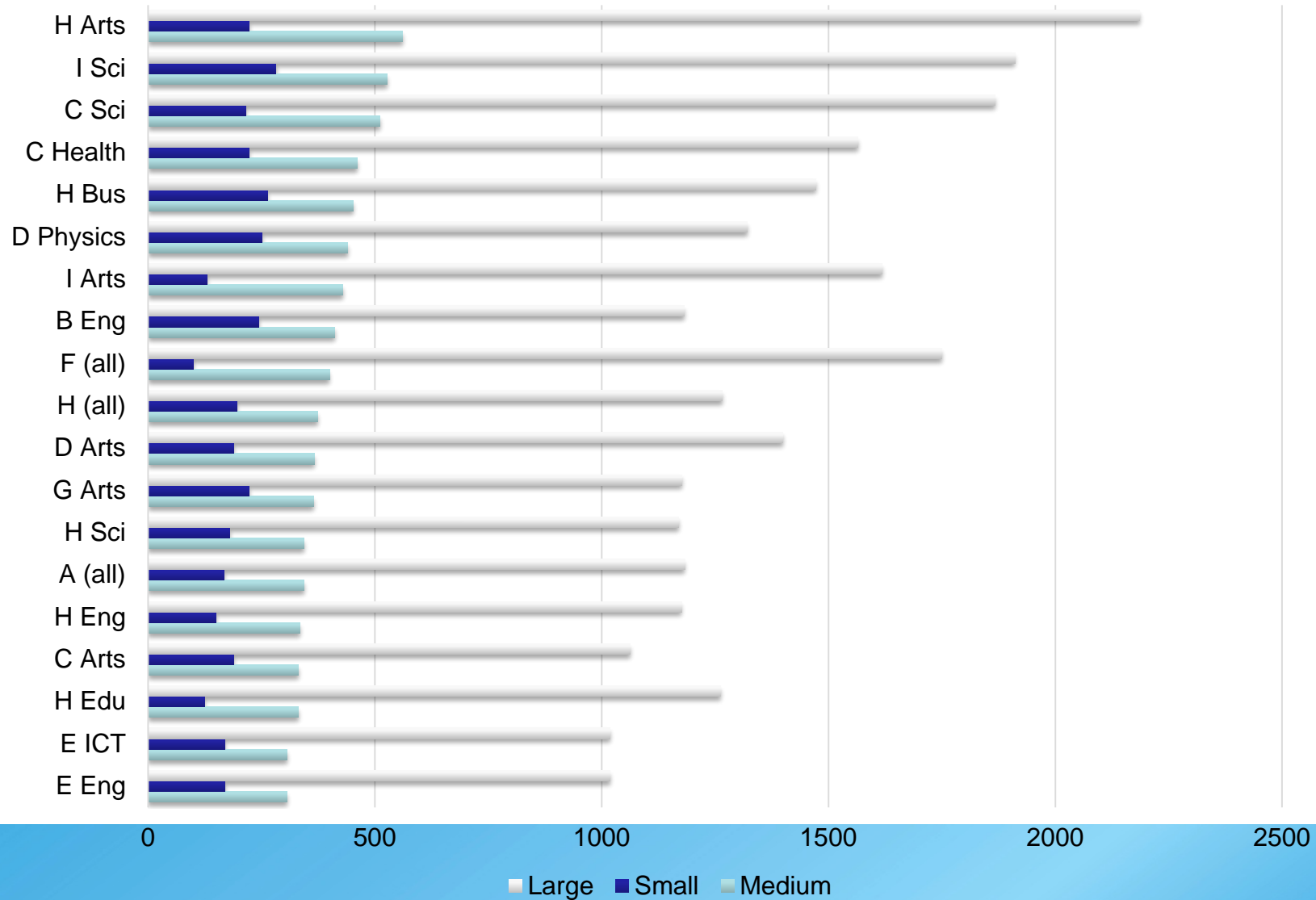
Course 2 – TST1001 [20 students (5 EFTSL)]

