

The Reform of Annual Working Time in Finnish higher education

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Starting points for the reform in the 1980s

- ✧ **Main Problem: teaching (as basis for salary) was defined as contact teaching hours in a week**
- ✧ **Senior lecturers 10-12 h/week; Lecturers 14 h/week; Full-time (part-time) teachers 14 h/week**
- ✧ **Associate professors 6 h/week; Professors 4 h/week**
- ✧ **2 seminar hours = 1 contact teaching hour**
- ✧ **The work time for senior assistants & assistants was defined as weekly worktime defined in national collective bargaining contracts**



Consequences: regulations prevented pedagogical innovations & development

- ✧ Compulsory 'dry pun' education had to be given
- ✧ Only one teacher per class allowed
- ✧ Mentoring/tutoring was not defined as teaching
- ✧ Pedagogical development & research activities ignored
- ✧ Strick division into **research careers** (professors) and **teaching careers** (lecturers)
- ✧ Inflexible system preventing pedagogical innovations; strick division of work between academic career tracks

Solution: Reform of Annual working time (AWT-Reform) (1988-1998)

- ✧ AWT-Reform aimed to increase flexibility in planning and implementation of teaching resources
- ✧ => AWT-Reform was agreed in national collective bargaining negotiations (1988), it was started as a 2-year experimentation in two HEIs
- ✧ Empirical follow-up study in FIER/JYU
- ✧ Academics' work (as the basis for salary) was defined as an annual working time; on average 1600 hours per year
- ✧ **Why 1600 hours?** = civil servants' average annual working hours

AWT-Reform (cont.)

- ✧ **Average** = average annual working hours in universities aimed at allowing variation between individuals
- ✧ **The idea of 1600 hours:** an instrument to allocate working time to teaching, research & management in departments => showing use & need of resources
- ✧ However, soon 1600 hours was understood as a description of academics' actual working hours... => leading to moral & ethical problems because academics work more than 1600 hours a year

Finnish Contexts for the Reform

- ✧ **Mistrust:** previous reforms of the 1970s (university administration & Degrees Reform) had frustrated all academics
- ✧ These reforms were based on **Top-down strategy** giving practically no power to universities or academics
- ✧ However, AWT-reform's implementation strategy was based on bottom-up: experimentation in 2 univ. + follow-up study => empirical data feed policy discussions
- ✧ Higher education development law increased resources by 10% a year during the late 1980s

The Process of the reform: Promoters vs. opponents

- ✧ **Opponents:** "unnecessary", "useless", "extremely dangerous" it will lead to the control of working hours
- ✧ Academic labour unions, especially Professors, had a very critical attitude
- ✧ **Promoters:** Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finances, National student union
- ✧ During the process: **academics** (in the experimentation HEIs): "the reform has supported new cooperation and improved planning"



What Happened?

- ✧ Teaching hours were reduced by 10% during the first year of the reform
- ✧ 95% of the academics in the experiential HEIs supported the reform on 1992
- ✧ Lecturers were accepted as members in research community => time for research
- ✧ New teaching methods and cooperation increased
- ✧ Differences according to disciplinary cultures: rational measures takes ⇔ questionable management reform

The Implementation of the Reform

- ✧ Experimentation lasted about 10 years, instead of planned two years
- ✧ Gradually, all actors accepted the reform; it was seen as a rational way to plan academic work in universities
- ✧ => **in 1998** annual working time reform was implemented in all universities and, **in 2004**, to all Universities of Applied Sciences
- ✧ 2017: 1600 h => 1632 h; 2020: 1612 hours

Allocating annual working time...

- ✧ Different practices developed in faculties/schools: variation from very flexible into departmental level formulas
- ✧ Categories accepted:
- ✧ **Teaching** (including, planning, mentoring and tutoring)
- ✧ **Research**
- ✧ **Third mission**
- ✧ **Administration & management**

Professor X: Working plan for the academic year 2020-2021

✧ Teaching (BA & MA)	12 h
✧ Doctoral Education	
✧ Supervisor: Student 1 (40 h); Student 2 (40 h)	
✧ 2 nd supervisor: Student 3 (60 h); Student 4 (40 h); Student 5 (20 h)	200 h
✧ Other Research (<i>Projects + Project planning</i>)	
✧ 10 articles; intl. & national Conferences; article reviews	1040 h
✧ Third mission (<i>Expert outside university: disputations, external evaluator;</i>	
✧ popular articles, committee member in MEC, other)	260 h
✧ University management / leadership (research team, committees)	80 h
✧ Education (Staff training, mentoring)	20 h
✧ Together	1612 hours

Conclusions & Lessons Learnt

- ✧ **Implementation strategy** is important in all reforms
- ✧ **Follow-up study** helps to moderate tensions between different actors
- ✧ **Gradual reform strategy** is one of the strengths of the Finnish society
- ✧ Reform illuminated disciplinary cultures => **universities are not monolithic entities & should not be treated as such**
- ✧ Harsh economic downturn hit Finland in early 1990s; FA-reform helped to survive this crisis

Thank you for your attention!



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