Higher Education Academy

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Shifting landscapes

Meeting the staff development needs of the changing academic workforce

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Contents

Executive summary

The research reported here seeks to investigate the day-to-day realities of those in academic and learning enhancement roles, their motivations and careers, and their staff development needs in relation to promotion, career progression and the balance of teaching, learning support, research and other responsibilities. It follows an earlier Higher Education Academy (HEA) publication, *Shifting academic careers: Implications for enhancing professionalism in teaching and supporting learning* (Locke 2014). Building on that context-setting report it provides further evidence and discussion of how the changes in academic work and careers are playing out within different types of higher education institution (HEI) throughout the UK.

Context

Since the publication of *Shifting academic careers*, the demands of increased competition and pressures for improved efficiency in the use of resources and greater accountability in UK higher education have become even more acute. There is an increased focus on teaching as a result of the new operating environment, particularly in England with the introduction of a 'Teaching Excellence Framework', and with more institutions requiring their teaching staff to achieve accreditation through the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education (UKPSF) – the nationally recognised framework for benchmarking success within higher education (HE) teaching and learning support.

The reform of quality assessment in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is focusing on the academic experiences and achievements of students, rather than systems and processes, and placing greater emphasis on the responsibilities of institutions and their governing bodies for these. Academics, and those who support learning, will be central to achieving these improvements in higher education, and so their professional and career-development needs will become a higher priority. Beyond this are broader issues about the systematic replenishment of the academic workforce, the preparation of early career staff, the attractiveness of the profession to them, and the need to create sustainable, internationally recognised career pathways. These matters are at the core of higher education institutions' ability to survive and flourish, not just in a national system but, increasingly in a global environment in which the pressures and demands are even more complex.

Methodology

This research study is largely qualitative, and is based on eight case studies of universities across the UK, consisting of individual interviews with up to eight staff from each institution in a variety of roles: teaching and research, teaching-only, research-only, learning enhancement, and senior management (e.g. Pro-Vice-Chancellor for learning and teaching, human resources director). We also analysed relevant policy and other documentation (e.g. staff survey results) – both published and unpublished.

In establishing the context for the interviews and case studies, we also reviewed what the data gathered by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), and others, tell us about the changing academic career paths and staff transitions with respect to differing institutional contexts, discipline influences and career routes for those in teaching-focused, research, and learning support roles.

Key findings

The HESA data for 2013-14 revealed a number of interesting developments.

Firstly, the total number of academic staff in the UK grew between 2012-13 and 2013-14 by 8,655 or nearly 4.5%; a huge jump compared with previous years, especially given the economic crisis and reduction of direct government funding for higher education.

Secondly, this increase was made up of an additional 5,780 staff on teaching-only contracts and 3,230 academics on research-only contracts. In 2013-14, 27% of all academics and 36% of those who teach were on teaching-only contracts. Those on teaching and research contracts actually declined and, for the first time, now represent a minority (48.6%) of the academic population. One plausible reason for this could be that institutions reduced the number of their academic staff who would be eligible for submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in order to increase their 'research intensity' rankings when the

results were announced in December 2014 (REF 2014). The report also explores how these and other trends vary by institutional type.

From the qualitative interviews and case studies, we draw out a number of common themes, shared challenges and potential solutions as follows:

The changing parameters of academic work

The parameters of academic work are changing in a number of different ways, with the increasing specialisation of roles, and growing separation (and at times tensions) between teaching and research activity, at both individual and institutional levels. These changes are often expressed in the differential priority and value accorded to research and teaching, in the formal mechanisms for rewarding and recognising these activities and in the responses of individuals, including the 'hidden' time spent on one or the other. The interviews confirmed that what counts as academic work is changing, with the enhancement of 'the student experience', pedagogical innovation, knowledge exchange, research impact and policy development as emerging priorities.

Changes in career trajectories and pathways

The staff interviewed for the study had followed a range of routes into academia:

- only a minority had pursued a career in higher education after what is often seen as the traditional, PhD and post-doctoral path;
- some early career academics had struggled to find secure employment with prospects and had taken on fixed-term and/or part-time teaching-only or learning support roles;
- it was striking how many interviewees had moved from their original subject of study to work in other disciplines, departments and schools/faculties or in interdisciplinary work;
- some mid-career academics had substantial experience of working outside academia, such as in industry or occupational practice prior to, or throughout their higher education sector career. These individuals tended to have more positive views of working in academia;
- the majority of the interviewees felt that their academic work was worthwhile and often intrinsically motivating. However, they reported differential opportunities for career progression in the different specialisms, hidden rules and practices in relation to recruitment and promotion, and variation between institutions in the possibility of moving between different roles and types of contract.

The majority of the case study institutions had sought to address issues of parity between the different academic career pathways and outline equivalent progression routes through to the top ranks. The lived experience of the academic staff in these institutions, however, suggested that there were still many practical points to iron out in the application and implementation of policies around the promotion pathways. Even where different pathways had been rolled out, staff were not always aware of their existence, or what they entailed.

Recovering time and psychological space

The interviewees singled out time and workloads as the most significant barrier to engaging with professional development. Workloads in many of the case study institutions were perceived to have substantially increased in the last 10-15 years, and many interviewees felt that they simply did not have the time to seek out and take up developmental opportunities. Staff development was viewed by some as a luxury that they could not afford. This view was particularly evident in the narratives of those on part-time or research-only contracts.

The increase in workloads and the advance of online and remote working for both students and staff has impacted on academic work and work–life patterns. Academic work was described as 'all pervasive' easily absorbing weekends and taking over holidays. 'Real time' and 'thinking time' for individualised developmental activities were highly valued by many of the interviewees.

Differentiation and the need for individual development and support

It was clear from the narratives in the study that optimal value could only be achieved if development programmes were closely tailored to individual needs, with provision of targeted support at the appropriate

time. Otherwise, as several respondents noted, they could be seen as a bureaucratic requirement in order to demonstrate credibility and proceed to the next stage of a career.

Being proactive in making time and identifying opportunities for professional and career development was another recurring theme. Many felt their proactivity had secured them developmental and promotional opportunities not afforded to others.

Local mentors and line managers were often seen as having a significant role in providing opportunities and supporting individual members of staff, as distinct from the role of the institutions, which was sometimes criticised.

The increasing differentiation of the academic profession suggests that uniform and standardised approaches to staff development may be becoming less attractive. For the interviewees, the most effective formal programmes allowed individuals to use and reflect on material generated in their own practice, and integrate this with their own career development.

Conclusions

The shifts from teaching and research posts to teaching-only and research-only contracts, and the growth of learning enhancement, knowledge exchange and other roles, mirrors what is happening in other advanced higher education systems. Policies and, particularly, practices designed to achieve parity of recognition and reward for the full range of contributions to university activities do not appear to have caught up with these changes. There remains a perception, at least, that career options and opportunities for those not in traditional teaching and research roles are not equivalent.

A heavy (and increasing) workload seems to be resulting in an erosion of work–life balance for many academics. A growing sense of the impossibility of undertaking all aspects of the academic role to the highest standard represented a key constraint for many interviewees on their engagement in professional and career development activities, both for themselves and for the benefit of others (e.g. as mentors). Consequently, there was greater appetite for learning by doing, peer-to-peer support, observing others, and self-reflection - which lead to actual improvement in teaching and learning - than for attending formal training courses.

Even in a limited sample of eight institutional case studies and 61 interviews, the diversity of the academic workforce was apparent. The differentiation of roles, careers, starting points and trajectories, together with the demands for more individualised, personalised and contextualised development opportunities, indicates a need to reconsider what we mean by initial and continuing professional development for academic and learning enhancement staff.

Recommendations

In recognition that there are a number of players who are likely to contribute to the development of the academic profession and others working in higher education, these recommendations are targeted at five main groups:

For the Higher Education Academy (HEA):

1. To continue to review and revise the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) and ensure that:
    a. it reflects the full diversity of roles and circumstances of academic and learning enhancement staff working in UK higher education institutions;
    b. it complements the professional frameworks for researchers (e.g. The *Concordat to support the career development of researchers* (Vitae 2008)), learning support staff (e.g. SEDA's Professional Development Framework (SEDA, nd)) and all those undertaking key academic roles and activities, regardless of their contractual status.
2. To raise the profile of a revised UKPSF, nationally and within HEIs, so that it is universally regarded as an essential focal point and resource for initial and continuing professional development for academics and learning enhancement staff.

3. To enhance the HEA's existing engagement with HEIs' human resources departments and the Universities Human Resources organisation (UHR) to support the current development of academic and learning enhancement career pathways, and the forms of professional development and approaches to reward and recognition required to support this.

For higher education policy makers and sector bodies:

4. To consider the implications of policies and funding arrangements for the staff of higher education institutions, the career opportunities available to them, and the attractiveness and viability of an academic or professional career in higher education.
5. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to consider the reliability and validity of data on the increasing range of types of academic contracts and roles, especially in relation to staff on teaching-only and 'atypical' contracts.
6. To consider whether there should be a Concordat for those focusing on teaching that is equivalent to the *Concordat to support the career development of researchers*.

For higher education institutions:

7. To ensure consistency between those policies and functions that impact on the recruitment, development, reward, recognition, motivation and aspirations of academic and learning enhancement staff in a holistic approach to organisational and individual professional development.
8. To recognise the importance of building trust between senior management teams, middle managers (such as heads of school and department) and staff, for instance, via the clear communication of career development pathways for different categories of staff, so that staff also have the opportunity to feed their ideas and experiences into policy formation and implementation (including those drawn from experience of other professional occupations).
9. To retain a clear distinction between employment contracts and roles, so that a common (perhaps, universal) academic contract can accommodate a number of different roles (for instance, teaching, research, teaching and research, knowledge exchange, and public engagement), and also permit individuals to focus on different activities at different times in their career, as well as across different areas of interest.
10. To ensure that promotion criteria and practices recognise each of the core activities and purposes of the institution, including education, knowledge exchange, and academic citizenship, for example, as well as research and Research Excellence Framework (REF) outputs.
11. To improve the opportunities and conditions, including security of employment, professional development opportunities, approaches to reward and recognition, and flexible career prospects for those with teaching-only and research-only contracts or roles, and to ensure these are comparable and equitable to those in traditional teaching and research roles.
12. To support a broad conception of professional development activity, to include informal and peer learning, such as mentoring, coaching, observation and reflection, together with an inclusive approach that, for example, might offer study leave for those in teaching-focused roles (e.g. to develop a new course or devise learning resources).
13. To consider the impact of workload models on individual careers and allow flexibility in their management, in particular, by heads of school and department, so as to take account of informal as well as formal opportunities for developmental activity.

For middle managers, such as heads of school and department and research team leaders:

14. To ensure clear communication with academic and learning enhancement staff about institutional policies and practice in relation to career progression and development opportunities, both formal and informal.
15. To adopt a flexible approach to developing the potential of early career staff, taking a medium-term to long-term view of what they might offer.

For academic and learning enhancement staff:

16. To give attention to their future employability, including the skills, experience and knowledge that may be required during their career for recruitment, progression and promotion.
17. To understand that academic career progression is no longer necessarily linear, nor guaranteed, and therefore to be proactive and informed about what is required and what is available within an individual's home institution, disciplinary community and more widely, and to take both formal and informal opportunities when they are available.
18. For early career academics with aspirations towards a teaching and research role to consider whether a 'teaching-only' contract will provide them with the opportunities they seek to develop their research activity, publish, and apply for research funding. If they do accept such a role, to work with their line manager in seeking both formal and informal development opportunities.
19. For early career academics with aspirations towards a teaching and research role, to consider whether a 'research only' contract will offer the security they seek, and the broad experience needed for a traditional teaching and research role. If they do accept such a role, to work with their line manager in seeking both formal and informal development opportunities.

1. The study

1.1. Introduction

The research reported here follows an earlier Higher Education Academy (HEA) publication, *Shifting academic careers: implications for enhancing professionalism in teaching and supporting learning* (Locke 2014). It builds on that context-setting report and provides further evidence and discussion of how the changes in academic work and careers are playing out within different types of higher education institution (HEI)[1] throughout the UK. In particular, it seeks to investigate the day-to-day realities of academic and learning enhancement roles, motivations and careers and their staff development needs in relation to promotion, career progression and the balance of teaching, learning support, research and other responsibilities.

The earlier report sought to provide a brief review of the literature and commentary focusing on the changing nature of academic careers in the higher education sector, including a reduction in the proportion of those in traditional, full-time, permanent academic roles that combine teaching and research. It highlighted the increasing differentiation between those who teach and support learning in higher education and their different needs, motivations and aspirations. It summarised the greater demands arising from, for example, research assessment and increasingly selective funding, reduced government expenditure on teaching and the increasing influence of league tables and other forms of ranking. In particular, it focused on the shift towards teaching-only contracts and roles, and the specific needs of early career academics (including those entering from other professions) and individuals who were described in the original brief as being in 'learning support' roles. These include a range of roles around different forms of educational development and academic practice, and are likely to involve tasks of an academic nature. They incorporate groupings with clear identities and, in some cases, professional associations in their own right. Some staff involved in these roles may have academic contracts, while others may have professional contracts, terms and conditions. The term 'learning enhancement' is used in this report, therefore, as a generic term to describe the roles of such individuals, who are likely to have academic qualifications. The study echoes findings elsewhere that the identities of learning enhancement staff, and the more practice-oriented research they undertake, are often not clearly defined or visible within an institution (e.g. Bennett *et al.* 2015).

The earlier report also aimed to identify the key issues for teaching and learning, continuing professional development and reward and recognition arising from these developments. It argued for greater flexibility in enabling individuals to alter the balance of their activities (e.g. teaching, research, knowledge exchange and engagement, and management) from year to year and throughout their careers. Finally, it concluded that, as higher education expands towards universal participation which requires more teachers and scholars, we need a more accurate and attractive picture of careers in academia, not just for new entrants to the profession but for academics and learning enhancement staff at every stage of their working lives.

