

REDUCING ACCOUNTABILITY WORKLOAD IN YOUR WORKPLACE

Post-16



**value
education.**

VALUE EDUCATORS

FOREWORD

It is time for education professionals to be valued. It is time for your professional views, based on your experience and expertise, to be heard.

Stress and exhaustion are not only the products of excessive working hours but also having too little professional discretion in your workplace – with key decisions about the curriculum and teaching strategies taken out of your professional control.

Teachers and lecturers in the UK work more intensively and for longer hours than any other profession. It is time to reclaim your professional lives.

Kevin Courtney Mary W. Boustad.

Kevin Courtney and Mary Boustad

Joint general secretaries, National Education Union

In this document we refer to lecturers when explicitly relating to their terms and conditions in the FE sector.

We use the term teachers not only for Sixth Form College members but also for FE college members in order to match the grammatical sense and professional practices of teaching.



**VALUE
EDUCATORS**

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
INTRODUCTION	4
SECTION 1: GUIDANCE FOR TEACHERS AND LECTURERS	6
SECTION 2: GUIDANCE FOR SUPPORT STAFF	13
SECTION 3: WORKLOAD AUDIT	15
SECTION 4: RAISING ISSUES WITH YOUR DEPARTMENTAL HEAD/SLT	20
SECTION 5: ESCALATING ISSUES	21
APPENDIX A: FLOW CHART OF STEPS YOU CAN TAKE	22

TIME TO TAKE ACTION

It is time to act on unnecessary workload that is driven by in-college accountability. It is time to reform Ofsted, an inspectorate which is:

- driving good teachers out of the profession, because of unmanageable stress levels
- discouraging new teachers from entering the profession
- exhausting teachers and leaders as they struggle to adapt to constantly changing inspection frameworks (four in five years)
- destroying the reputation of colleges in deprived areas, which are doing good work under the most difficult of circumstances and which have been let down by inadequate funding and support, with Ofsted consistently failing to call this out
- imposing inspection frameworks which are untried and untested on colleges, leading to poor inspection judgements
- making schools and colleges the scapegoat for rising child poverty, which is the real enemy of learning and progress.

While these external pressures cannot be ignored, many of the accountability measures implemented in colleges are not required by Ofsted or the Department for Education (DfE) and sit outside the bounds of the national agreement for teachers and support staff in sixth form colleges, and for lecturers and support staff in further education colleges.

Ofsted needs to acknowledge the critical role colleges are playing in the improvement of skills, especially in poorer areas.

**VALUE
EDUCATORS**

The Joint Agreement on Guidance for Regulating Working Hours in Further Education Colleges recommends that,

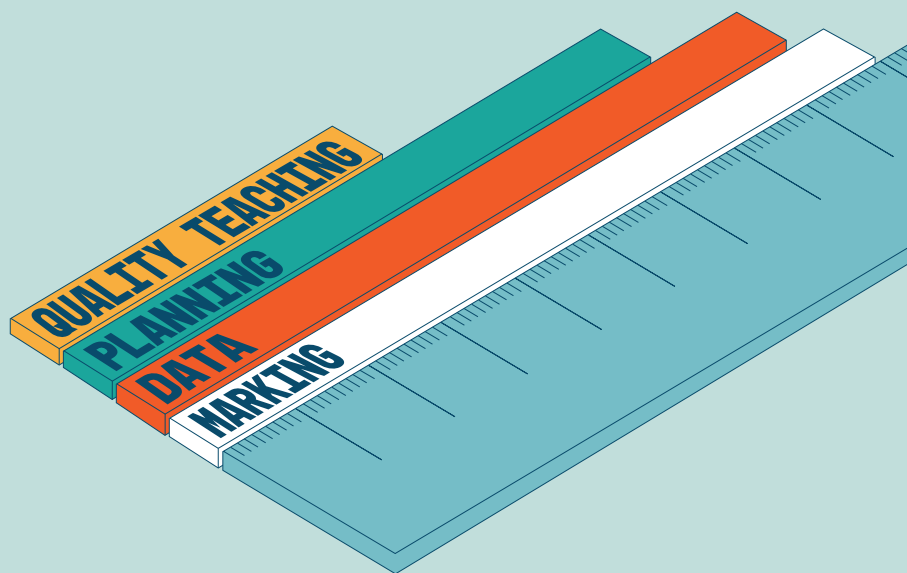
“ where long working hours exist, colleges work in partnership with local trade unions to develop workable policies, procedures and guidelines to regulate the hours of work. This guidance aims to provide a framework for colleges to assess local working hours practice and identify areas for improvement.”

