

# Work-Life Balance



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The Nuffield Department of Medicine is committed to providing staff with an environment and a range of resources designed to support the achievement of a healthy work-life balance.

Dividing your time appropriately between work and personal commitments isn't always easy and the conflicting demands of life can sometimes be draining.

Whatever your responsibilities beyond the workplace, whether they be for the care of dependents, studying for a professional qualification or participation in a local organisation, it is essential to find the right balance with your job to prevent overburden, fatigue and ill health.

By making informed, conscious decisions, you can take control and gain greater satisfaction from both work and home life.

## Reflection

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Do you have a  
good work-life  
balance?

What is important  
to you?

Career? Family? Hobbies?

Everyone has different motivations and aspirations, and our goals often change over time. The lifestyle you want today may not be the one you set out to achieve.

**Take a step back and reflect objectively.**

Are you exhausted on a daily basis? Not spending any time enjoying hobbies/activities, and spending evening and weekends thinking about/doing work? If the answer is “yes”, then now is the time to reassess your work life balance.

Form a mental picture of your ideal life and write down the key words that embody it. Let these words guide your decision making and commit to overcoming the obstacles and making your vision a reality.

# Action

This booklet provides a starting point in raising awareness, of both potential issues and the support systems which are available to you, setting realistic expectations for what is and isn't possible, and offering practical advice to assist you in striking the right balance.

For further support, try using our [interactive chart](#).

Category	Issues	Support
Personal	Getting to Work	<a href="#">Transport &amp; Parking</a>
		<a href="#">Flexible Working</a>
		<a href="#">Family Friendly Policies</a>
	Commitments & Responsibilities	<a href="#">Personal Leave</a>
		<a href="#">Childcare</a>
		<a href="#">Social Events</a>
		<a href="#">Managing Stress</a>
	Wellbeing	<a href="#">Personal Wellbeing</a>
Departmental	Awareness	<a href="#">NDM Events</a>
		<a href="#">Public Engagement Events</a>
	Networking	<a href="#">Work-Life Balance Talks</a>
	Communication	<a href="#">Latest News</a>
	Workplace	<a href="#">Harassment Officers</a>
Role	Workload	<a href="#">Personal Development Review Discussion</a>
	Duties & Responsibilities	<a href="#">Personal Development Training Courses</a>
		<a href="#">Careers Service Sessions</a>
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	Workload	<a href="#">Personal Development Review Discussion</a>
	Workplace	<a href="#">Harassment Officers</a>
	Communication	<a href="#">Latest News</a>
	Networking	<a href="#">Work-Life Balance Talks</a>
	Awareness	<a href="#">Public Engagement Events</a>
		<a href="#">NDM Events</a>

## Family Friendly Policies

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We recognise that modern life places conflicting demands on both men and women, and we are committed to offering a range of **family friendly policies** and practices which help in achieving a good work life balance. Current policies include maternity leave/adoption leave, paternity leave, parental leave and time off for dependants.

The University recently launched a new Returning Carer's Fund Scheme. This fund is a small grants scheme intended to support the return to research of men and women who have taken a break for caring responsibilities; and to increase the visibility of the University's support for carers, with a view to changing perceptions of balancing a research or academic career with caring responsibilities.

## Childcare

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The University is proud to be able to offer a comprehensive range of **childcare services** at affordable prices and works closely with various professional bodies to continue to enhance its provision. We have the highest level of childcare



provision in the HE sector, with 390 places across 15 sites; four of these being designated University nurseries. The University offers a salary sacrifice scheme for payment of nursery fees and also offers a childcare voucher scheme for all eligible parents.

## Part-time and Flexible Working

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The Department actively promotes a flexible work environment, and encourages a good work-life balance whether you have family responsibilities or not. As part of this inclusive approach the Department offers **flexible working** policies, including part-time working, compressed hours, job-sharing, staggered hours, term-time only working and teleworking. You should discuss your requirements with your line manager directly in order to explore the most appropriate options.

## Learning and Development

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The University provides a wide range of personal development programmes, resources and courses for staff. The learning Institute runs many of these programmes, such as **Managing yourself**, which aims to help individuals manage both themselves, including time and workload management, and their relationships with colleagues. Information on training and development opportunities as well as details on training providers are available through the [Staff Gateway](#) training and development pages, as well as through the [Oxford Learning Institute](#).

# Mentoring

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A mentor provides confidential support and guidance, giving you the benefit of their perspective and experience. A mentor can also assist in identifying development needs and building confidence and motivation. NDM runs a **Mentoring Scheme** for Externally Funded Research Fellows, which is designed to provide individualised, independent, confidential support and guidance for fellows to develop their long term career goals.

A similar mentoring scheme is being rolled out across NDM Units for post-docs, so there may be an opportunity for you to join a mentoring scheme. We would recommend that you ask for more details from your line manager or the Business Manager for your Unit. It may be something you would like to raise at your Personal Development Review.

In addition, the Learning Institute coordinates and supports a range of mentoring schemes, such as the Diploma in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and Springboard.