Since the publication of *Shifting academic careers*, the demands of increased competition and pressures for improved efficiency in the use of resources and greater accountability in UK higher education have become even more acute. All these developments are likely to have a significant impact on academics' working lives and careers. For example, the second Diamond Report on efficiency and effectiveness (UUK 2015) highlights an international market for the best staff, and the need for attractive pay and reward packages for high fliers in mid-career – who may well have worked in other spheres such as industry – together with more flexible approaches to reward and remuneration. The report also highlights an increased focus on teaching as a result of the new operating environment, particularly in England, with more institutions requiring their teaching staff to achieve accreditation through the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and

[1] We use the term 'higher education institution (HEI)', rather than the more recent term 'higher education provider (HEP)' because this research does not purport to investigate developments in FE colleges, private providers or other types of provider, which would require a different and larger study.

supporting learning in higher education (UKPSF), the nationally-recognised framework for benchmarking success within HE teaching and learning support.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE's) Financial Sustainability Strategy Group (FSSG 2015) suggests a continuing diversification of academic activity, with academics increasingly having to be ambassadors for their institutions and engage in business activities such as marketing, student recruitment and fund-raising. The Group points out:

> The next challenge is around the much more strategic, comprehensive, and individually-tailored use of digital technology … to enable academic staff and their institutions to engage with students in a way which is relevant to a generation of students who have grown up with digital technology. *(FSSG 2015, p. 59)*

The proposed introduction of 'Teaching Excellence Framework' in England (which was officially confirmed during the fieldwork for this study) will reinforce the policy focus on teaching. The Minister of State for Universities and Science, Jo Johnson, aims to rebalance the incentives for institutions to pay as much attention to the quality of teaching as to research. He seeks:

> to build a culture where teaching has equal status with research, with great teachers enjoying the same professional recognition and opportunities for career and pay progression as great researchers … provide students with the information they need to judge teaching quality – in the same way they can already compare a faculty's research rating … [and] include a clear set of outcome-focused criteria and metrics. *(BIS 2015)*

In parallel, the funding bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are seeking to reform the ways in which they meet their statutory requirement to assess the quality of education in the institutions they fund. This is focusing on the academic experiences and achievements of students "rather than systems and processes" and placing greater emphasis on the responsibilities of institutions and their governing bodies for these (HEFCE/HEFCW/DELNI 2015a). In particular, it is proposed that the external examining system should be 'professionalised', including the introduction of a national register of examiners, additional training on the role and assessment techniques, and better recognition of this activity by examiners' home institutions.

These various policy drivers and shifts in institutions' behaviour are, in our assessment, increasing the pressures and demands on academics, and especially those who teach. They do not consider whether those who work in our universities and colleges have the capacity or expertise to respond to them. The funding bodies' consultation on quality assessment, for example, contains no references to academics or professional staff, let alone the implications of the proposals for them (HEFCE/HEFCW/DELNI 2015b). Yet, one might assume that this group of professionals would be central to the quality of students' education. Few of these reports and initiatives give attention to longer-term questions around the systematic replenishment of the academic workforce, the preparation of early career staff, the attractiveness of the profession to them, or of creating sustainable, internationally recognised career pathways. Yet, these matters are at the core of higher education institutions' ability to survive and flourish. Not just in a national system but, increasingly, in a global environment in which the pressures and demands are even more complex and hazardous.

This research was commissioned to provide an insight into the professional development needs of all staff teaching and supporting learning in light of the changing nature of academic careers involving teaching, research and learning support. It aims to support the extension of the Academy's contribution in this area through the UKPSF, its own accreditation processes, and its continuing professional development (CPD) frameworks.

University College London (UCL) Institute of Education was commissioned by the HEA to explore the following research questions:

- What do HESA's data, and data from others, tell us about the changing academic career paths and staff transitions with respect to differing institutional contexts, discipline influences and career routes for teaching-only, research and learning support pathways?
- What opportunities exist for reward and recognition among those contracted only to teach in different types of institution?

- What kind of support is offered to those new to HE in research, teaching and teaching-related roles, and to what extent does this contribute to morale and motivation and support career development and alignment to the UKPSF?

The results of the study are also intended to inform the HEA's ongoing review of the UKPSF.

This report provides an initial summary of the research undertaken during this study, the design of which is described in the following section. Before presenting the substantive findings, we complete part one of this report by evaluating some of the currently available evidence of the shifting academic landscape and, in particular, the quantitative data on staff published by HESA. The substantive findings are presented in part two in three dimensions: by case study, to provide the institutional context; by individual career history, to highlight the real working lives and career trajectories of academics and learning enhancement staff; and by theme to begin to draw out comparisons between the different institutions we studied and the range of individuals we interviewed. Finally, we bring this rich material together in part three, discussing our key findings, drawing some conclusions and making recommendations for the key parties responsible for meeting the staff and professional-development needs of the changing academic workforce.

1.2. Research design

This research study investigated the staff development needs of the changing academic workforce. It focused on the lived reality of academic and learning enhancement staff through a qualitative programme of fieldwork enriched by analysis of existing quantitative data and the results of recent surveys on the academic workforce. The fieldwork programme covered eight case study institutions and included semi-structured interviews with staff and senior management. The interviews were contextualised through a review of documentary evidence made available by the case study institutions. The analysis was undertaken both at the level of the institution and the individual, but not by discipline, although every attempt was made to interview staff from a range of disciplines. We accept that teaching and research, and the relationships between them, can only be understood in the contexts of different disciplines, and their different positions on the nature of knowledge itself. There is good reason to critique a generic approach, as Becher and Trowler (2001) and Colbeck (1998) have demonstrated important patterns of difference between disciplinary areas. However, while the relationships between teaching and research will look very different in different disciplines, the sample size and focus on staff role and career stage precluded any systematic consideration of this issue. Analysis of the data was completed in three strands: the first focused on the institutional case studies to bring out any unique features of each case; the second focused on thematic analysis of the data to identify any similarities and differences between the case studies; and the third focused on the individual narratives about career trajectories emerging from the interviews. The project team members were William Locke (Principal Investigator), Dr Celia Whitchurch (Co-Investigator), Dr Holly Smith and Dr Anna Mazenod (Research Assistants).

The interviews

Interviews were the main source of evidence for the study. Semi-structured interviews with predetermined questions that could be modified were identified as the most appropriate format for the interviews that were focused on capturing people's experiences of career and staff development. The flexibility of the semi-structured interview design enabled the interviewers to adapt the wording and the order of the questions to follow the flow of each interview dialogue, and to make the interviewees feel at ease (Robson 2007).

The project received ethical approval from the UCL Institute of Education research ethics committee. This included clearance for the procedures for providing information and gaining consent from interviewees. These procedures maintained that, prior to proceeding with an interview, the interviewer ensured that the interviewee understood the broad aims of the research project and confirmed that the contents of the interview would remain anonymous and confidential. Interviewees were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point before publication without their data being used, and were asked to sign a consent form.

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of academic staff in a Russell Group university in February 2015 to pilot the schedule for the interviews. The interview schedule was restructured

into a chronological series of questions about an individual's career on the basis of the pilot experience, and a second interview schedule was developed to enable different types of case study interviewees to be targeted. The main interview schedule was used for interviews with academic and learning enhancement staff (see below) to explore their career trajectories, aspirations and experiences in their current institution. The second interview schedule was used for interviews with senior managers, such as directors of human resources and Pro-Vice-Chancellors (PVCs) with a staffing remit, who were providing an overview of staffing and staff development in their institutions. A short biographical data questionnaire was also developed to capture information on the demographic characteristics of the interview sample, for example, their age, sex and ethnicity. The biographical data questionnaire was sent out to the interviewees prior to the interviews along with the information and consent sheet and the relevant interview schedule. The completed biographical data questionnaires were separated from the signed information and consent sheets, and the questionnaires were anonymised and analysed collectively. Copies of the two interview schedules, the biographical data questionnaire, and the information and consent sheet are provided in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 respectively.

Selection of case study institutions

Eight case study institutions were selected on the basis of national location (five English and one each from Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland), institutional type (e.g. Russell Group, post-1992 university, etc.) and proportion of those who, according to the HESA data, have teaching-only contracts. These eight case study institutions were first approached in April 2015 and, by the end of May 2015, seven out of the eight first-choice institutions had agreed to participate in the research. A substitute for the one institution that declined to participate at that time was sought by identifying a university of a similar institutional type. This potential substitute was successfully recruited to the study, thereby completing the set of eight case study institutions. See Table 1 below for the anonymised list of case study institutions, together with the percentage of those employed on teaching-only contracts as a proportion of those who teach. (However, these figures were not necessarily corroborated by those interviewed.)

Table 1: Case study institutions

Case study institution	**Teaching-only contracts as a proportion of those who teach**
Large Russell Group university	23%
Small Post-1992 university	28%
Post-2004 university	33%
Small Russell Group university	35%
Medium-sized Post-1992 university	40%
Large Pre-1992 university	47%
Small Pre-1992 university	63%
Large Post-1992 university	64%

Source: HESA 2015

In each participating institution a 'gate-keeper' was identified to facilitate the nomination of potential interviewees and, in most cases, to help in setting up the interview timetable.

Selection of the interviewees

In each of the case study institutions, the research team asked to interview eight individuals (six to seven academic or learning enhancement staff, and one to two senior managers). They asked for the academic or learning-enhancement interviewees to include one early career academic member of staff, one mid-career academic member of staff, an individual with a teaching-only contract, an individual with a research-only contract, an individual with a traditional teaching and research remit, and an individual with a learning support remit. They also asked to interview directors of human resources and PVCs with a staffing remit as the senior managers who could provide an overview of the institution and its strategies in relation to staff development.

The gate-keepers were crucial to facilitating the fieldwork. In each of the case study institutions, the gate-keepers took on the responsibility for identifying potential interviewees for the study, a responsibility that was over and above their normal day-to-day duties. The gate-keepers' day-to-day roles ranged from human resources administration and management to staff development and central university administration and management functions. Depending on their role within the case study institution, and their perception of the purpose and value of the study, the gate-keepers adopted different approaches to the nomination of interviewees. In some institutions, the gate-keepers provided the research team with a list of potential interviewees. The member of the research team leading on that case study institution contacted the potential interviewees and arranged mutually convenient interview dates and times with those individuals who agreed to participate. A number of the gate-keepers also set up dates and times for interviews with individuals with the required role and career profile. While the research team's instructions to the gatekeepers were consistent in terms of the role and career profiles of prospective interviewees, there were considerable differences in the interview sample in the different case studies. This can be explained by institutional differences in the kinds of roles that are available to academic and learning enhancement staff, but also by differences in institutional cultures that could influence the gate-keepers' understanding of the types of staff the research team wished to interview. For example, the interviewees nominated as having a learning support remit ranged considerably in their roles. They included individuals with responsibility for enhancing the student experience, specialists on academic skills, e-learning and employability, and educational developers.

The sample of 62 interviewees across eight case study institutions is relatively limited (in size and range) and so the findings reported here are qualified by this. Where reference is made to 'most' or 'few' of the interviewees, this is not meant in any way to suggest the views reported are representative of the full population across the sector.

Data from the case studies

Each of the case-study institutions were visited at least once, and sometimes three or four times. The case study visits took place in June and July 2015. The majority of interviews with senior managers, and academic and learning enhancement staff took place face-to-face during these visits. Some telephone interviews were subsequently arranged where it was not possible to identify a mutually convenient time for the interviewee and a member of the research team to meet. Due to members of staff being unavailable over the summer holiday period it was not possible to complete the full set of eight interviews in one of the case studies, and only six interviews were completed. Two interviewees (from two separate case studies) decided to withdraw from the study, and data relating to their interviews was omitted from the study data set. The final set of interview data consequently amounted to 62 interviews. The roles of the interviewees and the types of university where they were employed are shown in Table 2. There were, overall, more interviewees on teaching and research, and teaching-only contracts, and in senior management roles, and fewer interviewees on research-only contracts and in learning enhancement roles.

Table 2: Roles and types of university					
	Post-2004 university (1)	**Post-1992 universities (3)**	**Russell Group universities (2)**	**Other pre-1992 universities (2)**	**Total**
Teaching and research	1	7	5	3	**16**
Research-only	1	3	1		**6**
Teaching-only	3	6	5	5	**19**
Learning enhancement staff	1	2	1	3	**7**
Senior management team	2	6	2	4	**14**
Total	**8**	**24**	**14**	**16**	**62**

Analysis of the biographical data questionnaires showed that 54% of the interviewees were male, and 96% of the interviewees identified their ethnic origin as white. Table 3 below shows the age breakdown of the interview sample.

Table 3: Age breakdown of the interview sample	
Age group	**Percentage (%) of the sample**
20-29	6%
30-39	33%
40-49	31%
50+	31%

The face-to-face and telephone interviews were recorded, fully transcribed and shared within the research team. In addition to the interviews, the case study institutions provided documentary evidence such as policies relating to staff recruitment and retention. Some of this information is in the public domain, while some documentary evidence was provided to the researchers in confidence.

Analysis of quantitative data

The main source of quantitative data for the project was the HESA staff data (HESA 2015). HESA staff data – available through subscription and the 2013-14 HESA data release (February 2015) – were analysed to identify trends in the HE sector and the institution-specific backdrop to the case studies. This analysis was complemented by longitudinal analysis of comparable data from earlier years and survey results from other sources such as the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) and the University and College Union (UCU).

Analysis of qualitative data

The approach to the interview data was qualitative and interpretive. Summaries were developed of each case institution from the interview transcripts. These were reviewed In relation to documentary evidence that was available publicly or had been provided to the researchers in confidence. At this stage, similarities and differences were identified between the institutions, alongside possible variables affecting their profiles.

Analysis of individual transcripts took place at three levels, the descriptive (for instance, to identify institutional contexts and different approaches to staff development), the interpretive (for instance, to understand the gap between formal statements about the value accorded to teaching and local

understandings), and the conceptual (for instance, to review ways in which individuals have become increasingly active agents in their own development, drawing on colleagues and networks as well as formal provision). This process followed authors such as Creswell (1998) and Miles and Huberman (1994), enabling "semantic" (explicit, overt) and "latent" (underlying, implicit) themes to be identified (Braun and Clark 2013). This allowed individual career histories to be explored in relation to, for instance, institution, subject area, previous career trajectory inside or outside higher education, and career aspirations.

1.3. Other contextual evidence

The previous report (Locke 2014) provided a summary of some of the key trends in the data on academic staff collected by HESA. This included a breakdown of full-time and part-time academics in the different nations of the UK; the trends since 2004 in the numbers of academics (including by subject area) and other staff in HEIs; and the shifts in modes of employment of academics between full-time and part-time and between open-ended/permanent and fixed-term contracts. For example, it noted from 2004, there was a steady rise in both academic and non-academic staff until 2010-11, when the increase in academic staff slowed but picked up again subsequently, and the number of non-academic staff actually decreased. In 2012-13, nearly 34% of academics worked part-time and nearly 36% were on fixed-term contracts. Of those academics on full-time contracts, 25% were fixed term. Among part-time academics, this proportion rose to nearly 56%. Between 2011 and 2012, the number of open ended/permanent part-time academics fell by nearly 16%, and over the same period the number of fixed-term part-time academics increased by nearly 19%.

The 2014 report also focused on the employment function of academic staff: whether they were contracted to undertake teaching and research, just teaching or just research. Since that report, a further year of data has been released (for 2013-14) which coincided with institutions' submissions to the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) in Autumn 2013. Some continuing trends are highlighted below, together with some significant changes. (Table 4 and Chart 1 provide an update on the earlier report.)