And a recent DfE staff survey (2018) of further education (FE) colleges found that workload was the main challenge for staff who were projected to stay in the sector, and management practices for those in colleges “requiring improvement”. Workload challenges also came in the forms of learner needs and support/behaviour, and lack of time. We need to practically address these related issues for our members in the post-16 sector.

We hope that this document helps you to understand and identify what is causing additional workload in your workplace; helps you to work collectively, to take action

over unnecessary workload that is driven by in-college accountability; and gives you and your colleagues more professional autonomy and control over your work. It includes guidance on some key accountability and workload issues, an audit tool for you to discuss workload and working practices, and guidance and model letters to help you raise the issues with your management and leadership. The National Education Union (NEU) believes that each issue listed in the following guidance must be agreed to before a college can be considered to be taking workload seriously. There has been a steady increase in workload over the years. By acting collectively, we can redress this and establish more acceptable professional standards. By bringing together sectoral advice from schools, sixth form colleges and FE colleges, the NEU is promoting the ambition of a national contract for educational professionals.

For more information and to find the documentation discussed in this booklet, go to neu.org.uk/further-education



**VALUE
EDUCATORS**

SECTION 1: GUIDANCE FOR TEACHERS AND LECTURERS

This guidance relates to issues that members have consistently told us add to their workload and do not aid teaching and learning. We have explained what the NEU policy is and also, where relevant, where the DfE and/or Ofsted have stated that these things are not required. Additionally, if there is specific reference in your terms and conditions (the Red Book for sixth form college teachers) that has been included. For more detailed guidance on each of these issues, please refer to our website. We do include reference to DfE and Ofsted guidance when referencing colleges because colleges have not always deserved, in the Government's eyes, their own specific inspection system that explicitly, and independently, covers vocational education and training (VET) in a way that renders inspection distinctive

to VET. The guidance for FE and sixth form college inspection is **here**.

Mock inspections

The NEU says: Inspection by itself does not improve teaching or learning. Mock inspections, and preparation for them, can be disruptive and cause unnecessary stress and workload. There is no statutory requirement to participate in 'mocksteds'.

The DfE and Ofsted say: Mock inspections and/or mock deep dives are unnecessary and a waste of time. Mock inspections or mock deep dives only add to staff workload and do not improve teaching or the educational outcomes of students.

Mock inspections and/or mock deep dives are not required by the DfE or Ofsted.

**VALUE
EDUCATORS**

You should not be asked to participate in mock inspections or mock deep dives.

Lesson plans

The NEU says: Planning lessons is an essential part of every teacher's role. Objecting to unreasonable prescription and scrutiny is consistent with maintaining the highest standards of professional practice. Members should not be obligated to submit their lesson plans to members of the senior management team or anyone acting on behalf of the senior management team.

Ofsted says: It doesn't require individual lesson plans during an inspection, or past plans. Lesson plans are helpful to support effective teaching in the classroom or workshop. They should not be produced to simply satisfy external scrutiny. The DfE's Independent Teacher Workload Review Group specifically stated that detailed daily or weekly plans should not be a routine expectation and we assume this intention for all educational sectors.

You should not be asked to plan your lessons in a particular format or routinely asked to hand in lesson plans.

Data collection

The NEU says: There is a tsunami of data recorded on students, much of which has little or no educational value. The NEU believes there should be agreed limits on student tracking and that teachers should not undertake exam results analysis or collate student reports.

Data shouldn't be collected 'just in case' or to be 'ready' for Ofsted. Nor should data be collected 'just because you can'. It should have a clear purpose. Ofsted does not require a particular format or a particular frequency: you should present any data in the format that colleges would normally use to monitor students' progress. As a rule, the DfE recommends no more than two or three attainment data collection points a year.

You should not be asked to collect or collate the same data more than once and there should always be a clear purpose for collecting the data you do.

Marking

The NEU says: Although giving feedback to students is important, this does not necessarily mean written marking, or that it should be done in a prescribed manner.