- One prac group only, rest is the same

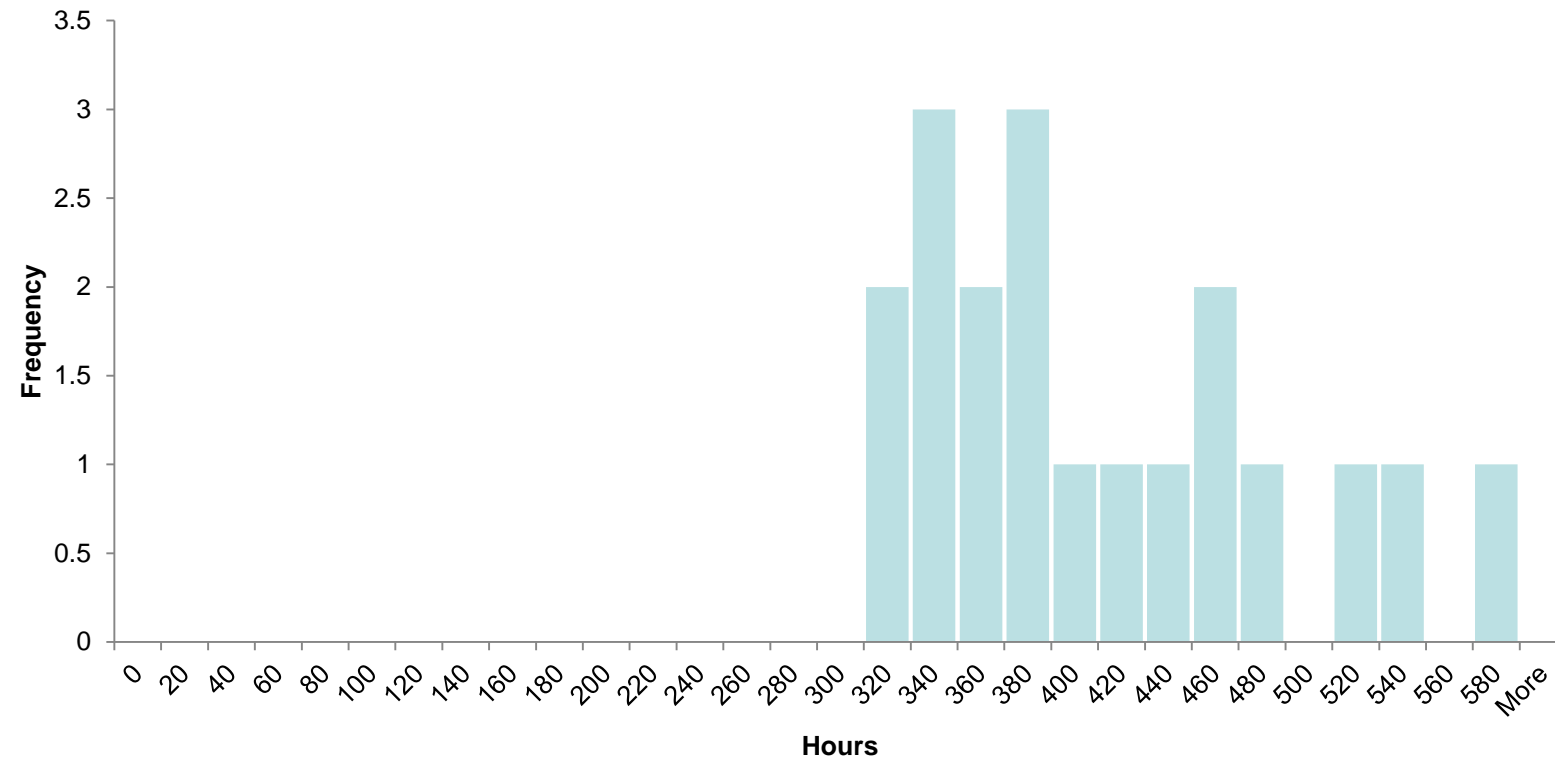
Course 3 – TST1002 [350 students (87.5 EFTSL)]