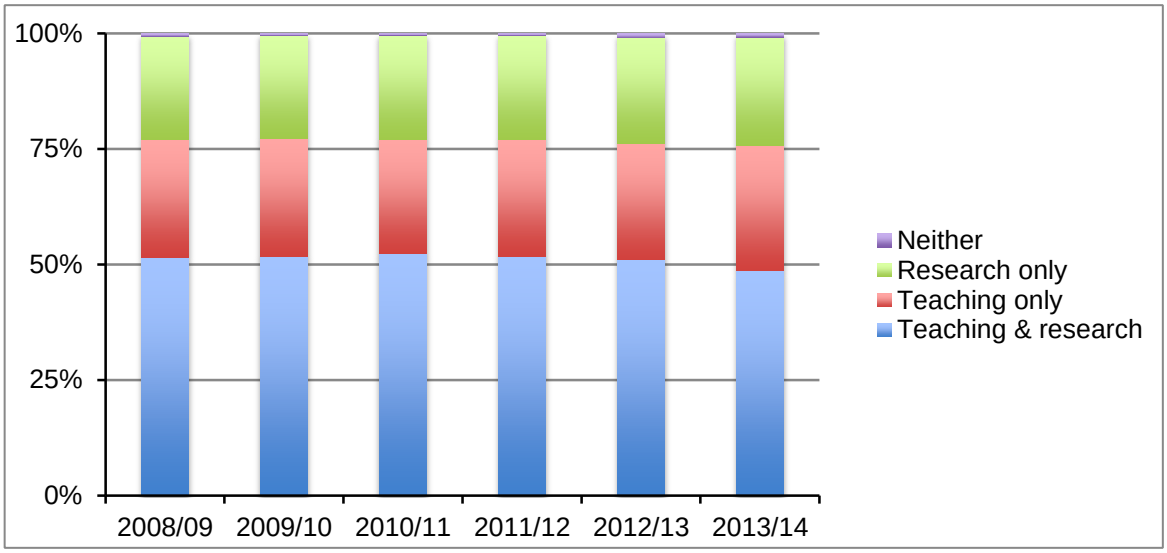
Table 4: Academic staff by employment function 2008-09 to 2013-14

	2008-08		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Teaching and research	92,135	51.5	93,885	51.7	94,760	52.3	93,960	51.8	94,600	51.0	94,480	48.6
Teaching -only	45,825	25.6	46,475	25.6	45,005	24.8	45,825	25.3	46,795	25.2	52,575	27.1
Research -only	39,915	22.3	40,470	22.3	40,740	22.5	40,845	22.5	42,350	22.8	45,580	23.5
Neither	1,170	0.7	770	0.4	685	0.4	755	0.4	1,840	1.0	1,605	0.8
Total	**179,045**		**181,600**		**181,190**		**181,385**		**185,585**		**194,240**	

Source: HESA 2010-15

There are a number of unusual developments between 2012-13 and 2013-14. Firstly, the total number of academic staff grew by 8,655 or nearly 4.5%, a huge jump compared with previous years, especially since the economic crisis and reduction of direct government funding for higher education. Secondly, this increase was made up of an additional 5,780 staff on teaching-only contracts and 3,230 academics on research-only contracts. Those on teaching and research contracts actually declined and, for the first time, now represent a minority (48.6%) of the academic population (as shown in Chart 1).

Chart 1: Academic staff by employment function, 2008-09 to 2013-14



Source: HESA 2010-15

In a single year, therefore, the number of staff on teaching-only contracts increased by 12% compared with 2012-13, meaning that 27% of all academics and 36% of those who teach are on these contract types (compared with 25% and 33% respectively in 2012-13). One plausible reason for this could be that institutions reduced the number of their academic staff who would be eligible for submission to the REF in order to increase their 'research intensity' rankings when the results were announced in December 2014. It is not clear the extent to which this could be a result of individuals who were previously on teaching and research contracts being moved to teaching-only contracts and new appointments to teaching-only contracts. However, while the vast majority (76%) of those on teaching-only contracts are employed part-time, the number of those on full-time teaching-only contracts in 2013-14 increased by 59% from 2010-11. This suggests a significant number of those excluded from submission in the run up to the 2014 REF had previously been full-time academics expected to undertake research as well as teaching, but now regarded as no longer 'research-active'.

In theory, it should be possible to compare the number of academics eligible for submission, and the proportion of these submitted by each HEI to the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) with their 2014 equivalents in order to see whether (and which) institutions were adopting this more selective strategy. However, the data definitions have changed during this period and it is not possible to compare contextual data in this way. In 2013-14, the number of staff on research-only contracts increased by 8%, and by 12% compared with 2011-12. Again, it is possible that this was related to institutions' efforts to improve their performance in the 2014 REF. It is also worth reflecting on the relative salary levels and the overall profile of staff in the different academic employment functions. The proportion of those on teaching and research contracts with salaries over £42,500 in 2013-14 was 80%, compared with 23% of those on teaching-only contracts and only 19% of research-only academics (HESA 2015). Those on teaching-only and research-only contracts are much more likely to: be young, have worked in higher education for less than ten years, be working part-time, and be female (UCU, unpublished survey results). A recent survey of institutional human resources directors reported that they had far fewer difficulties in recruiting teaching-only and research-only staff than academic staff expected to undertake teaching and research (UCEA 2015).

However, when the sector-wide trends are broken down by institutional type, a clearer picture emerges. The earlier report disaggregated the data by Russell Group universities, other pre-1992 universities, and all other HEIs (e.g. post-1992 and post-2004 universities, higher education colleges, etc.). It identified a much higher proportion of academic staff on teaching-only contracts in some (although not all) other pre-1992 universities (many former members of the, now defunct, 1994 Group). In particular, it identified ten multi-faculty universities and one specialist institution in 2012-13 with more than 50% of those who taught on teaching-only contracts. The situation in this group has not changed much in 2013-14. However, this means that the 12% growth in teaching-only contracts in that year occurred entirely in the other categories, with a

16% increase in Russell Group universities and an even greater increase of 26% (4,110) in all other HEIs. Indeed, it is in these other HEIs where the reduction in teaching and research contracts has taken place. So, while the core of such traditional posts is shrinking, those that remain are more and more concentrated in all types of pre-1992 university and, particularly, in the Russell Group universities which saw an increase of 5% (1,610) of those on teaching and research contracts in 2013-14.

These sector-wide figures are reflected in the post-1992 case study universities, which all saw an increase in the number of those on teaching-only contracts in 2013-14, including by several hundred in two of them. One has now over 400 and another over 800 such positions representing nearly a half, and more than a half (respectively), of those who teach at these universities. When asked about these proportions, several case study institutions seemed to be unaware of them or questioned the data the institution itself had submitted to HESA. The HESA definitions are clear (HESA 2015), but there appear to be variations in the ways in which different institutions are interpreting these in order to categorise their academic staff. This raises important questions about the accuracy, reliability and therefore validity of these figures, which need further comment. We return to this issue in our conclusions and recommendations.

It is also worth repeating from the earlier report that these data only include those academics whose contracts specifically state they are employed only to teach. There was considerable evidence from the case study institutions that some of those on teaching and research contracts are also being directed to conduct less or no research (or are receiving less or no funding or time allocation for research), and so effectively undertaking teaching-only *roles*, despite their contractual status. This confirms the results of previous surveys of academics, including a recent survey undertaken by the University and College Union (UCU) (Copeland 2014; UCU unpublished).

Nevertheless, the variation in the concentrations of staff on teaching-only contracts may reflect institutional employment policies and human resource management and strategies. Two Russell Group universities (not case study institutions) reported over 1,000 such contract holders and nearly half of this group has over 500 each. Fifty per cent of those who teach in two of these universities are recorded as teaching-only, and five of the 24 equal or exceed the national average of 36% of those teaching. Nineteen of the other pre-1992 universities reported that they exceed this sector average, even excluding the Open University, the conservatoires and other specialist institutions that rely on professional practitioners to provide 'state of the art' education. Eight of the larger former polytechnics had over 500 academics on teaching-only contracts in 2013-14.

Table 5 provides a similar break down as in the earlier report for the 2013-14 academic staffing figures. It also shows the numbers of 'atypical' staff employed by HEIs on academic contracts that are excluded from the figures for 'mainstream academics'. These include staff:

> whose working arrangements are not permanent, involve complex employment relationships and/or involve work away from the supervision of the normal work provider. These may be characterised by a high degree of flexibility for both the work provider and the working person. *(DTI 2003, para. 23)*

They may include professional practitioners, guest lecturers, graduate assistants, and others on fractional or occasional contracts, half of whom are concentrated in the 24 Russell Group universities (as shown in Table 5).

Table 5: Teaching-only and atypical academic staff by institution type, 2013-14					
Institution type (number of HEIs)	**All academics (%)**	**All teachers i.e. teaching-only and teaching and research (%)**	**Teaching-only contracts**	**Teaching-only as a proportion of all teachers in this type of HEI**	**Atypical academic staff (%)**
Russell Group universities (24)	77,485 (40%)	43,670 (30%)	11,960 (23%)	27%	37,820 (50%)
Other pre-1992 universities (49)	50,434 (26%)	41,405 (28%)	20,740 (39%)	50%	14,795 (20%)
All other HEIs (88)	66,325 (34%)	61,980 (42%)	19,875 (38%)	32%	22,425 (30%)
Total (161)	**194,245 (100%)**	**147,055 (100%)**	**52,575 (100%)**	**36%**	**75,040 (100%)**

Source: HESA 2015

The data on academic staff from the last few years seem to indicate a number of trends that should be monitored and investigated further, in particular, the growth in teaching-only contracts and roles in certain kinds of HEI. The case studies and individual career vignettes that form the core new evidence from this study begin to 'flesh out' the career trajectories and lived experiences of some of those in these roles.

2. The findings

We present the findings from three perspectives:

- through thematic analysis of all the case studies, interviews and documentary evidence, in order to draw out a number of common refrains, shared challenges and potential solutions that are explored further in part three of the report;
- as institutional case studies, drawing out the major organisational characteristics as revealed by the interviews, documentary evidence, and publicly available information about each university;
- and in vignettes of individual academics and learning support staff who were interviewed having been selected to represent the range of roles and contractual conditions.

2.1. Major themes emerging from the research

Here we draw out a number of common refrains, shared challenges and potential solutions through thematic analysis of all the case studies, interviews conducted, and documentary evidence we gathered. The following themes were those that arose most frequently in our coding and categorisation during the analysis of the evidence. These are discussed and placed in a broader context later in the report.

The thematic analysis provides a conceptual framework for the more detailed findings, ways in which these might be interpreted, and their practical implications, which lead into our conclusions and recommendations. Thus 'the changing parameters of academic work' (Sect. 2.1.1) incorporates increasing tensions, and at times distance, between teaching and research activity, at both individual and institutional levels. This includes the priority afforded to research and teaching, formal mechanisms for achieving this, and the responses of individuals including the 'hidden' time spent on one or the other. 'Changes in career trajectories and pathways' (Sect. 2.1.2) follows on from these generic shifts in working patterns and foci, impacting on both individual motivations and institutional reward structures. Similarly, there may be 'hidden' rules and practices in relation to promotion criteria, recognition of specific types of activity, and the possibility of moving between different types of contract. The pressures on individuals and ways in which they negotiate structures and processes, drawing on formal and informal relationships, are encompassed in 'recovering time and psychological space' (Sect. 2.1.3). In turn, the response of institutions, indeed the partnership they seek to achieve with staff in providing ongoing professional development is reflected in 'differentiation and the need for individual development and support' (Sect. 2.1.4). The themes were developed by clustering recurrent issues that arose from the narratives, using a logic of moving from the general (policy and system-wide concerns arising out of this) to the more specific (implications for individuals and responses that institutions might make at the local level in relation to practice).

2.1.1. The changing parameters of academic work

The parameters of academic work are changing in a number of different ways. The way in which academic work is undertaken is changing with increasing specialisation of roles. The earlier report (Locke 2014) referred to evidence of the differentiation of the academic profession. Analysis of the most recent (2013-14) HESA data (HESA 2015) as presented in section 1.3 identifies the increase in teaching-only and research-only contracts. This is indicative of academic work being increasingly divided into teaching *or* research rather than being conceptualised as teaching *and* research. Other 'specialist' areas of academic work that emerged from the interview narratives in this study included enhancement of 'the student experience', knowledge exchange, policy development, and pedagogical innovation. The majority of the interviewees felt that their academic work was worthwhile and often intrinsically motivating. There were, however, differential opportunities for promotion through the different 'specialisms'. (These findings are explored under the theme 'career trajectories and pathways').

The increasing specialisation of roles also reveals that what counts as academic work is changing. For example, the increased focus on 'the student experience' with more vocal, fee-paying students and parents was evident in many of the case study institutions. The vignette of the early career academic (teaching and student experience role) in a Russell Group university illustrates the lived experience of an academic with a key role in enhancing the student experience. The definition of academic work is, however, a very contested terrain with many of the interviewees feeling the strain of trying to construct their academic identity around

a pattern or type of work diverging from the perceived 'gold standard' of a full-time teaching and research role.

The hierarchies of 'worth' in academic work were also evident in the interview narratives with research that could be returned in the REF being perceived as most valued by the universities, and often by staff themselves. These hierarchies of 'worth' were shaping individuals' perception and construction of their academic identity, and were potentially impacting on the nature of their employment contracts as teaching and research, or as teaching-focused academic staff. A Pro-Vice-Chancellor, for example, frankly explained that an individual staff member's ambitions to carry out research could not be subsidised in the long-run if the research activity could not be included in future research assessment exercises. Some of the interviewees felt that the metrics-focused and evidence-based approach to assessing staff contributions had increased the transparency of processes around academic promotions. Others, however, felt that this resulted in an excessive emphasis on quantifiable outputs and outcomes that could not be representative of the full spectrum of academic work and the contributions that academic staff made to their institutions. The vignette of an academic and practitioner at a post-1992 university illustrates some of these concerns.

The increase in workloads and the advance of online and remote working for both students and staff has impacted on academic work and work–life patterns. Academic work was described as "all pervasive", easily absorbing weekends and taking over holidays. 'Real' time and 'thinking time' for development activities were seen as precious commodities by many of the interviewees. (These findings are explored further under the theme 'Recovering time and psychological space', 2.1.3 below.)

The agency of staff in making time and identifying opportunities for professional and career development was a recurring theme in the interviews. Many of the interviewees felt that their proactivity had secured them developmental and promotional opportunities not afforded to others. The role of the institutions in providing opportunities and in supporting members of staff in taking up opportunities was, however, critiqued. The increasing differentiation of the academic profession suggests that uniform approaches to staff development may be becoming less effective. (These findings are explored further under the theme 'Differentiation and the need for individual development and support', 2.1.4 below.)