## Personal Development Review (PDR)

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A PDR meeting is an opportunity for self-reflection and assessment, which aids in the identification of training and development needs as well as the setting of agreed objectives for the period to follow. Additionally, it provides a forum for discussing workload and the impact this may be having on achieving a good work life balance.

Clinical Consultants should refer to the [Clinical Care](#) webpage, for details on statutory and mandatory training, appraisal and revalidation.

## Career Development

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The [Careers Service](#) offers advice and guidance and works with you to make timely and informed decisions about career choices. NDMS has arranged for monthly career advice sessions specifically for researchers and students in the Department. These one-to-one appointments can be used for exploring career options, guidance in making decisions, improving CVs, cover letters and applications, preparing for and practicing interviews and addressing any other career-related needs.



## Health and Wellbeing

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The University's **Occupational Health Service** provides comprehensive advice and support to assist in promoting physical and psychological wellbeing and to prevent illness and injury arising from work activity.

We would recommend you approach your local HR team or line manager in the first instance, should you have any concerns relating to your health or wellbeing. They will then be able to work closely with these colleagues to ensure all necessary support is in place and any recommended work based adjustments are made, if appropriate.

Confidential counselling is also available for University employees experiencing work-related problems. You may refer yourself or, with your consent, be referred by your manager or HR Officer to the Occupational Health Service. You will be seen/called initially by one of the Occupational Health Advisers to discuss whether counselling is appropriate. The counsellors, who are independent of the University, are qualified, accredited with their professional organisation, and experienced in time-limited, short-term, solution-focused counselling. The counselling is for up to six sessions for any one referral.



## Stress

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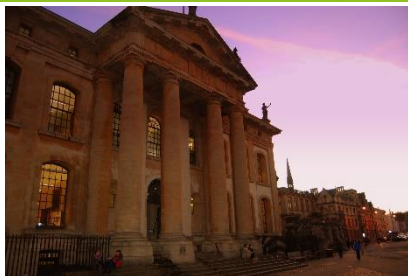
The Department seeks to maintain a positive and supportive working environment for all staff. The University policy on the prevention and management of work-related stress, which the department is committed to, seeks to establish standards and provide guidance and information on sources of support. We recognise that excessive or prolonged pressure in the workplace can have a negative impact on the University/Department and individuals. We recommend you speak with your manager or HR team as soon as you feel stressed, so that the correct support systems can be put in place.

We all experience periods of pressure at home and at work. However, when the pressure is sustained and or excessive, without an opportunity to recover, this may lead to emotional or physical harm.

The University has a range of resources to support those who are feeling stressed which are available on the Occupational Health webpages : [An employee's guide to managing stress](#).

## Social Opportunities

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Getting involved or participating in activities is the quickest way to become part of the University community. The University offers a vast array of **clubs, societies, events and sports**. The **benefits handbook** provides additional

information on places to visit in Oxford, such as museums, gardens and restaurants.

University employees can use their University Cards for access to the Bodleian Library and the other libraries in Oxford University Library Services. In addition, there are 45 colleges, with beautiful gardens and grounds, along with award winning architecture. University employees may visit them free on production of their university card.

## Top Tips for Work-Life Balance

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- ◆ Ensure that you get adequate sleep
- ◆ Renew your energy throughout the working day with mid-morning and afternoon breaks. Take a walk outside to get some air and exercise.
- ◆ Eat a balanced diet – adequate nutrition can affect your energy levels and improve performance and mood.
- ◆ Spend time on activities that give you a sense of purpose
- ◆ Build downtime into your schedule - When planning your week, schedule time with your family and friends, and on activities that help you recharge.
- ◆ Take stock of activities that don't enhance your career or personal life, and minimize the time you spend on them.
- ◆ Slowly build more activities into your schedule that are important to you.

# Further Information

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Family Friendly Policies

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/)

Childcare

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/)

Part-time and Flexible Working

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/flexible/staff/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/flexible/staff/)

Staff Gateway

[www.ox.ac.uk/staff/working\\_at\\_oxford/training\\_development/index.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/staff/working_at_oxford/training_development/index.html)

Oxford Learning Institute

[www.learning.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/)

Mentoring Scheme

[www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/mentoring-externally-funded-research-fellows](http://www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/mentoring-externally-funded-research-fellows)

Personal Development Review (PDR)

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/trainingandpdr/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/trainingandpdr/)

Clinical SMT, Appraisal and Revalidation

[www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/smt-appraisal-and-revalidation](http://www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/smt-appraisal-and-revalidation)

Careers Service

[www.careers.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/)

Occupational Health

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/uohs/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/uohs/)

Stress

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/uohs/at-work/mental-health/stress/employeesguide/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/uohs/at-work/mental-health/stress/employeesguide/)

Clubs, Societies, Events and Sports

[www.ox.ac.uk/new\\_to\\_the\\_university/living\\_in\\_oxford.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/new_to_the_university/living_in_oxford.html)

Staff Benefits Handbook

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/)