



YLL's membership survey 2019



Conclusions: Improvements needed in working conditions, work planning and salary issues

THE SURVEY reveals the views of YLL's members on salaries, work loads and well-being at work. What is positive is that more than 70% of the members who responded enjoy their work, are satisfied with their own work, develop in their work and feel that their competence is getting stronger. There is, however, a lot that needs to be developed and improved in working conditions, work planning and salary issues. This becomes clear from the responses.

Salaries in teaching-focused jobs have not developed as hoped. The most common requirement levels of the respondents are 5 and 6. University lecturers are at requirement level 7. The responses clearly illustrate that the work requirement level and the salary do not correspond with one another. Universities do not sufficiently recognise teaching performance or changes in the requirement level of teaching work through the salary system. Based on background information, it seems that experience and training have a slight impact on the salary, but based on the responses, the experience of this is different. Close to 80% of all respondents feel that it is not possible to advance at universities by excelling in teaching tasks.

Based on the Finnish Education Employers' (FEE) salary development study, it is clear that the most used requirement levels for teaching and research staff are 5 and 6. According to statistics, 43.5% of the teaching and research staff are placed at these levels. Requirement levels 7 and 8 are used very little, just 9.3% and 5.1% of the teaching and research staff are placed at these levels. More than 50% of the personnel are at three requirement levels (5–7), in which the task-specific salary falls between EUR 2,935.55 and EUR 3,946.50 (1 April 2019). The pay bracket between the three requirement levels is thus just EUR 1,010. A similar comparison of, for example, requirement levels 8–11, in which 14% of the teaching and research staff are placed according to statistics, shows that the task-specific salary falls between EUR 4,771.69 and EUR 7,031.37 and the pay bracket is a little over EUR 2,260. If requirement level 8 could be used more often in addition to requirement level 7, the pay bracket would grow to EUR 1,700.

The significance of training will inevitably increase. That is why strengthening the personnel's competence and pedagogy has to be brought to the fore at universities in a new way. Teaching merits must be taken into account more systematically and equally alongside research merits.

Work volumes have increased and work has become fragmented. Compared to previous surveys, it seems that work is becoming more fragmented and university community work and other work make up a larger share of total working hours. This other work now makes up a quarter of all work. These tasks are managed on top of teaching and

research tasks as respondents felt that the possibility to impact the volume of administrative tasks and other work was the weakest. The volume of teaching work is not falling, but in light of the survey responses, teaching work appears to be decreasing as a share of the total work volume.

Also research makes up a smaller share of the total working hours. Only one third had work plans that included research work, and time for research can be found for some only through participation in research projects, i.e. through external funding. At work, employees are caught in the conflicting pressures of teaching and research.

The significance of work planning is not understood everywhere as almost 40% of respondents feel that work plan practices are not clear. Employers do not sufficiently recognise the changes taking place in the teaching work. Blended learning is not recognised as being part of contact teaching. There are not enough working hours for online teaching.

Based on the survey, it appears that the respondents had trouble assessing their own working hours, on what they use their working hours and how much. The results are thus indicative in terms of working hours. The best way to identify the allocation of working hours into different tasks and how the working hours are used would be through working hours monitoring studies, whereby the employee would record in detail all of his/her tasks and the working hours spent on them for a specific period. This would also display the invisible work that is not included in work plans at the moment.

The volume of work and salary impact well-being at work. A clear majority enjoys job satisfaction and engagement in their work. The work community is a source of energy. Employees are somewhat more satisfied with their own work than with their workplace. Experiences of satisfaction have increased compared to OAJ's working conditions barometer two years ago. Its respondent profile is slightly different, which can impact the result.

YLL members felt that clearer career paths, improving rewarding and increasing the number of staff would improve well-being at work. These factors stand out from the other options with a 70% support rate. A low salary and its non-development in relation to the requirement level of the work and the work load impact the respondents' work motivation and well-being. This is apparent in many of the responses.

The wish to increase the number of staff is understandable especially in light of the responses given related to the work load and the possibility to take time off. If the work is so comprehensive that employees do not recover from their work or if the work does not enable them to take time off alongside their work or during the study year, there is reason to quickly do something about work planning and staffing. Signals of this kind are cause for concern. Work should be planned within the total work time so that it is possible to take time off during the year. Work is not meant to bind workers to an around-the-clock work culture.

The experiences of university lecturers on working hours differ from the responses of groups that carry out other teaching work. More than half of university lecturers feel that there is often too much work. One third feel that there are conflicting expectations related to the work.

The work plan reserves time for research for around half of university lecturers, but, based on the responses of the university lecturers, the work that exceeds the working hours is still mostly focused on research. Teaching and administrative tasks often have to be dealt with first and only then can employees get to the research work. However, the persons with the most research merits are the ones who advance the most at universities.

Around 40% of university lecturers feel that they do not have enough free time alongside their work. This impacts coping at work and job satisfaction. The study shows that more than half of university lecturers considered their workplace atmosphere to be supportive. The average of other respondents was around 20 percentage points higher.

OAJ's and YLL's demands

How to make university work more attractive and increase coping at work

1. The salary policy for teaching-focused positions must be improved. Universities need clear career paths.

Teaching merits must provide a way to advance in university work. This means both changes in titles and salary development. Teaching merits could, in particular, focus on teaching experience, pedagogy studies, teaching development and research focused on teaching. A model for this can be found in OAJ's and YLL's career model for university teaching positions.

It must be made clearer in the salary system what is meant by tasks becoming more demanding in relation to teaching merits. Enabling the use of requirement level 8 and opening it up for joint use for experienced and high-performing university lecturers and for starting professors would bring flexibility to applying the salary system. This would also enable the building of more balanced career paths. Career path models must be based on permanent employment contracts.

2. Improving work planning and staffing, balanced allocation of work.

The practices for creating work plans must be clarified. Work plans must allot enough time for different tasks. The dimensioning of teaching work must reserve enough time also for planning the teaching and for follow-up work, depending on group sizes. Teaching tasks must be reduced if other work, such as research or university community or administrative tasks need to be fit into the work plan. The planning of work must ensure that recovering from work and taking time off are possible.

3. The opportunities for people in teaching positions to carry out research and development work must be increased.

Persons working in teaching-focused positions at universities must have the right and opportunity to carry out research during their working hours. All universities should have a research period system that enables participation in and concentration on research work.