The study also identified some regional differences that impacted on the demands and experiences of academic work in the case study institutions. These arose from differences in regional labour markets and the presence of other higher education institutions in the area, to which academic staff could potentially transfer. Other regional variations arose from different policies and contexts within which institutions were located. One example was the need for academic staff with specialist language skills in Wales. Another was the different funding level per student and the importance of monitoring the profile of staff promotions in relation to gender and religion in Northern Ireland. In the latter context, for example, the Equality legislation introduced in 1988 meant that a greater level of transparency was the norm. Another potential regional difference suggested in the interviews was the significant collaboration in research across universities in Scotland. For example, the Marine Alliance for Science and Technology in Scotland, which is a pooling initiative to enable research with high infrastructure costs, such as those relating to marine studies.

2.1.2. Career trajectories and pathways

Early career staff would appear to continue to have high ideals and aspirations about an academic career, including job and life satisfaction, contribution to society, academic freedom, and the ability to influence students' lives, as well as research productivity and teaching performance (Sutherland 2015). At the same time, Fumasoli *et al.* note "the multiplication of tasks to fulfil and competencies to gain" (2015, p. 211). Nevertheless, there continues to be a perception that it is research that really counts for advancement, and that activities such as enhancing graduate employability, service to the community, and student and public engagement, in which early career academics may become involved so as to add to their profile, have lower status in the career stakes. Such tasks individually can be seen as representing:

> an activity *sans* career pathway or well-formulated and formalised system of recognition and reward … Something pursued mainly by those at the beginnings of their academic careers, struggling for a way in, perhaps uncertain of its implications. *(Watermeyer 2015, p. 344).*

The same applies to learning enhancement activities such as developing students' academic writing (Tuck 2014). In turn, Fumasoli, Goastellec and Kehm (2015) report:

> an on-going stratification and division of labour … in the academic profession … The university as a collegial system is turning more and more into an organisation where different actors are involved … while a professorship appears increasingly difficult to achieve in the course of an academic career, differentiated roles and positions are created and new paths are experimented with to manage the variety of human resources. *(Fumasoli, Goastellec and Kehm 2015, p. 204)*

Outside the UK, the transformation of academic career structures is ongoing in the US, where only 30% of academic faculty in public and non-profit private institutions now have tenure-track posts (Kezar and Maxey 2015). Those not on tenure track typically focus on teaching, teaching support, or research, but not all three. Experimentation with different role structures include an expansion to definitions of scholarship to include, for instance:

- community engagement, programme development, practicum or online teaching;
- allowing early career researchers in tenure-track positions additional time to secure research grants or establish research programmes before formally beginning their probationary period;
- interdisciplinary team teaching;
- establishing 'creativity contracts' whereby faculty members might focus on different activities at different periods of time, so that they are not carrying full teaching, research and service loads at the same time;
- alternatively there may be provision for them to move in and out of higher education (Kezar and Maxey 2015).

In Europe, Fumasoli, Goastellec and Kehm (2015) also note a diversification of academic careers. Emergent models, such as externally funded positions and cross or joint employment are explored by Brechelmacher *et al.* (2015). In turn, and perhaps counter-intuitively, Kwiek and Antonowicz (2015) show that in competitive and less stable academic environments, all stages of meeting the requirements for advancement on an academic career path are becoming more uniform. Therefore, the academic career might be described as "less stable but more predictable" (Kwiek and Antonowicz 2015, p. 64).

A variety of routes into academia

The staff interviewed for the study had followed a range of routes into academia. Only a minority had pursued a career in higher education after what is often seen as the traditional, linear trajectory of an undergraduate degree, post-graduate study leading to a PhD, followed by post-doctoral positions and a first permanent academic post. In the case of the majority, career trajectories were less linear and many had worked outside the higher education sector. The experiences of work outside the higher education sector can be grouped into two broad categories. The first includes academic staff who had initially started on a different kind of career trajectory, but quickly felt drawn into academia and academic work. These interviewees were, for example, more likely to recognise the benefits of academic work in contrast with interviewees who had followed the traditional linear trajectory and had no experience of non-academic work environments and types of work. The second category includes academic staff with substantial experience of working outside academia, such as in industry or occupational practice prior to, or throughout their higher education sector career. A number of the interviewees in the latter category were combining their professional or commercial activities with part-time teaching and research work, and therefore could be characterised as 'freelance' academics.

Interviewees with academic roles, including learning enhancement staff, were evenly distributed across Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. Of these, approximately half were teaching and researching in their main original subject of study. However, it was striking how many had crossed boundaries to work in other subjects, departments, schools, and faculties. Some of these would be working in educational technology, language/writing skills, health and wellbeing initiatives; facilitating links with employers, business, industry and professional bodies; and promoting public and regional engagement. There appears to be significant movement from their original disciplines, with the result that non-linear career paths were being forged, often as a result of professional contacts or emerging interests, in ways that were considered developmental by the interviewees themselves. Learning from peers in different settings was mentioned as being particularly enriching.

Teaching-only and research-only contracts and roles

Eighteen teaching-only and seven research-only staff were interviewed. Some of them had formal contracts that were teaching-only or research-only. Others had negotiated within their formal 'teaching and research' workload to focus on one or the other, thus:

> It hasn't happened yet [Teaching-only contracts] but you can, without changing your contract, because of the three elements [teaching, research, enterprise] within it … negotiate what percentage of each element you do. So if you really wanted to focus on teaching, you could rack up your teaching hours and reduce your research hours, for example, if you really wanted to work in research, you could do the same and if you wanted to work in enterprise you could do the same, as long as the needs of the school or the department were met then that's a reasonable thing to do. So we don't need different contracts in that sense because there's flexibility there. *(Late-career academic, teaching focused)*

Some staff were content to remain within these roles because it suited their interests, talents and lifestyles, because of intrinsic motivation, and because of any influence they might have on the next generation:

> I think when you love the job it gets you through it and that's the thing*. (Early career teaching-only academic)*

Another individual, formally on a teaching-only contract, said that "I'm teaching what I'm researching and I'm researching what I'm teaching" and saw this as a fulfilling activity. Nevertheless, there was acknowledgement that such roles were not easily contained, as one early career researcher put it:

> research contract [work] is not a 9 to 5 job and that's the first thing I think people have to recognise … If to you it's just a job … it's one of the worst professions to be in, from the point of view of the fact that you get out of it what you put into it, and it's very, very competitive. So, winning research grants and things like that, you've got to really want to do it. *(Early career researcher)*

However, there was evidence that it was possible to build a career out of research, particularly if this involved an ongoing relationship with a professional body or industrial funders, often built through personal ties:

> I moved from being a researcher to understanding researchers and understanding the bigger context, understanding how politics influence research, how strategy is extremely important; the global aspect of research and not just your own … world and your own discipline and your own subject area. I started to learn there the importance of being much more strategic in your creative planning and how you move forward. *(Mid-career research-only academic working with public body)*

> the working relationship was brilliant and the opportunity to be [the] catalyst between the two was fine … it [is] the best combination of what I love to do, which is share knowledge, and the commercial environment. *(Late-career research-only academic working with commercial partner)*

However, in this case the interviewee expressed some frustrations with the ability of the institution to act speedily enough to meet the requirements of business.

Similarly, mid-career and late-career academic staff who focused on teaching-only contracts typically had a management role in relation to, for example, the student experience, a programme directorship, or recruitment and outreach, which they found rewarding, and also provided a degree of security. Others worked in practitioner settings such as nursing and social work and had a commitment to these as their professional milieu.

Where the narratives became more strained, this could be because of, for instance, a lack of communication with both line managers and central departments, such as human resources, about what the role comprised; a perceived over-burdening with "administration", which did not "count" for workload models or for promotion, for example; and intense competition for advancement which militated against genuine teamwork and collegiality and contributed to a sense of isolation.

There was also evidence that, although individuals early in their careers might be happy to have gained a foothold for the time being and become very involved in, say, improving the student experience or pedagogical research, there came a point when they needed more security:

> I'm doing my dream job at the moment really … but then there'll come a point where the money isn't enough and the impact isn't enough I suppose, [and] I'll want to move in different circles. *(Early career academic)*

Initiatives taken by individuals in teaching-only or research-only roles to extend their networks and gain experience in other spheres included, for instance, being part of school or faculty committees for initiatives such as ATHENA SWAN, attending external programmes such as the LFHE AURORA programme, and being involved in professional or disciplinary associations.

Furthermore, ideas about short-term early career contracts were not entirely negative and were seen by some interviewees as providing essential experience and a platform for progression. Similarly:

> if there's people that you want to draw into the teaching conversation, you can … get them in teaching less than 10 hours … So, if you have a member of staff that says, "I've got an opportunity to go and do a secondment in Australia" or whatever, they can go away and do that and … you can pick someone off the register and that works really well in terms of … getting people in who can have interesting conversations, seeing how they work, seeing how they fit with the school and then hopefully they can get more and more involved, so that works quite well. *(Teaching-only academic)*

Newer career pathways in academic work

Many of the case study institutions had recently introduced or repackaged their academic career pathways. Where academic career progression other than the traditional teaching and research pathway existed, these tended to include a teaching-focused pathway and an enterprise or knowledge exchange pathway. The majority of the case study institutions had sought to address issues of parity between the different career pathways and outline equivalent progression routes through to the top ranks. The lived experience of the academic staff in these institutions however suggested that there were still many practical points to iron out in the application and implementation of policies around the promotion pathways. Even where different pathways had been rolled out, staff were not always aware of their existence or what they entailed. These findings are consistent with UCU's teaching survey (UCU, unpublished), which found that the majority of academic staff surveyed were not aware of a defined career track for teaching-focused or teaching-only roles in their institution. The lack of awareness may be an indication of their relative newness in many institutions, but perceptions of parity between the different pathways are also likely to impact on individuals' interest in, and engagement with, them.

For most of the interviewees, the traditional teaching and research pathway was seen as the major route, both in terms of numbers of academic staff being promoted, but also in terms of prestige. Only in a small minority of the case study institutions did the interview narratives demonstrate evidence of promotion through pathways other than research. Across the whole study there were some interviewees who had been promoted through the teaching-focused route, but felt that other academic staff regarded them as 'second class' for this. There were also variations in the narratives emerging from different departments within the same case study institution, suggesting that where role models for promotion through, for example, the teaching-focused route were visible, these routes were more likely to be seen as viable and valued. In departments where there were no such role models, the non-research pathways were more likely to be seen as irrelevant despite the existence of a university-wide policy.

The issue of research being seen as more prestigious also seemed to tie in with issues of academic identity. Many of the interviewees talked about the importance of remaining research-active, whether it was for the purposes of being included in REF submissions or for pursuing an area of interest important to them. Concerns were expressed about the consequences of rigid teaching-only career pathways, both for individuals and for the higher education sector as a whole. One mid-career academic, for example, professed to not knowing "a single academic who doesn't want to do some research." This echoed findings from Ylijoki and Ursin's (2013) study of Finnish academics, which found academic staff having "to reinterpret and negotiate what it means to be an academic without being an active researcher."

Academic staff on teaching-only contracts or in teaching-focused roles often felt rewarded by their teaching. Many, however, were frustrated by what they saw as limited opportunities for career progression. There were institutional differences in what opportunities academics saw as available to them, for example, through specified career pathways. One of the particular challenges that was raised about being promoted through a teaching-focused pathway was the recurring emphasis on the pursuit of scholarship and the lack of clarity around what 'scholarship' means. As one of the mid-career academics commented:

> one of the great mysteries of the teaching and scholarship contract is that nobody can actually tell you what you have to do to fulfil the scholarship part of it. And I guess that's actually how I got interested in it in the first place, because you're thinking, "I need to go for a promotion here", and it says in the promotion criteria "scholarship". I need to know what that is, what that means. *(Mid-career academic)*

Almost equally important were local differences in line managers' and middle managers' approaches to staff development and career progression. One late-career academic, for example, described a previous head of department asking staff to "stand up … teach and that's it, don't think outside that, don't be creative or innovative." This contrasts with another head of department, who had adopted a more empowering approach to staff taking opportunities to develop themselves. Reflecting on the experiences of her peer group, an early career academic summarised the difference that departmental leadership or culture could make as follows:

> you can see that even with the same faculty, you belong to … different departments, you have different culture, you have different supports, then you become different people. *(Early career academic)*

Generational differences in the lived experience of academic staff

For many of the interviewees getting their first permanent academic post had been a major milestone in their career. This had been experienced as a significant achievement after a more precarious academic existence on, for example, short-term teaching or research contracts. Achieving a permanent foothold on the career ladder is such a major step that younger staff often give little thought to the next stages, although a number of them mentioned the need for training in the use of IT and online teaching and learning techniques. Furthermore, achieving a permanent post may be serendipitous in the sense that it is often the result of small steps taken, the use of networks, and even patronage, through which opportunities arise.

Some of the interviewees who had worked in academia for 10-15 years felt that it was now much harder to get onto the first step of the career ladder and obtain a permanent academic post. Thus, a mid-career academic commented on the competition for first permanent academic appointments as follows:

> people will say they sit on interview panels and they're interviewing people and thinking "gosh, if I was being interviewed at that level, I wouldn't have got my own job." Because the minimum standard is increasing and increasing and increasing. *(Mid-career academic)*

Clear differences emerged between the older and the younger cohorts of academics in terms of the level of education that had been expected at the starting point in their academic career. The early career interviewees in the study had all completed their PhDs prior to their appointment or had commenced a part-time PhD as part of a contractual obligation. Many already held a teaching qualification or were working towards such a qualification in the higher education sector. The late-career interviewees in the study were, in contrast, more varied in their qualification profiles and some expressed frustration at having to have the right 'badges' after decades of successful teaching to meet the raised expectations of the HE sector.

What was common to the lived experience of academic staff across the generations was the significance of serendipity and contacts, especially in earlier stages of their career. Many of the interviewees highlighted the importance of external networks that were typically discipline-focused or profession-focused. It was through these networks that academics made contacts and felt supported, for example, to develop the impact of their disciplinary research or to retain a connection with their practice-oriented background and skills.

Limited progression opportunities for learning support staff

The interviewees included members of staff with responsibilities for learning support. Learning support staff include those working academic developers, student support advisors, academic writing tutors and e-learning developers. The location of such posts in institutional structures is often vexed, as the functions of

e-learning, student support, staff development, quality enhancement and academic development can be separated or united, and can be located in Registry, Human Resources, Library and Computing Services, or embedded in disciplinary faculties or departments. Also, frequent restructuring and changes to line management and reporting arrangements appear to be a feature of these units. These organisational changes had significant consequences for the professional development opportunities of these staff. Outside the standard conditions of academics in departments, their autonomy and scope to develop their role depended significantly on the view of their immediate line manager or strategic leader in their area.