- Many prac groups, rest is the same

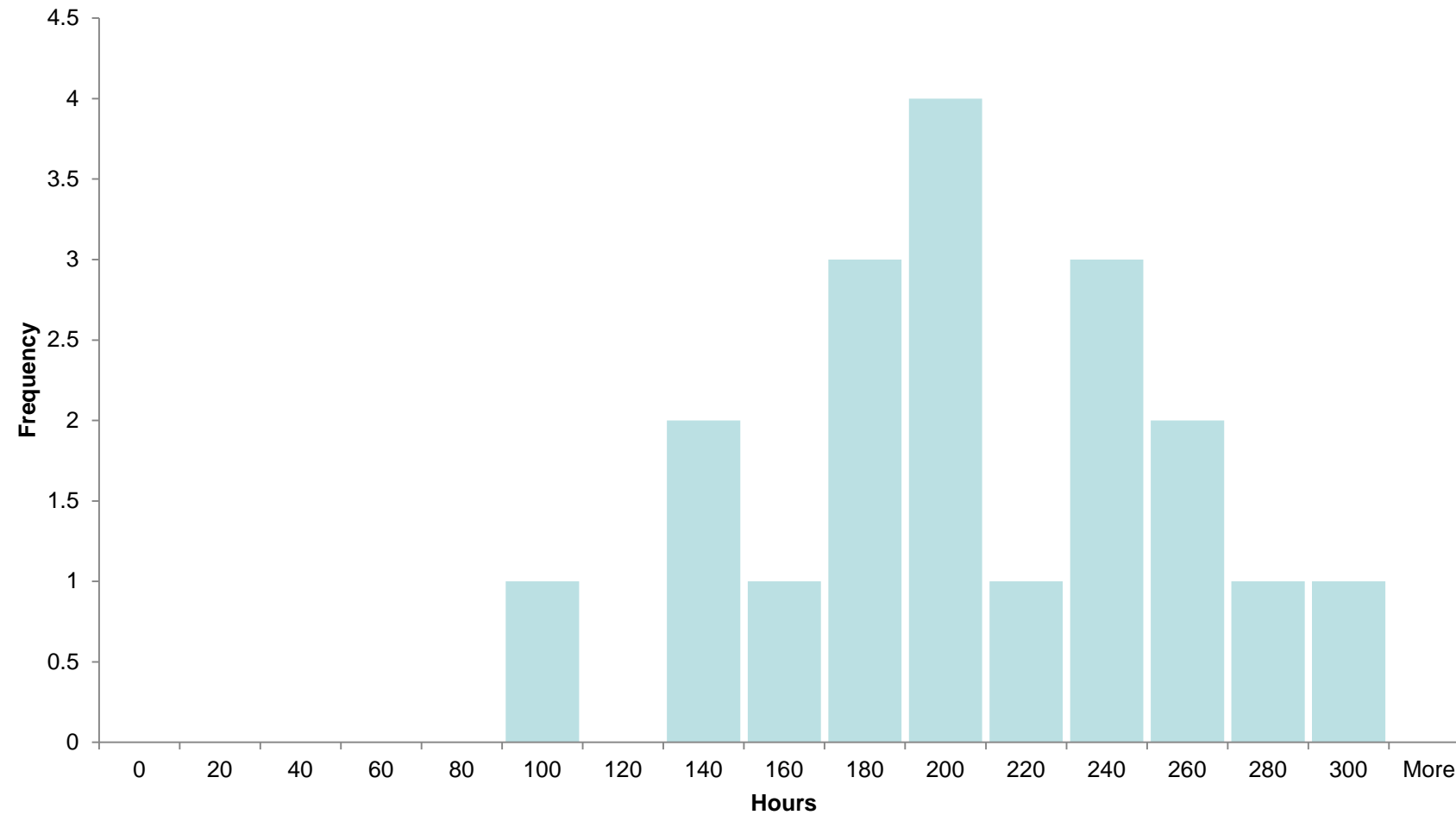
Cost of 3 dummy courses for 19 models



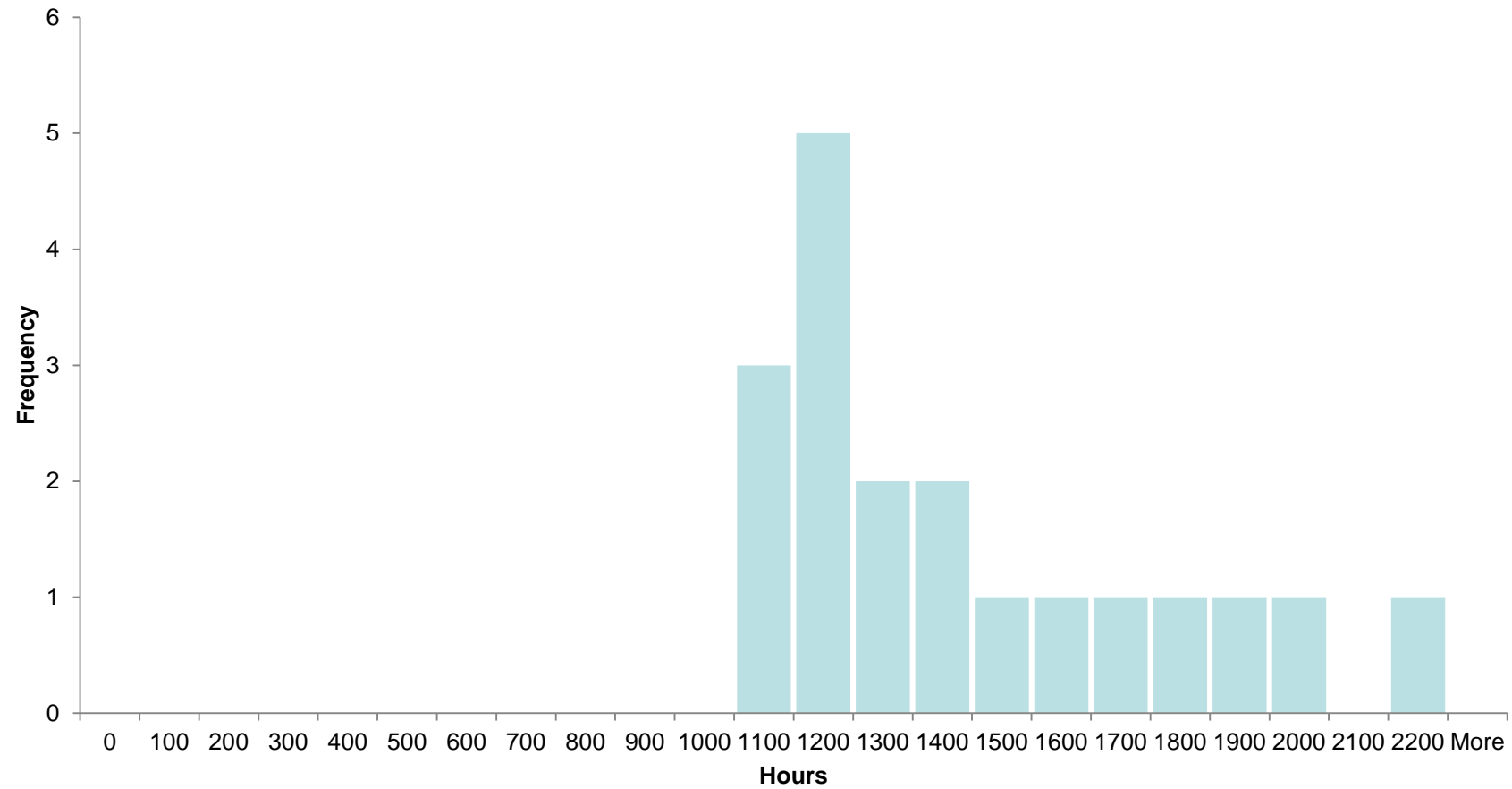
Histogram – Medium Course



Histogram – Small Course



Histogram – Large Course