The DfE says: All marking should be “meaningful, manageable and motivating”. Ofsted and the DfE are encouraging colleges to move away from excessive marking policies. There is no requirement from the DfE or Ofsted that teachers must provide written feedback and that students should respond in writing. The DfE Workload Toolkit suggests practical measures colleges can undertake to reduce excessive workload around marking. This is partly relevant for colleges too.

You should not be expected to routinely give or receive written feedback.

Reports

The NEU says: Teachers should only produce one report per year for each of the students they teach, in writing or using an electronic comments bank.

The DfE says: Lengthy written reports are unnecessary and do not engage students or parents or improve student outcomes. The DfE is encouraging schools to review their procedures to ensure they do not generate excessive workload. This must be the same for colleges too. Reports to parents and students on progress should not be onerous or taxing.

You should not be asked to produce more than one report per academic year.



**VALUE
EDUCATORS**

Classroom observations

The NEU says: Excessive classroom or workshop observation is one of the biggest sources of stress and does not lead to better practice. It also adds unnecessarily to the workload of those undertaking the observations. These include observation during learning walks, student tracking/shadowing, departmental and subject reviews, pre-inspection visits, drop-ins, mock inspections and any other initiatives that involve classroom or workshop observation.

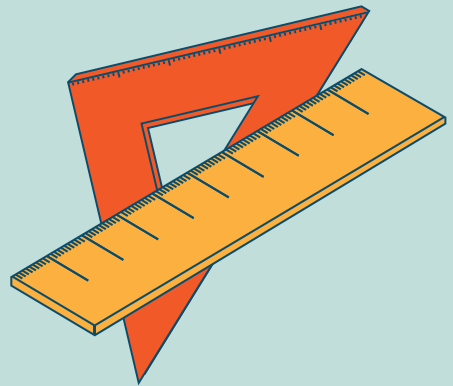
Observations should be part of a collegiate, professional dialogue, with either one full-class observation per year or a maximum of three 20-minute observations over the year. There may be certain exceptions, eg probation, ITT, formal capability etc.

You should not have more than one observation per year.

Appraisal

The NEU says: The union advocates appraisal which is developmental, supportive and based on a professional dialogue that aims to improve teaching and learning. The process should not be punitive, unfair or overburdensome. For more guidance on appraisal systems, visit the NEU website or contact the national official for the post-16 sector.

Appraisal should not add to staff workload nor deny progression to teachers whose performance is acceptable.



Meetings

The NEU says: Members should not attend any meetings which are not within directed time or that are not calendared meetings for the academic year, agreed with NEU members. The NEU believes meetings should only take place if they are necessary and have a clear agenda and purpose. Unnecessary meetings add to workload and are counterproductive.

To keep workload manageable and improve work/life balance, there should be one meeting per week and it should be no longer than an hour. Where possible, it should be planned in advance. Dates and meeting times should not discriminate against part-time or other employees.

More information is in the nationally agreed joint guidance on workload and working time for teachers in sixth form colleges (Appendix 9 of the Red Book national agreement for teachers in sixth form colleges). While FE colleges are, on average, much larger than sixth form colleges, the scope of the work

and the professional practice of teachers is similar and therefore it is entirely relevant to refer FE members to the Red Book.

Directed or 'contact' time

The Red Book national agreement for teachers in sixth form colleges states that the maximum number of hours a teacher can be directed annually is 1,265 hours, pro rata for part-time teachers

Contact hours and teaching duties in FE colleges should be standardised in a way that is no worse than in sixth form colleges. The Joint Agreement on Guidance for Regulating Working Hours in Further Education Colleges defines working time as follows:

- any period during which a worker is working at the college's disposal and carrying out his/her duties
- any period when a worker is receiving relevant training
- any additional period which is to be treated as working time under a relevant agreement –

examples of working time might include time spent on:

- preparing, correcting and assessing reports
- college-supervised trips or other similar activities with students
- meetings with parents
- liaison with local authorities or employers, universities etc
- attendance at staff meetings and other work-related meetings
- attendance at college-organised training.

PPA Time

The nationally agreed joint guidance on workload and working time for teachers in sixth form colleges (Appendix 9 of the Red Book) states that “an appropriate level of non-contact time should be allowed for purposes such as planning, preparation and assessment which would otherwise be carried out during the teacher’s own time possibly to the detriment of work/life balance”.

The NEU believes that planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) are essential elements of a teacher’s role and all teachers, including principals who are timetabled to teach, should have guaranteed time within college sessions for such purposes. PPA time should take up the majority of hours of non-teaching hours in a lecturer’s contract for weekly hours.