It is difficult to make generalisations about such diverse learning support staff, as the defining features of their careers are very much about their particular context and local management. Many of the interviewees in learning support functions did, however, reflect on their professional identity in the workplace as being a significant challenge in their area of work. They described having to develop an identity that helped in approaching and successfully engaging with academic staff. This was referred to as 'talking the talk' and involved having to, for example, "[immerse] yourself in the culture of your discipline and your faculty and [show] that you know what you're talking about and what you're doing."

Many of the learning support staff interviewed had completed professional and teaching qualifications, and some had come into their role with a PhD. While such qualifications tended not to be a contractual requirement for their post, many of the interviewees saw such professional development as integral to being able to successfully perform their roles. Interviewees, for example, talked about feeling more comfortable in using pedagogical discourse and being more confident about their teaching. As one interviewee put it: "it's not a question of looking down on you, but there's more gravitas maybe if you go in with the pedigree" of a PhD or a teaching qualification.

However, with smaller numbers than academics, learning support staff can face greater challenges in their career paths as a new type of professional where there is no obvious progression without a new post. The generally quite small and flat organisational units where colleagues are brought together for their specialist expertise and a specific function was also reported as a reason why staff cannot easily progress their careers. One interviewee, for example, described the role as a dead-end job and reflected that: "you're treated as a bit of an add-on, you're in that sort of hinterland between support and teaching."

Routes out of academia

In line with the increasing competition for the first permanent academic posts, some interviewees felt that doctoral students should be better supported in identifying alternative career pathways to academia, and that employability initiatives should be incorporated in the same way as for undergraduates. This was seen as more challenging for some disciplines than others with one interviewee, for example, identifying Social Sciences as a disciplinary area where alternative career pathways to academia needed to be strengthened.

A number of interviewees had considered leaving academia due to what they saw as increasing workloads and pressure, and bureaucratic constraints on creativity. Some were particularly concerned about the long-term consequences of their work–life balance on their health. The prospects outside academia were not, however, seen in a very positive light, and a small number of early career and mid-career academics seemed to feel trapped in academic work, because they were not confident about finding alternative employment. One interviewee also described how leaving academia would amount to a kind of failure, given all the time and effort that had gone into gaining a PhD and subsequent academic posts.

2.1.3. Recovering time and psychological space

Carving out time for staff development

The interview narratives from this study single out time and workloads as the most significant barrier to engaging with staff development. Workloads in many of the case study institutions were perceived to have substantially increased in the last 10-15 years, and many interviewees felt that they simply did not have the time to seek out and take up developmental opportunities. Staff development was thus viewed by some as a luxury that they could not afford. This view was particularly evident in the narratives of those on part-time and research-only contracts.

Other interviewees described developmental activities as integral to meeting their career development goals and proactively carved out time for internal and external opportunities to develop themselves, their skills and their networks. Some developmental activities were being accessed in the individuals' 'own time' and

remained 'hidden' from an organisational overview of staff development. The hidden nature of activity yielded benefits for some, for example, being able to engage in professional development activity that the individual saw as fulfilling, but was not recognised as part of their role profile. Hidden activities and achievements were not, however, recognised at the institutional level, but there was evidence of some interviewees having used evidence of achievements from this to shape their formal role profile or to strengthen their case for a promotion.

A clear distinction emerged from the interview narratives between 'nominal' time that is represented in workload allocation models, and 'real' time, which represents the actual time taken up by the variety of academic activities in practice. Workload allocation models, particularly, were perceived to be underestimating time spent on preparing and delivering teaching and administration. The nominal time that was allocated to research thus tended to be squeezed out by teaching and administration, and research was left for the evenings and weekends, advancing the notion of the successful academic as someone who is always working. These multiple and intense pressures on time resulted in staff not often being able to attend developmental activities scheduled during term-time and indicating a preference for flexible modes of delivery of training that staff could access, for example, online or learning by doing.

Many of the interviewees in the study craved for 'real' time to develop themselves and their thinking. The lack of 'time to think' featured in the majority of the interview narratives and some recognised the benefit of structured staff development activities as providing an opportunity to reflect and to exchange ideas with colleagues, even when this was not the main purpose of the activity itself. The competitive and pressurised nature of the academic workplace, as described by the interviewees, made it challenging to step back from the immediate demands of the work, and to find the psychological space for reflection. Having 'time to think' was seen as important in terms of identifying personal professional development needs and goals, but most crucially as an essential part of the academic work process. 'Time to think' enabled staff to write about their research, to make new connections in their work, and to reflect on their teaching practice.

Individual strategies for prioritising work and recovering time

The interviewees identified different kinds of strategies for recovering time and psychological space. Many of the interviewees talked about prioritising tasks and becoming more efficient in their work. Some consciously rejected the 'cult of excellence' and talked about the choices involved in prioritising their work as follows:

> Because you can't, you can't go for excellence. So if I looked at everything on my to-do list and wanted to do it to the level that I would like to do it to, I would need twice as much time. So you're constantly saying, "Right, what can I not do? What does really need to be excellent? And what's going to be sacrificed in that?" *(Mid-career academic)*

It was evident that academic staff were making different kinds of choices in how they were prioritising and using their time. The choices they were making seemed to be influenced by factors such as institutional culture, career ambition, and the stage they were at in their career. Some of the interviewees were influenced in their choices by a desire to retain some kind of work–life balance; others were constrained in their choices by caring responsibilities or health issues.

Some, including those at earlier stages in their careers, were very clear about their long-term objectives and were managing to carve out time for developmental activities relevant to their objectives. Promoting themselves and creating and enhancing a professional profile through internal and external networks and engaging in disciplinary or pedagogical research were identified by the majority of the interviewees as key developmental activities for ensuring their future in academia. The ethics around prioritising work were raised directly or indirectly in many of the interview narratives. Some academics were open about wrestling with their conscience in prioritising research over teaching to ensure their longevity in academia despite enjoying teaching. Others reflected on their career progression, and opportunities potentially lost, because they had not been willing to be 'ruthless'.

Career development as a partnership between the individual and the institution

Some of the interview narratives point to a difference between what might be described as the optimal way of prioritising time from their line manager's perspective and from the interviewee's own perspective. This disparity arises partly from a difference between short-term and medium-to-long-term perspectives. For example, in the short-term, the line manager may prefer the member of staff to prioritise their time on the delivery of teaching and enhancing the student experience, while the staff member may insist on a balance

between teaching and research to keep their research going. However, in the medium-to-long-term, the university as a whole will also benefit from any research outputs that academic staff have generated.

The role of line managers and middle management emerged as crucial in enabling and encouraging staff to engage in developmental activities important to their professional development. This was particularly the case for those at the earlier stages of their career, for whom more guidance in interpreting processes and procedures would be welcome, for example, meeting the criteria for career paths and progression, and how best to navigate their way through them. This echoes Sutherland's (2015, p. 14) findings that "Not only do early career academics need clearer guidelines and more specificity in promotion and tenure documentation, but they also need more senior colleagues to help them unravel objective expectations" (Sutherland 2015, p. 14). However, there may continue to be a time lag as recognition systems, written criteria, and practices catch up with day-to-day activity.

The literature suggests that career development is a partnership between institutions and the staff themselves. Institutions play a significant role in creating an environment in which individuals can realise their potential:

> Creating a positive working environment is key to the future success of higher education across Europe. Self-direction and autonomy are positive influences in the work context … Those who feel supported at work will enjoy their experience, like their jobs and have high levels of job satisfaction. *(Clarke et al. 2015, p. 11)*

The findings from the study provide some examples of employer/employee relationships working as a partnership in career development. There were examples of staff being supported and guided in their development and being given the space to flourish. The lived experience of many of the interviewees, however, suggest that this was often a dysfunctional partnership, with the early and mid-career academic staff making their own opportunities. Some of the interviewees who had been successful in securing the next steps in their career development seemed in fact to have engaged in professional development despite – rather than because of – institutional structures.

2.1.4. Differentiation and the need for individual development and support

Introduction

The routes taken by academic staff into a career in higher education have become increasingly varied. For instance, many have practitioner and/or transferable skills from outside the sector. There is also a greater range of types of contract, together with evidence of a blurring of boundaries between academic and professional roles, particularly in areas such as learning support, academic practice and research management (Whitchurch 2013). Nor can it be assumed that all staff undertake a balance of teaching, research and knowledge exchange/service activity, and roles may vary significantly in relation to both content and form of employment contract. Thus, "The university … is turning more and more into an organisation where different actors are involved … differentiated roles and positions are created and new paths are experimented with to manage the variety of human resources" (Fumasoli, Goastellec and Kehm 2015, p. 204). Individual development needs are therefore also likely to vary between individuals, and at different stages of a career, so that 'one-size-fits-all' provision becomes less appropriate.

Academic interviewees, including learning support staff, were evenly distributed across Arts and Humanities, Social Science, and Science disciplines. Of these, approximately half were teaching and researching in their mainstream 'subject of origin'. However, it was striking how many had crossed boundaries to work on other programmes and/or in other faculties, schools and departments. For instance, some delivered educational technology, language/writing skills, health and wellbeing initiatives; facilitated links with employers, business, industry and professional bodies; and promoted public and regional engagement. There could, therefore, be significant drift from the original discipline, with the result that non-linear career paths were being forged, often as a result of professional contacts or emergent interests, in ways that were, in themselves, considered developmental. Learning from peers in different settings was mentioned as being particularly enriching.

The literature suggests that career development is a partnership between institutions and the staff themselves. On the one hand, institutions play a significant role in creating an environment in which individuals can realise their potential. On the other hand, individuals encounter difficulties including

uncertain contexts with short time horizons that make it difficult for early career staff to plan ahead, and institutions are increasingly dependent on 'soft' funding for essential infrastructure, with consequent priority being accorded to research over teaching. All these factors can contribute to staff feeling "unsupported" both *vis-a-vis* their careers, and with respect to administrative back up (Clarke *et al*. 2015).

Institutional and individual responsibilities in developing potential

It was clear from the narratives in the study that optimal value could only be achieved if development programmes were closely tailored to individual needs, with provision of targeted support at the appropriate time. Otherwise, as several respondents noted, they could be seen as a bureaucratic requirement in order to demonstrate credibility and proceed to the next stage of a career. All the case institutions had some kind of staff development programme in place with the aim of enhancing individual performance in ways that supported the institutional teaching strategy. The most effective formal programmes allowed individuals to use and reflect on material generated by their own practice, and integrate this with their own career development. However, some institutions were less proactive than others in looking at ways in which they might link such programmes to the development of individuals, whose roles could vary significantly, and also promote the benefits of formal provision alongside 'learning by doing'. This could lead to a situation in which changes happened in an *ad hoc* way, so that individuals were to a greater or lesser extent thrown back on their own resources in planning their futures. Furthermore, staff with short-term or part-time contracts were less likely to have development opportunities provided, especially if they were research-only. There could also be a time lag before institutions integrate their staff development policies with institutional strategy as a whole.

As might be expected, there was a spectrum of views about national policy and its local interpretation in relation to staffing processes and structures, and those representatives of senior management teams that we interviewed (PVCs and directors of human resources) were by and large at pains to acknowledge the difficulties that could arise in relation to individual career expectations and aspirations. There were clear tensions between, for instance, enabling the delivery of teaching to increasing numbers of students, playing to the strengths of individuals, and providing them with the time and space to explore new lines of interest, which might or might not enhance the range and quality of institutional offerings. Middle managers such as heads of departments and schools were mentioned repeatedly by both managers and rank-and-file academics as critical to this process, often by flexing local mechanisms such as discretionary funding and workload models.

In turn, one senior manager referred to "spatial and temporal flexibility" so that, for instance, individuals could focus on different activities at different times in their career, and across different areas of interest, suggesting that this kind of approach also offered "a more fluid, kind of organic way of recognising what's important for the university at [any] moment in time." Thus, institutions might do more to recognise that:

> if you try and please everyone with everything all the time … no-one gets exactly what they want out of it … targeted stuff is more labour intensive and more difficult to do but the results at the end of it will be better. *(Director of Human Resources)*

Individuals who were successful in achieving at least some of their aspirations within institutional frameworks spoke repeatedly of being proactive in identifying imaginative routes towards their goals, persuading colleagues and local managers to back such initiatives, and being able to demonstrate added value for the institution. This might well involve a facilitative relationship with a line manager, and/or supportive peer group, or extended network inside or outside the university. Nevertheless, having the confidence to make creative suggestions in many cases had paid dividends and promoted a bottom-up top-down collaboration, at local if not institutional level.

Those who seemed to have a positive approach were not only proactive, but appeared to follow their instinct about what they wanted to do and were prepared to keep options open even though they might also have a precise goal in mind, such as achieving the next level of promotion. They were likely to achieve some accommodation with practical issues of, for instance dual careers and family life, accepting a degree of uncertainty. They were also able to achieve 'mature' relationships, including for instance articulating priorities for the time being with line managers. This was facilitated by what some people referred to as dialogic or conversational relationships.

Individual perceptions of development opportunities
Despite an acknowledged need for development, there tended to be reservations about formal initiatives, in-house or external. These were often seen as more useful as an opportunity for extending networks and finding out what happens elsewhere, unless they met a very specific need or skill requirement such as increasing understanding of the practicalities and potentials of online learning. External opportunities such as secondments, exchanges and international experience were, however, seen as career enhancing.

While some staff were unaware of staff development opportunities that were available, or of which opportunities might help them (usually because of time constraints), others were overwhelmed by the wide range of skills they were expected to acquire beyond subject knowledge:

> As teaching or research academics you are expected to be really great at presentations, good at your teaching, excellent [at] international world-leading research, you're expected to be presenting at conferences, being invited to do research seminars … to be really good at publicity and public relations … and there just seem to be so many … different jobs [for] which you don't get any training … at all. *(Mid-career academic, post-1992 university)*

Those who felt that they had benefited or could benefit from both formal and informal provision tended to be those who were proactive in seeking out what was available, and also sourcing contacts and mentors who might support them.

It was also important to keep up to date, although some needed encouragement:

> things change so quickly … and I've had some staff who are just absolutely brilliant with technology and social media and they didn't go on a course, they [were] self-taught, they knew it was important … and they took personal responsibility for making sure they had the skills that they needed to do the job … Whereas you've other staff members that will wait for a course to be run before they will want to do it. *(Teaching and learning support manager, post-1992 university)*

Opportunities that provided constructive, one-to-one feedback, such as peer observation of teaching, action learning sets, or feedback on an application for promotion or an UKPSF portfolio, were seen as particularly valuable. As this is usually undertaken by academic colleagues, however, it represents another time pressure on individuals.

The creation of a safe environment for such discussions was paramount, as well as the separation of career development from appraisal mechanisms. Moreover, line managers were likely to be central to facilitating awareness of appropriate opportunities, and it was apparent that even within institutions there could be unevenness between departments.

Several respondents stressed the need for dialogue and good communication at local level to facilitate take up of institutional provision.