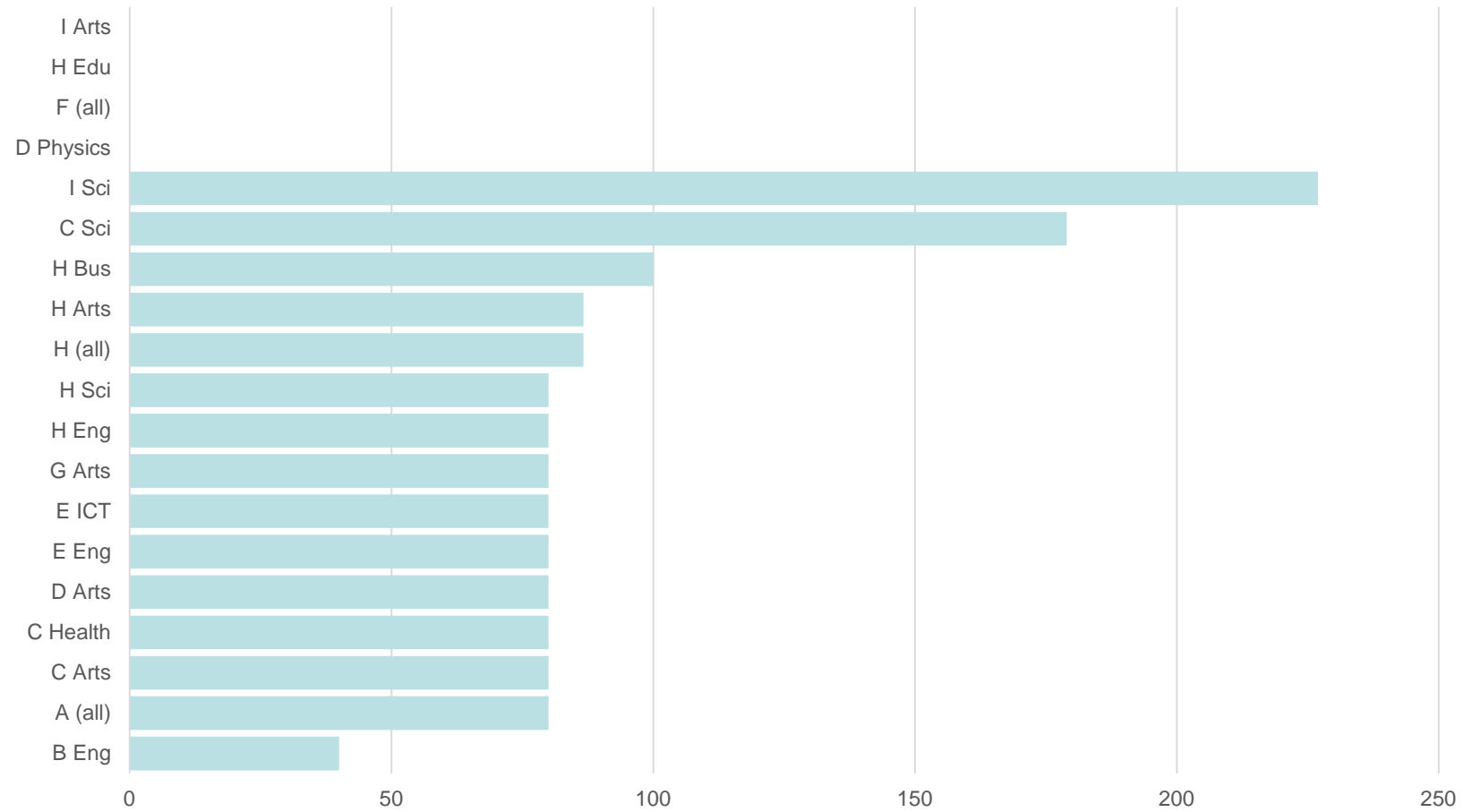
Discussion

YOUR VIEWS ON THESE OUTCOMES

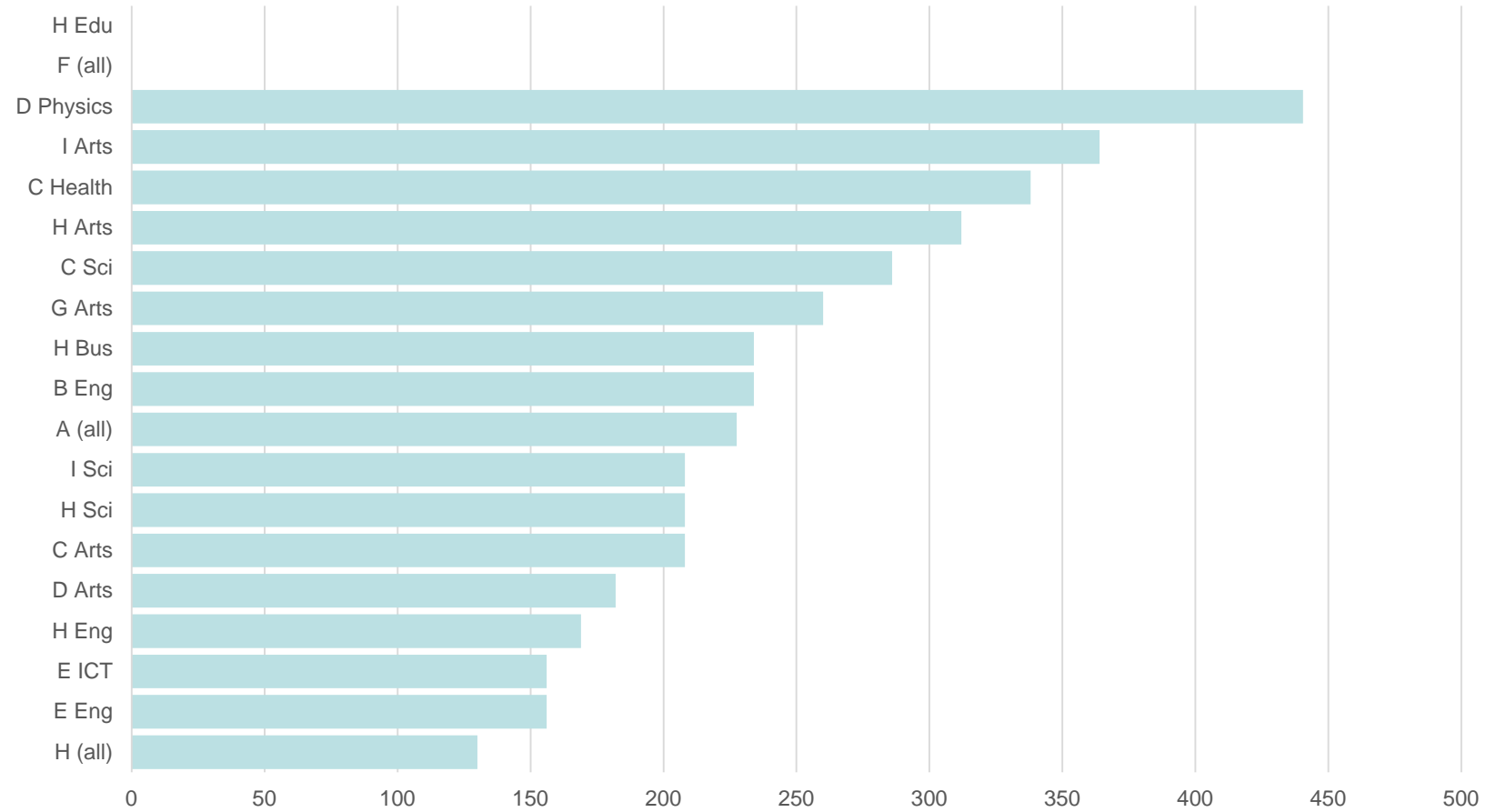
Contributing parameters

Model	Assessment	Block	Consultation	Development	F2F contact	Leadership	Non-F2F
A (all)	80				227.5	36	
B Eng	40		13.328		234	63.328	60
C Arts	80		24		208	19.6	
C Health	80				338	43	
C Sci	179				286	46	
D Arts	80			91	182	13	
D Physics					440.44		
E Eng	80			26	156	45	
E ICT	80			26	156	45	
F (all)		400					
G Arts	80				260	24.8	
H (all)	86.664		48.336	78	130	30.328	
H Arts	86.664				312	6.5	156
H Bus	100		40	10	234	68	
H Edu		264				67	
H Eng	80		40		169	45	
H Sci	80		27.2	8	208	20.6664	
I Arts					364	65	
I Sci	227		12.8	52	208	27.5	

