

<b>Session Title:</b>	<b>Work life balance and supporting staff when travelling</b>
<b>Speaker(s):</b>	<p>Panel members:</p> <p>Ailsa Mackenzie, University of Leeds, Education Outreach Officer  Geraldine Musajjakawa, University of Leeds, Education Outreach Lead Officer  Emma McShane, University of York, Student Recruitment Manager  Katie Whitmore, University of Birmingham, Senior Student Recruitment Officer  Sarah Bouvier, University of Hertfordshire, UK Student Recruitment Manager</p>
<b>Chair:</b>	Amanda Kenningley
<b>Reporter:</b>	Mari Higginbotham

<b>Overview/aim of session:</b>	<p>Panel members will answer questions (pre-submitted and from the room) bringing their experience and expertise of their personal strategies for an effective work life balance and supporting staff within their teams to achieve this also.</p>
<b>Questions and Answers:</b>	<p><u>Pre-submitted questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>What does good support from your line manager look like to you while traveling and attending events?</b></li> </ul> <p>Ailsa: Regular check-ins are important, when you arrive at an event or return to hotel/home. Regular meetings to evaluate events. Important to have good CPD opportunities to help staff grow as lots of travelling can become samey and isolating without this. Managers need to trust the way you take your TOIL – could be an hour here or there. But having to ask permission for half/full days is acceptable.</p> <p>Emma: Need to avoid micro-management of staff, COVID helped this, managers had to trust staff more. The job doesn't need to be done 9-5, for some it suits better not to. As a manager, change your expectations. Use technologies to assist with that. It has been shown micro-managing not good for mental health.</p> <p>Katie: [Ahead of the conference Katie asked her team in advance what they thought good work/life balance looked like]. Having asked my manager he believes "...It is an individual thing and works differently for everyone. It's about</p>

being honest and doing what works for you. Post-COVID institutions are still trying to work it out...”

Geraldine: Micro-managing doesn't provide the necessary tools required when your staff are out in the field. It is important to empower and build confidence in staff who are in such roles – everyday the challenges faced can be different.

Sarah: Staff should share concerns and worries with their line managers. No manager wishes to lose a good staff member where issues could have been resolved.

- **What are your top tips for someone new to a position with lots of travel and event attendance? How can they best prepare for the busy periods e.g. March?**

Geraldine: Organization! Write down contact details name, telephone numbers etc well in advance. Make checklists including travel bookings, contact details, slide prep etc. Reach out for support from your team when you drop the ball (it will happen occasionally). Without good planning it is easy to burn out quickly.

Sarah: Plan your journey time aswell. Google maps provides average times. Add this in to your diary.

Emma: Make the most of the places you are visiting and being away from home. Go out for a walk and explore where possible or if you prefer enjoy being away from the commitments at home, when the work day is done find time for yourself.

Ailsa: Managers should involve their team members in the decision making around allocations. Allocating events to staff that are keen to visit that region (e.g can catch up with friends, attend a show, visit a new city).

Emma: Take pride in the events that go well and the good advice you give – positive interactions have greatly impacts other people for the better.

Geraldine: Lean on other recruitment staff for support, others will help put things out for you if you are running late due to traffic.

Workshop participant commented:

- When you are out and about you should be focussed on the student. When you get to an event give it your all, switch off your phone and avoid your inbox.
- We will help each other. We are a supportive group. Never feel you are alone.

- **How do you stay on top of your admin workload while attending lots of events?**

Katie: You need to define what work/life balance means for you. Carve out wellbeing and leisure time. Justification: If I am really productive now then I can get the reward later. Align calendars with significant others. Check whether all the admin within your job is required. Prepare a spreadsheet to capture the event metrics. Keep up to date – don't let the boring stuff back up.

Geraldine: With COVID we have learnt how great technology can be. Find ways to work smarter and perhaps more remotely. Keep on top of your receipts and expenses.

Sarah: Block out time for your admin in your calendar and turn off email notifications.

- **I often find it hard to say no to an event when I have other significant work commitments. For context, the vast majority of the time in our team, events are assigned to us rather than procured/organised by an individual member. Do you have any tips for this?**

Sarah: I don't want to lose a team member as they are becoming stressed.

Staff should try and have open discussions with their line managers.

Ailsa: As a manager be aware of staff. Sometimes this can also be gauged anecdotally through Whatsapp groups etc.

Geraldine: It's about managing the culture within your team. Good to let your team allocate themselves where possible.

- **Is it healthy for a work life balance to have things like Teams and Emails on your phone. Can sometimes be useful but does make it hard to ever be away from work.**

Sarah: [After a show of hands, half the people in the room indicated they have a work phone.] Try and get a work phone. If you must have emails or Teams on your phone - turn off your notifications.

Katie: COVID has accelerated flexible/hybrid working. We are now much more individually accountable for organising our time and work.

Additional questions from the audience:

- If someone comes into a senior role from outwith the sector how can you explain the role of recruitment staff and the challenges we face "on the road"
  - Encourage them to walk the walk
  - Public sector does not have the benefits of the private sector
  - Quiet quitting?
  - We are very external facing – they can't always see the benefits try and showcase these
  - Speak their language (prospective students may be more tech savvy but what schools are looking for from universities by means of engagement has not greatly altered in over a decade)
- How can we be saying no more often to events in the planning stage
  - We need feedback from events
  - New staff should have the confidence to say no to things where they feel that is appropriate

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can be good to understand the rationale if you are frustrated by attending the event</li> <li>- Saying yes to everything flies in the face of supporting a good work/life balance. If you are working too much you will find yourself “Pouring from an empty cup”</li> <li>- Consider saying no and giving them an alternative – post-pandemic there is an opportunity to go virtual, more recorded content than before. To this end the pandemic may have provided more solutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Summary Key takeaways:</b>	<p>Useful session covering how to prioritise and minimise work at the bookings stage, how to organise your time effectively and a clear call to action to speak openly with your team to overcome problems before/ when they arise.</p>