Networking and career capital
Networking and developing a personal profile were mentioned universally as a priority for the purposes of self-development, and also to promote greater confidence, overcome isolation and achieve career advancement. This included having an online presence, blogs and publications, as well as attendance at conferences and working with more experienced colleagues in order to develop writing and presentation skills.

One person went on to describe how they had found encouragement, advice and direction from external social networks, reinforcing the view that "the capacity to form supportive relationships at work is one of the main features of productive work environments" (Clarke *et al.* 2015, p. 11). In some cases the social network was seen as more important to professional identity than colleagues in the department. Thus the development of career capital would appear to be critical, as demonstrated by Angervall and Gustafsson (2015) who describe early career academics at four universities in Sweden as being "invited" (recruited for research), "useful" (recruited for teaching), both with associated social contacts and networks, and "uninvited". The latter had "missed out on getting contacts and receiving help in finding the right career paths" (Angervall and Gustafsson 2015, p. 10) and therefore had diminished career capital. The narratives in the case studies also reinforced findings elsewhere of "flatter relationships, new career structures, independence through international experience, competition for international funding … [so that] Luck',

'chance' and 'opportunity' that were historically important in academic careers are becoming more important, while networks count even more" (Fumasoli, Goastellec and Kehm (2015, p. 207). However networks are also useful,

> for participants to learn about new pedagogies and socially compare their teaching practice. In other words, academic developers need to recognise that participants use formal and informal social relations inside and outside the [academic development] programme for a variety of complex (emotional, academic and professional support) reasons. *(Rienties and Hosein 2015, p. 12)*

There is, therefore, also the possibility that they can be actively harnessed in support of more formal development initiatives, so that there is synergy between formal and informal opportunities.

UK Professional Standards Framework

Mixed motivations for take up of staff development initiatives have been acknowledged in the literature:

> Ideally engagement comes from a real desire to enhance one's practice as a teacher and, as a result, the experience of the learner. However, the current climate has led to a form of sector-wide race to get as many colleagues as possible recognised in the new, competitive marketplace, that is, HE, and with this have come challenges and opportunities. *(Peat 2005, p. 93)*

Furthermore, it has been suggested that in order to integrate and optimise provision, this should be built into everyday practice, as occurred at a small pre-1992 university:

> The cultivation of champions within the faculties or departments so that the workload can be shared is, therefore, paramount. One way of achieving this is to emphasise that the mentoring of colleagues through the process of applying for recognition can be used to support one's own claim, for example, Descriptor 3 of the UKPSF mentions explicitly the mentoring of colleagues. This allows for good practice to be shared and for small communities of practice to develop. *(Peat 2015, p. 94)*

Although most of the case institutions had teaching award schemes, supported staff in applying for National Teaching Fellowships, and had aspirations to increase the percentage of teaching staff with HEA Fellowships within the next three to five years, awareness of the UK Professional Standards Framework among rank-and-file staff was mixed. Of those interviewees asked, 41% had heard of the UKPSF and thought it relevant and useful, 25% had heard of it and did not think it relevant or useful, and 34% had not heard of it. Even where local development initiatives were integrated with the Framework there were issues about the impact on the quality of teaching in practice. Making the links between theory and practice were therefore seen as paramount, for instance, via the use of mentors and peer reviewers who can comment on an individual's day-to-day practice. Other respondents referred to it as providing a structure for their thinking and career development. Others suggested that it could be made more relevant to professional staff, and that the latter could be advised more clearly as to how it might be useful for them, for instance, by introducing a link with more project-oriented activity such as community engagement.

Staff development as a partnership

The study corroborates findings in the literature that staff development is a partnership between institutions and the staff themselves. However, there may be a time lag before institutions integrate their human resource and staff development policies with institutional strategy as a whole, and there is a resulting tension between individuals feeling "'masters of their fate' as opposed to corporate employees subject to institutional administrative action" (Finkelstein 2015, p. 326). Achieving a matching process between appropriate individual pathways and overall workforce profiles is likely to require facilitative structures and local relationships that promote "holistic alignment between systemic, institutional and individual drivers and performance" (Bentley *et al.* 2015, p. 311). At the same time, as Bentley *et al.* suggest, "customisation should be grounded in a set of clear and broadly applicable rules, should be based on transparent forms of workforce segmentation, and should be evidence driven" in order to maintain equity within what may be, in individual cases, bespoke arrangements (Bentley *et al.* 2015, p. 307).

Key issues that arose around staff development included the sense in which it is perceived by staff that it is something that is 'done' to them by institutional managers, how it might be integrated with the perceived needs of individuals, and how it might be internalised by them. It has even been suggested (di Napoli 2014) that there is a political dimension to this, which may account for the apparent distance between perceptions

of formal provision and individual need. Thus, where formal development is seen as a requirement, "Value tensions inevitably run through the work of academic developers and they can manifest themselves in different forms of compliance and/or resistance [by staff]" (di Napoli 2014, p. 5). The challenge for those responsible for development programmes, therefore, is to design them so that there is a correlation between what the individual thinks they need, what they need that they might not know they need, and what the institution thinks they need. Thus "the impact of academic development could be improved by thinking about it holistically to improve the relationships between discrete strategies for learning about teaching and potentially, to combine formal and informal forms of development" (Thomson 2015, p. 10). This is reflected in comments from the study about the need to ensure that formal opportunities are congruent with and enhance day-to-day practice:

> On paper you run this great development programme but are you actually giving people things that truly develop them? … I think that process of taking some time to stop and properly think and write about what you've done and discuss it with other people and get some feedback from them is a valuable one. *(Learning enhancement manager)*

Thomson goes on to suggest that:

> The ideas that are part of the content of the formal development program can lead academics who have attended a formal program to change their conceptions of and approaches to teaching …
>
> The following suggestions [for academic developers] focus on practical strategies that build on existing systems and processes to (1) enhance the relationships between informal conversations and formally structured development programs, and (2) encourage academics (whether novice or mid-career level) to engage in conversations that serve multiple purposes.
>
> - Assist academics in recognising the potential of conversations for learning …
> - Prepare academics for the possibility that their colleagues and even the curriculum framework may not support the ideas acquired during the formal program and thus, it may be difficult to initiate conversations about teaching.
> - Encourage small faculty/discipline based groups of staff to attend formal programs, to 'extend discipline-focused dialogue through cross-disciplinary exchanges', and to improve the likelihood that informal conversations about teaching will be promoted upon their return to the department …
> - During formal programs, allocate space, provide refreshments, and plan for informal times for participants to discuss their teaching and the formal content, and through this, build connections with colleagues …
> - Design initiatives that are neither completely formally structured nor wholly informal, and offer academics the option to select and attend sessions based on what they identify as relevant. This may be facilitated by adapting features from development programs that support experiential, problem-based, and research-based learning. *(Thomson 2015, p. 11).*

To such initiatives might be added further suggestions that arose from the case studies:

- drop-in sessions and questionnaires to determine what development staff need and at what point in their career;
- increasing opportunities for tailored one-to-one feedback in a safe environment, for instance with a trusted mentor or colleague, so that developmental conversations are separate from appraisal and staff review;
- provision of secondments and exchanges, particularly for staff who have been in the institution for a long time;
- better advice within institutions about the practical benefit that might be derived from the UKPSF, including for professional staff;
- more imaginative development initiatives for doctoral students and postdoctoral staff, for instance providing honorary fellowship status on graduation, visits to and presentations by employers, and opportunities to engage in teaching and postgraduate certificate programmes.

2.2. Institutional case studies

The findings from each of the eight institutional case studies are reported here, with a summary at the end of each.

2.2.1. Post-2004 university

This is a small, teaching-focused post-2004 university.

Strategy and direction
The University's strategic plan includes raising the proportion of research activity submitted to the REF to 50% as world leading internationally excellent, increasing the proportion of academic staff who are HEA accredited or qualified to teach to 100% by 2017, and increasing the proportion of academic staff who have a doctorate or equivalent to 50% by 2017.

The pressure for staff to become HEA accredited and to undertake a PhD if they did not already have one was evident in the interview narratives. This resulted in HEA accreditation being described as a "box-ticking exercise", and the human resource department's monitoring against the targets as "policing". The academic staff members interviewed were, however, very motivated in their work and generally saw time as the major constraining factor for staff development.

The system of matrix management that the University operates seemed to generate additional complexity and confusion for some members of staff, and the importance of good departmental middle management in making staff feel valued and supported was evident in the interview narratives. There were differences in how departments implemented University policies, for example, around the rigour and regularity of staff reviews.

There seemed to be evidence of a generational shift, with many of the older members of staff not having a doctoral qualification, while newer members of staff already tended to have a doctorate at the point of entry. One of the interviewees commented that:

> generally the new staff have always perhaps been demographically different; they've usually been younger, they have PhDs, they've done research – because it's clearly hard to find a permanent position in the UK. *(Mid-career academic)*

A senior management interviewee indicated that the UKPSF had been incorporated within competency frameworks at the University, but that:

> we've said we can't really homogenise them all into one standardised University competency framework because it all depends on your career pathways. *(Senior manager)*

Juggling tasks
While the UKPSF had been incorporated within the University's competencies framework, there was a relatively low awareness of the framework itself. This may be an indication of the UKPSF having been well embedded so that some staff may not have recognised UKPSF as a standalone framework. Those academic staff who were aware of the UKPSF did not, however, see it as a useful tool for professional development. Furthermore, HEA accreditation tended to be seen as a box-ticking exercise to demonstrate that contractual obligations were met, as the following interviewee commented:

> I'm not sure if having Fellowship would change my ability to do my job any differently, because I've been doing it for the last two years anyway. It just seems to tick a box. *(Teaching and research academic)*

All interviewees struggled to find enough time to complete tasks set for them through the workload allocation system, and all felt that the system did not accurately capture all the work they did. A mid-career academic, for example, felt that the system seriously underestimated the number of administrative hours that accompanied the work of a subject leader, who was often 'fire-fighting' issues that could not be put off. In the case of an early career academic, some of the tasks could not even be included in the workload allocation system, as they were meant to be responsibilities taken up by academic staff on higher grades.

A late-career academic explained that teaching always had to come first, but that staff were also having to juggle their teaching on the basis of room availability. This meant that research tended to take place after everything else:

> we used to have a Research Day as such, but that collapsed because of timetabling requirements (because our rooms are all heavily booked, so you have to teach when there's a room available). It's an odd way of managing time, isn't it? *(Late-career academic)*

This meant that research and related activity was often done in an academic's own time. The norm seemed to be to work well over and above the hours identified in the workload allocation models. One academic, for example, reflected on his policy related work that had generated a lot of positive impact, but had been done in his own time in the evenings and weekends. The tendency for everyone to work well over and above the hours identified in the workload allocation models led one academic to reflect that there is:

> Something about being in higher education is you volunteer your time over and above what you're contracted to do and you do it willingly, for some strange reason. *(Late-career academic)*

Fortunately, the early career academics interviewed seemed to have realistic expectations about the workload. An early career academic who had already done a considerable amount of teaching alongside her PhD, in particular, felt that she could manage as she already had experience of juggling teaching and research. There was, however, a feeling expressed by a number of interviewees about the administrative burden being excessive, and taking the focus away from what really mattered – that is, teaching and research. As a mid-career academic commented:

> it's all the stuff you hear in the media all the time about bobbies writing reports instead of being out there catching criminals. The same kind of thing is happening here. We're spending so much time administrating the courses, that then there's a real pressure on actually [having] the time to teach the courses. Administration, there's a lot of information going up because the people above are saying, "We need information" (which is fair enough) but it needs to be tempered with a trust. *(Mid-career academic)*

Opportunities for staff development and promotion

A senior management representative explained that the staff development programme for academic staff was well-developed, but that the relatively small proportion of staff on research-only contracts had not until recently been integrated sufficiently into those programmes. This was now being addressed.

The academic staff contracts identify teaching, research, and enterprise as the three key areas of work. The vast majority of staff at this University are teaching-focused. It is, however, possible for staff members to focus on research or enterprise, for example, without necessarily changing their contract. This room for flexibility seems to more likely to be successfully taken up by those members of staff able to negotiate a reduction of their teaching hours, for example, having brought in some enterprise income. As one academic explained:

> you need to achieve. So say you want to rack up your research hours, you have to agree to meet certain targets or criteria to justify the extra hours you're spending doing that. *(Late-career academic)*

The early career academic was not sure about the potential implications of teaching-only contracts for early career academics in the sector as a whole. She hesitantly reflected that:

> actually it is a big jump going from a PhD to teaching, so when you're trying to manage and get your head around the teaching aspects, you do lose a little bit of focus on research, and that might cause you to be then automatically put down onto a teaching pathway where you might do quite well doing both. But I can see it happening in a lot of universities and a lot of my friends are on 'either/or' contracts. I think the positive of it means that there's a clear progression route. If you are very teaching focused, there's a progression into the higher job roles, which perhaps wasn't that transparent prior to [this]. *(Early career academic)*

There are three professorial routes at the University: teaching and learning, research, and enterprise. The University operates a system of permanent and rotating secondment opportunities into management functions for academic staff. Staff new to teaching tend to start at an Associate Lecturer grade, are provided

with support to establish them in their teaching, and can then progress through the probation period into a Lecturer grade.

The interviewees had differing views about the clarity and transparency of the career progression routes at the University, which can be partly explained by the relative newness of the three different pathways. Some of the interviewees described the different professorial progression routes as clear, while others saw these as fuzzy. Those in learning support roles cannot follow the merit-based academic promotion routes and so progression is particularly difficult for them. It seems that those who had proactively sought out information about promotion opportunities were clear, which suggests that communications about the career pathways could be improved. A mid-career academic, for example, reflected that "no one's been really explicit about it but you just pick that stuff up."

Those interviewees who had considerable experience at the University felt that the promotion procedures had become more transparent and that promotions were now made on stronger grounds. One of the interviewees nevertheless felt that, despite the promotion criteria, there were still subjective judgements being made:

> The promotional opportunities, going from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer to Principal Lecturer are actually in the gift of the Dean, they're not competed for, if you like, there's no interview system (the Dean decides whether she thinks you are worth it or not). *(Teaching-focused academic)*

Some frustrations were also expressed by members of staff on support staff contracts who were, however, engaging in academic work. Promotions through the academic promotion system were not available to them, and promotions to more senior roles within departments were not always possible because of the specialised nature of the roles.