New policy initiatives

The NEU says: Members should refuse to implement any new management-led policies and working practices, which have not been impact assessed for workload jointly with union reps and leadership. Existing practices should be regularly reviewed to ensure they are necessary and do not create too much additional workload.

You should not be asked to implement any new policies or practices that increase your workload without determining which initiative it will replace.

NEU reps have successfully negotiated workload charters that ensure members are protected from overwork, from

being burdened with obligations to support students in detriment to their health, and from being exploited in cutting costs.

Additional responsibilities

Appendix 9 of the Red Book states that “consideration should also be given to appropriate additional non-contact time for those with additional management or leadership responsibilities”. Where they are also teaching, they require a reasonable allocation of time in meaningful blocks within college session times to support the discharge of these responsibilities.

All teachers with leadership and management responsibilities should receive payment in accordance with the provisions of the Red Book or local agreements in FE colleges. In too many colleges, members are being given onerous responsibilities for leadership and management without the associated payment. Transparent and open information should be given around remuneration

for leadership and management responsibilities and should be discussed at the joint consultative and negotiating committee (JCNC).

You should not be asked to undertake additional responsibilities unless you receive an appropriate payment and details on the terms of the agreement, duties and termination options.



**VALUE
EDUCATORS**

Cover

Sixth form college teachers' contractual cover obligations are set out in Appendix 4 of the Red Book national agreement and local agreements should be in place in FE colleges. Covering for teacher absence is not a good use of a teacher's time and asking teachers to cover for planned absences is unacceptable.

Support staff should only be asked to cover for teacher absence in rare and unforeseen circumstances.

You should refuse to provide cover in any situation that is not a genuine emergency.

Lunchtime supervision

TheNEU says: Teachers should not undertake supervision of students during the lunch break.

The nationally agreed guidance (Appendix 9 of the Red Book) states that "it is important that teaching staff... should not have to spend time on tasks that do not require their professional expertise".

You (including FE college lecturers) should not be asked to supervise students during your lunch break.

Exam invigilation

The nationally agreed joint guidance on workload and working time for teachers in sixth form colleges recognises that exam invigilation is not a productive use of teachers' time and states that "consideration should in all cases be given to means of minimising any requirement to invigilate".

You should not be asked to invigilate any exams with the following exceptions:

- controlled assessments
- practical or oral examinations which require the specialist teacher to be present
- mock or trial examinations that are carried out by teachers with the class or group they normally teach during their normal timetabled time and under the arrangements for the conduct of the lesson.

SECTION 2:

GUIDANCE FOR SUPPORT STAFF

The professional needs of our support staff membership need to be included in meetings with management.

Support staff roles vary so much that a detailed discussion with members in your college should precede any approach to management, ie the specific concerns of IT technicians may well be different from those voiced by support staff who focus on learning.

However, we believe that the following issues are those most likely to be raised by members.

Job descriptions

The NEU says: You should have an up-to-date job description that accurately reflects the work you do. If it does not, you should seek a review to have any additional tasks that you perform included in your job description and consider whether they merit additional pay.

'Grade drift' is a growing problem, whereby support staff take on responsibilities that are over and above their pay grade, but without appropriate recompense.

For more information go to:
neu.org.uk/support-staff



neu.org.uk/valueeducators

Contractual hours

The NEU says: You should only work your contractual hours. Any additional working should be on a voluntary basis and paid at overtime rates.

Too many support staff are expected to work beyond their contracted hours without additional payment, and 'job creep' is becoming increasingly common, with support staff given additional duties without additional hours to ensure commensurate payment.

Cover for teachers

The NEU says: Unless it is in your specific job role, ie you are employed as a demonstrator or technician where specific learning tasks are supported and are planned to be done without a teacher present, you cannot be forced to cover for an absent teacher.

And even if you are a demonstrator or technician there are strict limits on the amount of cover and work you can provide in the absence of a teacher.

Career development

The NEU says: Your employer should provide high quality career development opportunities for staff, including those in support roles.

College budgets should not discriminate against continuing professional development (CPD) for support staff, and professional development days should take into account the whole college workforce.



SECTION 3:

WORKLOAD AUDIT

For more information go to neu.org.uk/support-staff

The first step is for you and your colleagues to organise an NEU members' meeting in your workplace to discuss this document and workload issues. Although this is primarily concerned with teacher workload, we know that it's an issue for all college staff and it should be discussed in that context.