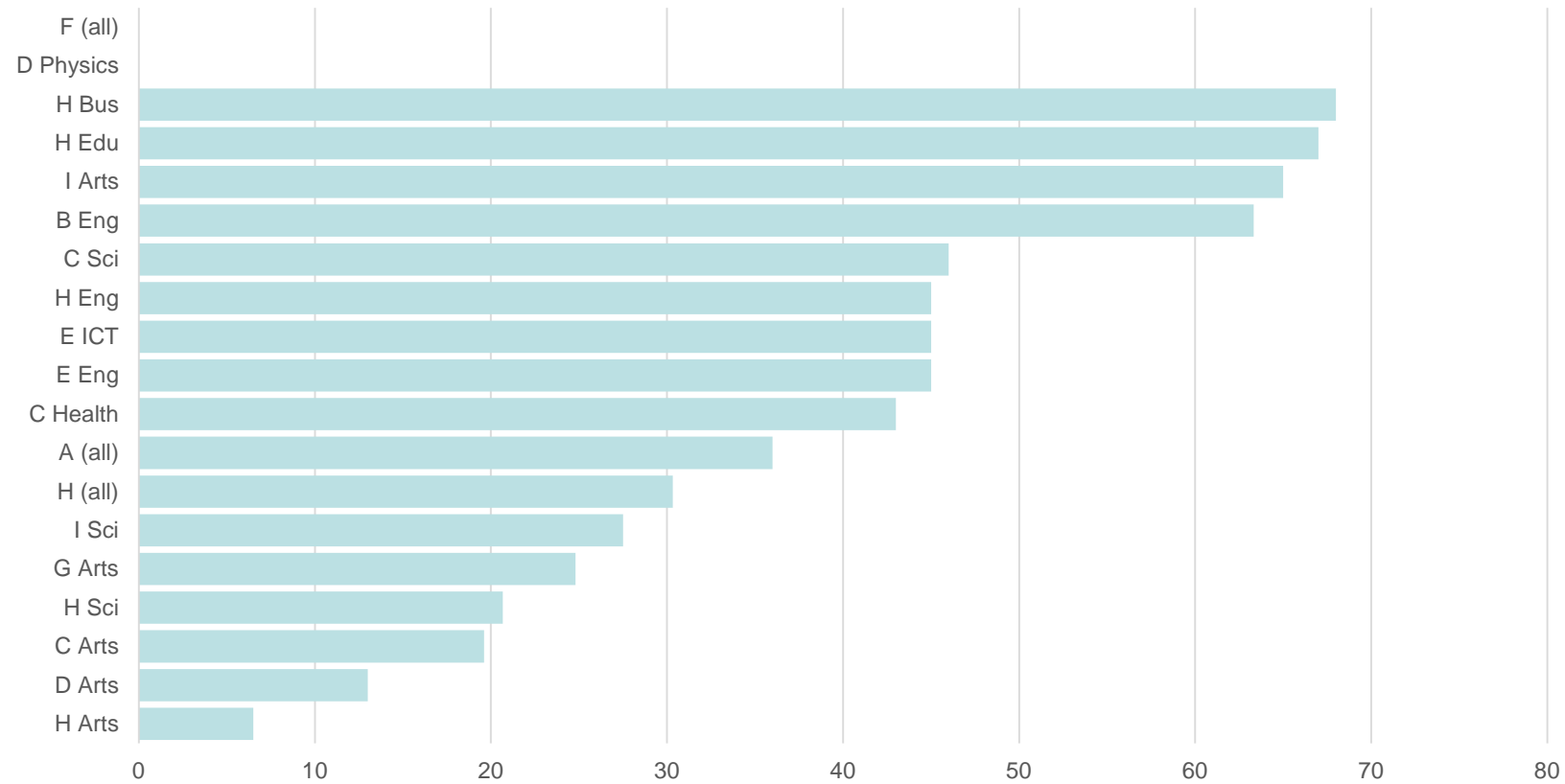
Assessment Hours



F2F contact (lectures, tutorials)



Course Leadership hours



Research next steps

- **Workload models are an evolving story**
- **Workload models do not measure productivity, but are an agreed formula for allocating work.**
- **May be no relationship between time allocation and time taken to do the tasks**
- **More information is needed**
 - **Time allocations may be based on custom and practice not the time it takes to do the work**
 - **Why 40/40/20 split**
 - **Are there measures of what is a reasonable time for a competent academic to undertake a task**
 - **Impact of online/blended learning**
 - **Impact of research workloads**
- **Impact on individuals**
- **Importance of ensuring broad congruence of workload models with other HR/Management systems.**
- **Benchmarking between institutions.**

And for HR practitioners



- **NTEU**

Increased regulation in EBA

Maximum Teaching hours

Links to casual campaigns

- **HR needs**

Better understanding of impact of workload models on individuals and institutions

Importance of the alignment of reward systems

Look at the longer term implications of restrictive work practices

Importance of integration with other management systems.

Better systems to collect data

QUESTIONS DISCUSSION