The skill set of an academic

A number of the interviewees reflected on the kind of skills they had acquired over the course of their careers, or the kinds of skills they saw as necessary for a successful career in academia. A late-career academic, for example, talked about the kind of co-ordinating skills required for programme director or similar posts, where the post holder has a considerable amount of responsibility, but little authority. He argued that, in these kinds of posts, it is important to have the skills to solicit the co-operation of others, which is not necessarily easy given the typically competitive nature of academia. The competitive nature of academia and how this did not always easily sit with teamwork was also something another academic reflected upon:

> somebody accused me of 'empire building' … because I need to do it to differentiate myself and my own academic career and there's been discussions among other people that we need to build our profile as a whole and not build the profession of individuals – because obviously we are a team and that's fine, but obviously, a team's still made up of people. I understand but if there was more of a mentality of helping people collectively, that would be fine, I'd involve myself in that but there aren't the mechanisms to do it, so you are left to your own devices. *(Early career academic)*

Being able to work autonomously was also suggested to be very important, particularly at the earlier stages of an academic career. Initiative, and the ability to work independently, had enabled some to succeed, whereas "people who might require more direction probably would [founder]."

Networking skills and the ability to develop relationships with people in and outside academia were also identified as important to being an academic. Many of the interviewees talked about subject-specific links outside of the University as being particularly important to their professional and career development. A number of interviewees identified accreditation by professional bodies as important to their current or aspirational identity as an academic and as a professional. It was not always possible to attain funding for such professional development through the University. One of the interviewees, for example, mentioned having been able to fund relevant professional accreditation through having a National Teaching Fellowship.

From many of the interview narratives, there emerged a gap between what was viewed as being in the University's benefit, and what was viewed as being in the individual staff member's benefit. This was both in terms of staff development and in terms of the mechanisms for reward and recognition. A number of interviewees talked about different ways in which they had been left feeling frustrated or disillusioned, for

example, having to fight to get paid according to the role they were acting up in, or the human resources department not making their entitlements as employees clear. In these narratives there was less evidence for the culture of valuing staff that the senior management alluded to. One academic speculated that the relative lack of feedback that was given to staff might relate to a concern that positive feedback should be backed up by a financial reward and that:

> they worry that then they're creating an argument for people to ask for more money or ask for more holiday or ask for rewards which could not be paid for. *(Mid-career academic)*

Summary
The effects of senior management setting targets at an institutional level without the support of staff was seen in the scepticism of some staff towards these goals. In the specific instance of the 'Key Performance Indicator' of the number of staff with UKPSF accreditation, it was seen more as a case of credentialism for competences already achieved, rather than any kind of voluntary professional development.

The pressure on staff of excessive workloads, working in personal time and increasing bureaucratic burden was highlighted, along with the way the bar had been raised over time for academic staff, for example, in the number holding PhDs.

The interview narratives suggest that there is some work to be done at the University to build trust between management and staff. One of the first steps in this direction would be to communicate clearly the career development pathways that exist at the University and to ensure that the messages cascade equally to different departments. The important role of local managers in implementing policy and supporting staff was demonstrated again.

2.2.2. Small post-1992 university

This is an enterprising, teaching-focused post-1992 university based across multiple sites within one city and covering a broad range of subject areas.

Strategy and direction
This institution's strategic objectives relate to internationalisation, improving the student experience, and the academic reputation of the institution.

Key performance indicators related to improving the University's academic reputation by 2020 include a 20% increase in the student population, doubling the number of REF submissions, and a significant increase in the share of academic staff engaged in externally funded research and knowledge exchange. The University has nearly twice as many full-time academic staff as part-time academic staff, the vast majority of whom are on academic contracts. These academic contracts refer to staff member duties as relating to 'teaching and related activity', 'research and other forms of scholarly activity', 'consultancy and income generation', and 'related duties including educational management and administration'. HESA data suggested a clear recent increase in the proportion of staff on teaching-only contracts, but this trend was not acknowledged in the discussions with senior management. This discrepancy was queried and senior management suggested that it might have arisen from counting atypical staff as members of staff on teaching-only contracts.

The University's strategic objectives were acknowledged at several points in the interview narratives, including staff being seconded to develop the institution's programme delivery overseas, and references to a change in direction with the new leadership's keen interest in research. These strategic objectives were, however, often experienced as conflicting with the interviewee's day-to-day roles. A key issue seemed to be the senior management's drive to improve the academic reputation of the institution through a focus on disciplinary research that was often not followed through in middle management's focus on teaching and the student experience.

The University was going through a period of considerable change with significant numbers of staff leaving through a voluntary redundancy scheme. None of the interviewees had opted to leave, but many mentioned colleagues who had decided to leave as their roles had either ceased to exist in the new smaller management structure, or they felt that they were unlikely to meet the newly introduced criteria for academic promotions, for example, the requirement for lecturers to have a PhD. The senior management interviewee explained that there was a conscious decision around this change to bring in "new blood" in an institution that had experienced relatively slow staff turnaround. This could be interpreted as the institution

seeking to meet its strategic objectives partly through attracting a higher calibre of new staff with existing PhD qualifications and established research profiles where relevant. There was also, however, an evident desire to have staff who would work well with others, with the senior management interviewee commenting that:

> We need staff who actually will do great research and develop track records, develop careers, but will take other people with them, will provide mentoring and support, will work as part of teams and programme curriculum design, programme leadership. We need people who are really corporate citizens and we can't afford the people who just develop, in quite a selfish way, their own sort of individual career track record, but actually in doing so keep everything else very much at arm's length. *(Senior manager)*

Staff development opportunities

The University has introduced the completion of an HE Teaching Development programme as compulsory for all new lecturers who have no relevant teaching qualification. The members of staff interviewed who were going through this programme saw it as a box-ticking exercise. Unsurprisingly, the two members of staff interviewed who were engaged in the management or delivery of the programme saw it as a very positive form of staff development, and as integral to promoting the quality and importance of teaching within the institution. There is an internal Teaching Fellows scheme, which has been in operating for more than 15 years. The scheme is open to academic staff with an HEA Fellowship who have a self-declared interest in teaching and learning. This scheme is semi-autonomous with the Teaching Fellows running their own conference and other events. They can also apply for funding to run programmes, or to attend events. The institution also offers an opportunity for up to six members of staff a year to complete a blended or online MA academic development programme with the fees waived. There is a mentoring scheme for early career lecturers, but this seemed to be restricted to the first two years of the probationary period and related to teaching rather than to academic work more broadly. Some staff on non-academic contracts with roles in, for example, careers, student learning support, and the library, do the HE Teaching Development programme part of the online Masters. Successful completion does not offer them a promotion opportunity, but gives them professional recognition.

The early career academic with a traditional teaching and research role positively commented that, compared to his previous places of work outside of the HE sector, there were "so many opportunities within the university for professional development." A more bleak perspective was provided by the teaching-only academic, who reflected that:

> It's just the nature of it, you're on a six-month contract and it just has been teaching, then there's no kind of flexibility for thinking about your professional development, thinking about your personal objectives. *(Teaching-only academic)*

The pay structure is based on the nationally negotiated pay spine with incremental progression, no discretionary points, and currently no performance-related element.

There were some suggestions for how to improve staff development within the institution and across the HE sector as a whole. A mid-career academic, for example, suggested that, while international exchange activities were very positive, it would be useful to have national institutional exchange programmes in place so that academics could learn from the experience of working in a different kind of institution, but closer to home rather than only internationally. Within his own institution, he suggested that the personal development review processes should be taken more seriously and take place regularly. At the moment, he reported, they were not taking place, partly due to time pressures. He also felt that there was a need for more confidential discussions around career development, for example, through opportunities to have discussions about career development without the presence of line managers. One senior manager felt that within the institution overall, there is "not a strong culture of giving or receiving feedback" (Senior manager). He reflected that:

> when I talk to academics, I say "Your bread and butter is assessment and feedback, it's in relation to your student population, it's a natural thing. So where's the resistance in applying that concept to your own personal development?" I'm trying to get across a view that feedback on your performance is an entitlement, not something that is done to you. But that's a culture shift, that's not here at the moment. *(Senior manager)*

A mid-career academic identified the importance of raising the profile of teaching in higher education sector as a whole, and suggested that there is a need for:

> an independent, professional body to articulate professional standards for teaching in the tertiary sector and to advocate for that and to militate for that to make it a properly respected profession in a way that it still isn't. *(Mid-career academic)*

There was a high level of awareness about the UKPSF among interviewees, elements of which had been incorporated into the promotions criteria around academic leadership. The institution had set the strategic goal of raising the proportion of staff with HEA Fellowship to 100% by 2020.

Time and space

The most significant barrier to accessing staff development seemed to be time. All members of staff who were interviewed (excluding the two senior management interviewees) mentioned time as a major constraint in structuring and managing their work. Time was a key constraining factor for accessing staff development opportunities available within, and outside of, the institution. In a number of different ways, time was also a source of frustration and stress. The workload allocation model, for example, was described as "bureaucratic and divisive" by one mid-career academic who commented that:

> having people with a certain allocation of hours within a subject group, what can happen is that people refuse to spend their hours somewhere else … there is a danger and a culture of kind of accounting for one's time which can erode collegiality. *(Mid-career academic)*

The same academic went on to challenge the "cult of excellence" that he saw as generating a considerable amount of stress for academic staff with only a limited amount of time available to do the multiple types of tasks and roles they were asked to perform:

> People can feel overwhelmed with the demands on their time. My view is, if I did my job properly as a teacher then it would be non-ending and would be a 60-hour job, and I think that's the nature of teaching, it's never perfect and you can always improve it, and there are always new demands on you. So actually you need to be quite robust and willing to just not do it properly sometimes, in order to create space for yourself. *(Mid-career academic)*

Another mid-career academic felt that "the best career development you could give me is to lock me in a room, somewhere else, without a telephone, without any email." This would give him the focused time he felt he needed to do research. Another academic verbalised the challenge of time as a conflict between tasks with short (e.g. responding to student emails) to long (e.g. research activities) payback periods. He commented on having to "sacrifice some teaching" to "protect" his research time and so far having painfully achieved an equal split in his time between teaching and research. It was not something he felt comfortable with as he referred to feeling that he was "neglecting one or the other, and never on top of both." Research was referred to as the one activity that suffered the most from the squeeze on time. One mid-career academic summarised the view of many line managers as follows:

> The research can always wait. It can always wait for the summer. *(Mid-career academic)*

Some members of staff felt unsupported in these difficult decisions around prioritisation and talked about "lacking in steer" and having been "left to [their] own devices." Another member of staff felt that they could not always be open and transparent with managers about the range of academic activities they were engaged in, and that were necessary to meet the promotions criteria, but that were not seen as crucial to the day job by the line managers.

The majority of interviewees talked about external relationships, for example, relationships formed through conferences, professional networks, or previous places of work or study, as having been, and continuing to be, crucial for their professional and career development. This included opportunities to do research and to exchange ideas, but also informal mentoring and coaching.

Moving up the ranks

The University had recently introduced four distinct promotion pathways that included enterprise and professional practice as additional pathways to the more common teaching and research pathways. Members of academic staff expressed differing appetites for moving up the ranks and applying for promotion. One academic commented being "happy enough just kind of doing what I'm doing and getting better at it over the years" One mid-career academic who had previously had an application for a promotion rejected but who had re-applied, was feeling quite emotional and frustrated with the whole application process. Considerable time and effort had been spent demonstrating through a lengthy application form how the relevant criteria had been met. This time and effort would feel wasted if the feedback was minimal and not constructive in identifying a medium-term plan for turning a rejection into a promotion in the future. This was particularly important as the criteria for promotion were liable to change, changes that some of the academics talked about often being products of a new leadership wanting to impact on the organisational structure and culture.

The University was seen as specifying the kinds of individuals they were looking for through the promotions criteria. Some members of staff challenged these criteria, arguing that the University needed other types of individuals too. The promotions criteria were also seen as very challenging. Some members of staff reflected on the opportunity costs of engaging in work that they had been asked to do, but that would result in them not being able to demonstrate enough activity across all the required aspects of the promotions criteria.

Secondment activities were, for example**,** talked about in a positive light, but could narrow the options for academic staff applying for promotion, as they might not be able to evidence recent activity across all the required aspects due to a secondment that might otherwise offer a beneficial professional development opportunity.

Different roles and contracts

The new recruitment and promotions criteria were described by senior management as equally rewarding teaching and research. A senior manager asserted that the University had no appetite for introducing teaching-only contracts:

> So we would expect all of our staff to be engaging actively with their disciplines in one way or another, and to have a teaching-only contract would slightly be at odds with that kind of notion. *(Senior manager)*

The new criteria were described with mixed views by members of staff. There was, however, a sense that serious efforts were being made to promote the importance of teaching and to try to have everyone involved in both teaching and research. A recently recruited mid-career academic, for example, favourably compared her current place of work with her previous employer:

> So at X University, the contract for the university teaching was teaching and scholarship … Here, it's everybody does research and teaching, and there's a push at the moment, I think, for everybody to be involved in some kind of research, whether that's pedagogical research or disciplinary research, and I guess because everybody's on the research and teaching contracts, then everybody should. *(Mid-career academic)*

There was, however, some recognition of the differing rewards and recognition systems for members of academic staff in contrast with members of staff on professional contracts. A mid-career academic, for example, reflected that there was:

> a perceived, if not real divide between colleagues [on academic contracts and those on professional contracts, and that] … it's harder to progress if you're on those non-academic contracts. *(Mid-career academic)*

Members of staff on professional contracts would have to wait for an opportunity to apply for a more senior job or move to another institution to progress. Many interviewees were also very conscious of the challenges of working within short-term contracts, and reflected on the benefits of having permanent contracts as enabling their career development.

Internal and external hierarchies

Members of staff at earlier stages of their careers seemed particularly conscious of the internal hierarchies based on whether someone was research-active or someone who had their career development. Hierarchies

of institutions across the sector were also present in many of the interview narratives with, for example, a mid-career academic talking about having "tried to keep my standing in those types of institutions" through acting as visiting lecturer in more research-intensive higher education institutions, and about "trying to get back into that type of league."

Summary
The new leadership team at this HEI is making substantive changes, with the significant expansion of student numbers, the introduction of international programmes, new promotion criteria, a voluntary severance scheme to encourage staff turnover and setting ambitious goals such as doubling REF submissions and achieving 100% HEA Fellowship. There was some evidence that interviewees experience these as conflicting priorities and struggled with competing demands from local management.

Academic staff interviewed also characterised their struggle with competing priorities as a lack of time to undertake tasks to the standard they wished to. This pressure of work created personal dilemmas for some who felt forced to make difficult choices between activities that would benefit themselves and activities that would benefit their students and department.

There was very high recognition of the UKPSF, and it was a strategic goal of the institution to achieve HEA Fellowship for 100% of staff by 2020. Staff involved in the delivery of teaching development programmes to academic staff viewed this goal very positively.

2.2.3. Large Russell Group university

This case institution is a research-intensive Russell Group university with a well-structured approach to staff development.