During your meeting, use this audit tool to identify the drivers of workload in your workplace. It will help you determine whether your college is following NEU, DfE and Ofsted guidance to reduce workload.

If you can answer 'yes' to most of the points listed in the audit tool, your college is taking serious steps to reduce workload. However, this does not mean that there are no other workload issues of concern to you and your colleagues. Meet and discuss

those issues, raising them with your head if necessary.

We would love to hear from you if you have said 'yes' to all the points on the audit – it will be invaluable and inspirational to other groups, reps and members to hear about colleges where workload has been taken seriously and reduced.

If you and your colleagues answered 'no' to any of the questions below, these are the issues to prioritise and take forward for discussion and negotiation with your departmental head or senior leadership team (SLT).

For help on organising a meeting visit neu.org.uk/how-organise-great-workplace-meeting

neu.org.uk/valueeducators

Mock inspections

- Your college has agreed not to undertake mock inspections and/or mock deep dives to prepare for Ofsted.

Lesson plans

- Teachers are free to use their professional judgement when deciding how to plan lessons.
- Teachers are not obliged to submit lesson plans to members of the senior management team or anyone acting on their behalf.

Data collection

- There are strict and agreed limits on student tracking in your workplace.
- There is a clear and identifiable purpose for collecting this data.
- Your college has reviewed its data collection practices to ensure they comply with the DfE Workload Advisory Group recommendations (where relevant to post-16 context).

Marking

- There is shared agreement about what manageable, meaningful and motivating marking looks like in your college.
- Teachers are not required to provide feedback in a particular style and can exercise professional judgement in how they provide feedback to students.
- There is a marking policy (particularly around internal verification) in your workplace that has been agreed with you and your colleagues, and complies with NEU guidance.

Reports

- There is a limit in your workplace of one report per year for each of the students you teach, in writing or using an electronic comments bank.
- The communication strategy with parents has been agreed with staff to ensure it is in line with DfE guidance (where relevant) and does not add to teacher workload.

Classroom or workshop observations

- There is a limit on the number of observations to a maximum of one per year for no longer than an hour in duration. (NB There may be certain exceptions for trainee teachers and those on probation, intervention, and those on formal capability.)
- Observations are part of a collegiate, professional dialogue.

Appraisal

- The appraisal policy has been agreed with you and your colleagues.
- Appraisal objectives are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound) and limited to three per year.
- Data-driven targets are excluded in appraisal objectives.
- Annual pay progression is automatic, non-discriminatory and is not linked to appraisal. (NB This may not include those on capability or in the middle of a performance review process.)

Meetings

- There is a maximum limit of one meeting no longer than an hour per week in your workplace.
- Meetings are included in the directed time calendar (or scheduled calendar of meetings), which has been agreed with NEU colleagues in your workplace.

Directed time/working hours

- There is a directed time calendar (explicit working hours policy and/or workload charter in FE colleges), which has been negotiated and agreed with NEU colleagues, in your workplace annually.

PPA time

- Teachers have their contractually guaranteed minimum PPA time identifiable in their timetables.
- PPA time is in reasonable and planned blocks of time.
- PPA time is protected and teachers are not asked to carry out other duties during that time.
- Teachers are free to determine how PPA time is used and when/where.

neu.org.uk/valueeducators

New policy initiatives

- All new management-led policies and working practices are workload risk assessed and agreed before they are implemented.
- All existing policies and working practices have been reviewed to ensure they are necessary and workload-light.
- All new management-led policies and working practices are impact assessed for equality before they are implemented.

Teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) payments/additional responsibility payments

- Teaching staff in receipt of a TLR (or equivalent 'pay for responsibilities' policy) also receive dedicated time in their timetable to support the discharge of their responsibilities.
- Teaching staff who do not receive a TLR (or equivalent 'pay for responsibilities' policy) are not obliged or required to undertake management activities.

Cover

- Teachers are only obliged to cover "rarely, and only in circumstances that are not foreseeable", ie in genuine emergencies and not for planned absences.
- Other staff supervisors who take the register of attendance in emergency situations can only stand in for teachers in unique circumstances.

Lunchtime supervision

- Teachers are not required to undertake supervision of students during the lunch break.

