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Managing Overtime in Higher Education Institutions

Balancing Operational Efficiency, Staff Wellbeing & Compliance

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SETTING THE CONTEXT

WHY OVERTIME IS A CRITICAL TOPIC IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Overtime affects

- staff morale,
- institutional costs,
- compliance,
- and well-being.

In HEIs, cyclical demands like

- Registration
- Exams,
- Graduations, or audits
- drive spikes in workload.

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How many hours of overtime per month do you consider sustainable?

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IDENTIFY KEY PRINCIPLES AND COMMON PITFALLS IN OVERTIME MANAGEMENT

Compliance: BCEA limits to 10 hours per week and requires written consent.

Equity: How are overtime opportunities distributed?

Cost: Are we tracking or simply paying reactively?

Productivity: Chronic overtime often signals poor workload planning.

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Which challenge causes the most tension in your institution?

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THE CORE DILEMMA

Scenario 1:

- Payroll and HR staff work late for SARS deadline – Finance refuses to pay.

Scenario 2:

- Cleaners/security personnel required to work overtime during registration without approval.

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Where is the line between operational duty and compensated overtime?

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Who authorises and who monitors?

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BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Compliance: Written consent, weekly limit, rest intervals.

B. Cost Control: Budget caps and monthly reconciliations.

C. Wellbeing: Time-off in lieu, rest-day scheduling.

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Which control would have the biggest impact?

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THE TECHNOLOGY LEVER

- Integrated overtime modules in Payroll systems.
- Automatic time-off conversion.
- Analytics to identify departments with recurring spikes.

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ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

- Overtime should not substitute fair pay.
- Dependency culture creates inequity and fatigue.
- Gender equity: who can work overtime vs. who bears family load?
- Align overtime management with transformation and wellness policies.

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MODEL FRAMEWORK FOR HEIS

Area	Key Action	Outcome
Policy	Define approval thresholds	Predictability
Process	Automate workflow	Transparency
People	Train supervisors	Accountability
Performance	Track hours vs. productivity	Efficiency
Partnerships	HR–Finance–Line collaboration	Governance alignment

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

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