Exam invigilation

- Teaching staff are not required to invigilate any public examinations, including GCSEs and A-levels/BTECs/T-levels.
- Teachers are not required to invigilate any mock examinations where the college has reorganised the timetable to replicate the external examination process.

SECTION 4: RAISING ISSUES WITH YOUR DEPARTMENTAL HEAD/SLT

After you've carried out the audit, you and your colleagues will be able to identify key areas of concern. If there are lots, you may want to initially prioritise the two or three issues that you collectively agree cause the most unnecessary workload.

Once you have all agreed which of the issues you wish to raise with your departmental head/SLT, the rep/s need to arrange a meeting with the head. See the model stage 1 letter at neu.org.uk/valueeducators

As reps, you may already have scheduled regular meetings with your principal/SLT, known as a joint negotiation and consultation committee (JNCC) or more informal meetings, as and when there is an issue. We would also

encourage you to talk to other union groups in your college and work together to demand changes to reduce workload forming a local trade union side (LTUS).

Very often discussions with the principal will lead to positive changes in your workplace. After the discussions, it is important that reps hold another members' meeting to feed back and gain their agreement. You should also take the time to celebrate your success and decide which issues you will prioritise next. Please contact us on your successes at post16@neu.org.uk

If you are in a non-recognised NEU workplace, please insist on regular 'informal' meetings with the human resources (HR) team

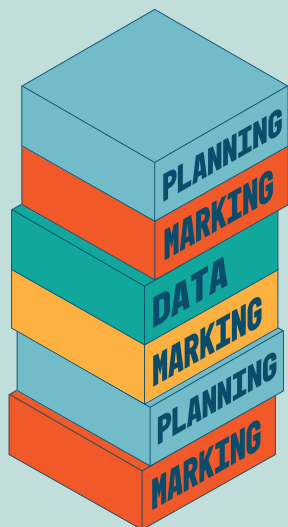
in order to represent the interests of members. As a nationally recognised trade union in the sector, we take part in national pay and conditions negotiations and framework agreements, and can support members directly for breaches of contract and termination of employment issues. All workplaces are therefore important.



**VALUE
EDUCATORS**

SECTION 5: ESCALATING ISSUES

If meetings with your departmental head/SLT do not result in a workload reduction in the areas identified in the audit, hold another meeting with your NEU colleagues to discuss how to escalate and to identify possible measures you and your colleagues can take to win the reductions in workload you deserve.



It is important at this meeting to understand the strength of feeling of members so the next course of action can be taken collectively. There are a number of options to escalate, which will range from collectively deciding not to participate in certain activities to balloting for action. Please contact your regional reps on the national council, local branch or regional office who will be able to support you and discuss the options open to you – find details at neu.org.uk/contact-us

neu.org.uk/valueeducators

APPENDIX A: FLOW CHART OF STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

Step one

Hold an NEU meeting, complete the audit and highlight which points are statutory requirements (or nationally agreed according to the Red Book for sixth form college members).

Step two

As a group prioritise the two or three issues you want to raise with the departmental head/SLT first. Knowing how strongly members feel and whether they are prepared to take any action if necessary should inform this process. It will also help you prepare to consider the options in step 5.

Step three

Adapt and send the stage 1 model letter to your principal to arrange a meeting or add workload to the agenda of your regular JNCC.

Step four

Discuss and agree changes with your departmental head/SLT to reduce workload in the areas identified by your group.

Step five

Hold a members' meeting to discuss the outcome of negotiations. Contact your regional reps on the national council, branch or regional office to discuss the support they can offer to escalate your campaign to win a workload reduction in your workplace.

Outcome A: Congratulations! If your departmental head/SLT agrees to all the changes suggested by your NEU group, hold another NEU meeting to celebrate the success and decide which workload issues you will prioritise next.

Outcome B: If you come to agreement on some but not all of the issues raised by your NEU group, hold another NEU meeting to decide your next steps (accept the outcome or escalate).

Outcome C: Your departmental head/SLT don't agree any changes to reduce workload in the areas your group has identified. Hold a members' meeting to decide whether to escalate.

Step six

Hold a meeting and go through the options for action. As a group, decide which actions you would be prepared to take win a reduction in workload.

Step seven

Get in contact with your local branch about escalating further with your union group; this may include a letter signed by a clear majority of NEU members (70 per cent or more).



**value
education.**

VALUE EDUCATORS



NEU2379/1112