Strategy and direction
The University strategy is being currently revised. The overall approach to staff management emphasises the importance of recruiting and retaining talented staff to maintain and improve the quality of teaching and research at the university. Senior management at the University have actively sought to raise the esteem of teaching in an institution that has traditionally prioritised and rewarded research more. This goal has been pursued through better articulating the teaching-specialist track for academic staff and how to progress through it in line with the other two tracks (research-specialist and teaching and research).

While there were examples of academics being promoted through the teaching-specialist track into professorial positions, these appointments were still perceived as too few and far between to have permeated the staff consciousness and the traditionally research-focused culture at the University. An interviewee who had been promoted through the teaching-track saw it as a marginal, yet important promotional pathway. Another interviewee on a teaching and scholarship contract felt frustrated to be perceived solely as a teacher rather than to be recognised as a teacher and a researcher. The relative low status of the pathway was also reflected in the comments of an academic who had achieved promotions through the traditional track:

> What you have to do to get to be a teaching-only Professor? I have no idea what counts as teaching innovation and leadership to a level whereby you get promotion there. I'm not entirely sceptical about it but … whether it is really viewed by all peers and the institution as something that is absolutely on a par with the traditional fully rounded teaching and research academic, I don't know. *(Mid-career academic)*

Approach to staff management
The senior management interviewee described the University's approach to staff management as being to recruit and retain top academic and non-academic staff, and motivating them to keep improving. There is considerable variation between different departments in the prevalence of the three types of pathways. The senior management representative identified areas in, for example, Social Sciences and occupational subject areas as having the most teaching-specialist academics.

The application process for a promotion through the teaching-track to a professorship goes through the Departmental Promotion Panel, Faculty Promotion Panel and two further central University panels that will consider the application including references from external institutions, a portfolio of evidence, and a CV. There are three professorial pay bands.

The next big project for the HR department relates to ensuring that the boundaries between the different pathways remain fluid so that it is possible for staff to move from one pathway to another to reflect their interests, research ideas or stage in their career. During the first few years of being an academic new to lecturing, individuals are ideally assigned a slightly lighter teaching and administrative workload as they are also expected to complete a teaching qualification. In reality, not all departments are able to honour this due to overall workload allocations and teaching specialisms. The University has recently launched a scheme for early career researchers, through which a series of training opportunities are provided to new researchers. This includes the opportunity to apply for research funding.

The University's recognition and reward policy has recently been revised. Where people are going over and above the expectations it is possible for individuals to accelerate through the annual increments. There is now also a formal recognition system that enables, for example, an individual or a team to be formally recognised and celebrated for their achievement. Managers will be making decisions locally around the recognition and reward policy. This is to allow departments and faculties to reward staff based on local needs and the different kinds of contributions that are made.

The University provides a wide range of staff development programmes including leadership training, management training to support staff in being able to have difficult conversations, mentoring, and tailored support for female academics returning from maternity leave.

Structures and agency in staff and career development

The interview narratives pointed to the importance of good middle management, established institutional support structures, networks, and individual agency, in enabling successful staff and career development. An early career academic for example commented that:

> I think there's a huge amount of support there, I think understandably the onus is on the individual to seek out support in the areas that they need, because we are all very different people coming into academic jobs, and need very different things. *(Early career academic)*

A mid-career academic further commented that:

> My experience, in any case, is that whatever your contract says, that your immediate line manager is absolutely critical to what you do. *(Mid-career academic)*

Good line managers were able to guide individuals in "strategising" and navigating through the "power bases and kingdoms" that exist in parts of the university. The interviewees at the earlier stages of their careers seemed better supported in this process. One early career academic in particular talked about being supported and feeling clear about her next steps:

> I'm pretty clear on how I fit into all those things and how all those things fit into what I'm doing, and also my place and the fact that my place is important within that, but with the reassurance that I'm not required to do all of it and I'm part of something rather than having to think of myself as having to carry everything. *(Early career academic)*

Those with longer service seemed to receive less support, possibly because they were already seen to be coping successfully. An ambitious mid-career academic in particular talked about having:

> very much shaped my academic identity and my job according to what I think are my strengths and interests. So I've kind of led the process myself really. *(Mid-career academic)*

There was, however, a feeling among mid-career academics that more support could be provided at this stage of their career, particularly as they were being asked to play different kinds of management roles. It was not, however, clear what shape or form this support should take as the interviewees recognised the tension between wanting more support, but not necessarily having the time to attend formal training, and questioning the value of training and support that was not highly individualised. More specifically, a mid-career academic who had progressed through the traditional teaching and research route stated that he preferred to learn by doing and by observation. He talked about his experience of having taken on new management duties and reflected that:

> I know that there is stuff out there that would potentially be of use, but for me it's been about learning by doing as being just more practical on a day-to-day basis. There are problems in the role that I was facing on day one, challenges that I'm dealing with kind of very much on an unfolding basis, and it's like, "Okay", and stopping and thinking about those and having the opportunity to talk to other people in similar roles, at close quarter[s]. *(Mid-career academic)*

This mid-career academic talked about mentoring as a potentially useful form of staff development in his stage of the career, but felt that its feasibility would be severely constrained by existing workloads. To make it happen, the university would have to support individuals in prioritising such activity.

Learning from peers within the institution and outside the institution was talked about very positively by the interviewees. The mid-career academic described his external peer network as both becoming:

> the thing that you judge yourself harshly against but also the thing that you draw support from. *(Mid-career academic)*

The interviewees talked about different individual strategies to career development. The mid-career academic, for example, reflected on the promotion criteria and that these understandably favoured quantifiable outcomes that better stood up against an objective comparison. As such the promotion criteria did not:

> necessarily capture all the things that, you know, reflect a person's full contribution to that institution. *(Mid-career academic)*

This strategising was also reflected in the comments of an early career academic who suggested that staff tend to look at the different areas of activity they need to demonstrate as something they can "tick off" so, for example, instead of looking for an opportunity to teach, rather doing some supervision and marking as these tend to be less time-consuming and will be seen to meet the requirement.

Some of the interviewees also alluded to the importance of connections in their own career trajectories. An early career academic, for example, commented that:

> It all sounds rather nepotistic, but there is an element of having been in the right place to meet the right people, doing the right things in order to move and know the next people, if you see what I mean. *(Early career academic)*

Time and priorities

Many of the interviewees talked at length about the challenges of managing their time and prioritising teaching, research and other activities. The mid-career academic, for example, reflected that it was difficult to cut down on any particular activity, but that it was necessary to try to become more efficient. The early career academic referred to trying to establish good rather than bad practices from the beginning, for example, by finding the discipline to maintain research activity when it was easy for all time to be taken up by teaching.

Academic work outside of the norms

Some of the interviewees talked about the challenges of undertaking academic work outside of the norms of a traditional academic contract, for example, being employed on short-term contracts or working part-time. One of the interviewees referred to the perception of the academic who is always working as being quite pervasive. Technology had enabled flexibility in working patterns, but it was also blurring boundaries between work and home.

The early career academic felt that the university had made considerable progress in better including people in fixed-term and research-only contracts within staff development programmes since her earlier experience of a teaching-only fixed-term contract at the University. She reflected that:

> The ideal would be not to have that need for a period of fixed-term contracts or of insecure employment. In order to solve that we'd have to completely change the way that research is funded and the way that people are employed within universities and indeed the requirements for going into lectureship, whether that would mean creating job roles, a bit like [University specific] Fellowships for example … where you are employed and funded as a researcher with the explicit feed into an academic contract. If that were more normal it might solve some of the instability problems but it would also mean that the jobs were being directly awarded to a few people very early on, and it would close more doors for people who wanted to take, or had to take non-standard routes through. So it probably wouldn't be a solution. *(Early career academic)*

Another early career academic on a research-only contract, however, felt that she was unable to take up any staff development opportunities as she was working part-time.

A mid-career academic was concerned about the consequences of introducing teaching-only pathways. For individual academics, they suggested that this could lead to dead-end jobs where their career aspirations were not being supported. For the higher education sector as a whole, the development of teaching-only pathways had other significant unintended consequences in loosening the link that supported good quality teaching:

> if the teaching and research become increasingly divorced, then … the claims about what makes British higher education of good quality that you are being taught by people who are at the cutting edge of research. If those two paths begin to diverge then I think there are wider questions about institutional reproduction that begin to serve this, if your research staff are repeatedly buying themselves out and putting themselves out of the classroom. *(Mid-career academic)*

Awareness of the UKPSF
There were very mixed levels of awareness of the UKPSF. An early career academic who had just completed a HE teaching development programme accredited by the HEA, which involved mapping their work against the UKPSF, felt it was a good fit, whereas other research-only and late-career academic staff had not heard of it. One late-career academic expressed a preference for the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) framework, which he saw as more nuanced and felt that the low level of awareness of HEA Fellowship schemes at the University stemmed from the fact that the university is very research-focused. However, another late-career academic had attended a workshop about gaining Fellowship so there was clearly some institutional promotion of the UKPSF.

Summary
This case study highlighted the need for individualised professional development opportunities, and raised the issue of mentoring and peer support as strategies to achieve this. Disciplinary peer-support networks beyond the institution were also identified as being of great value to academics. Good practice was observed in including part-time or short-time contract staff in professional development opportunities.

Academic staff at this University also struggled with prioritising different tasks and finding time for research. The case was made for a mutually supportive relationship between teaching and research, although interviewees here appeared to be under pressure of work, as elsewhere.

Once again, the importance of local line managers' interpretations of institutional policy was raised. A further point of good practice was noted in the intention to keep open the possibility of movement between teaching-only, research-only, and traditional academic career tracks. This flexibility could limit the possible impact of teaching-only pathways on individual careers.

2.2.4. Small pre-1992 university

Strategy and direction
This pre-1992 university has a balanced teaching and research profile and is committed in its strategic plan to "research-led education". Its staffing policies are well-established, with clear criteria for promotion and progression supported by mechanisms for reward and recognition whereby individuals can apply for discretionary increments for having undertaken specific roles and projects. Parity between teaching and research is affirmed in the strategic plan. The majority of academic staff are expected to meet the University's promotion criteria in both teaching and research, the latter including knowledge exchange and

public engagement, although there are also clearly articulated career routes for teaching and scholarship/professional practice, and for research-only roles, mainly in research institutes. The University is raising the game for teaching via the UKPSF and creating a new landscape to which younger staff in particular have signed up. According to the University, 25% of full-time staff are teaching-only. In the past, people who were not performing in research had been moved on to teaching-only contracts. This practice has been discontinued, as all new appointments are regarded as encompassing both teaching and research unless they are for a specific purpose such as language teaching. There is also formal provision for individuals who have been moved onto teaching-only contracts to reapply for a teaching and research post if their profile changes, for instance, if they acquire a research grant and start publishing. Current policy is for teaching-only appointments to be for specific purposes in technical areas such as language teaching, laboratory support or professional practice. Some of these staff undertake scholarship, pedagogical research, and/or activities such as student support and public engagement. Others have management responsibilities, or have their time 'bought out' by external funders.

Those with research as part of their contract are required to submit to the REF on a regular publications cycle. There is also a push to recognise and reward individual initiatives for teaching by all staff, for instance, through local teaching awards, support for the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme and external recognition awards. Chairs can be awarded for teaching, and there are also grants for innovation in both teaching and research. All departments have a transparent workload model based on hours, although they are not centrally designed, and "will typically be negotiated at departmental levels and the department as a whole will decide exactly how it counts" (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education).

Appointments and promotions are monitored for gender/ethnicity. The pay gap at professorial level for women, although it is smaller than at other universities, is also being monitored.

Academic staff turnover in 2014 was nearly 15%. Because of its relatively small size, and the existence of staff who have been in post for a long time, the University has developed as a reasonably cohesive academic community, with staffing policies that are integrated both down line management hierarchies via Heads of Department, and across teaching and research teams, so that staff feel that they have access to colleagues, laterally and vertically. This reflects the importance attached to informal as well as formal relationships, for instance, those between mentors and mentees, and those forged via local networks. Understanding of management issues is, therefore, becoming more evenly distributed across academic constituencies, with heads of department becoming more professionalised via management development programmes, which are open to both academic and professional staff. However, there is a feeling that, as processes have grown, the planning, staff review and development systems can be over-bureaucratic, with multiple sets of forms to be completed, causing additional pressure for individuals on top of heavy workloads. Senior managers recognise this, and the intention is to integrate all these processes within the planning round:

> we are looking at the cycle of important meetings of the year … We've got a whole load of things that happen together: annual review, planning, budgets, etc. … then [academics] have got all the student stuff happening at the same time and consequently we are trying to do … twelve months' work in six months … All the big corporate institutional things that have to be done are being done in one part of the year. *(Director of human resources)*

Staff development opportunities

Staff development has recently been incorporated within the human resources department, and a well-developed programme maps on to the UKPSF at all four levels, is validated by the HEA, and articulates with the annual staff review process conducted by heads of department. The general approach is to develop the strength of the individual so that opportunities are not limited or predefined, and there is no set entitlement, although some of the senior management programmes are by invitation only. Coaching and mentoring is provided for early career staff, as well as workshops to assist with, for instance, the writing of research grants. Fellowship of the HEA is a requirement for academic staff on probation and those with less than three years' experience are encouraged to undertake the University's postgraduate teaching certificate. It is seen as critical to introduce early career staff to the programme at entry via their probation requirement so that they internalise the principles of effective teaching from the start. Once individuals are involved in the process of developing a portfolio for the UKPSF they are more likely to buy into it, and their activities can be mapped on to it on an ongoing basis.

Within the formal processes there is scope for self-initiatives including self-assessment and diagnosis at point of entry onwards, so that pathways can be defined on the basis of strength:

> there is a big push to recognise the individual's responsibilities for initiative and taking forward things, leading their own path … rather than tramlines. *(Staff development manager)*

Thus:

> Some of it is you going out and getting it. *(Senior lecturer)*

Collectively, the aim is to develop a culture of self-learning among peers, for instance, through individuals training in peer observation so that they can observe each other teaching. To get initial buy-in it is pitched at individual circumstances and allows for flexibility of engagement. Appropriate Fellowship of the HEA is strongly encouraged at each stage of an academic career, and would be expected for each promotion, with the aim of having nearly half of eligible staff possessing a teaching qualification and HEA accreditation by 2019. This is not merely a formal exercise, and it is not uncommon for individuals to be asked to revise and resubmit their portfolios for the internal programme at the various stages. Although the University effectively manages the accessibility and uptake of its formal provision, enabling individuals to integrate this with their career planning, it is acknowledged that younger staff are more likely to participate than mid-career and late-career staff. As there is less staff mobility between institutions than would be possible, for instance, in a large urban conurbation, there are proposals to encourage staff to undertake periodic secondments and exchanges elsewhere.

Academic work and careers

The key turning point for the majority of those interviewed was obtaining a permanent post and moving beyond the uncertainties of short-term appointments, so much so that, at least in the initial stages of a career, security was more important than one-off rewards or even promotion prospects. There was no one route in, and for many people it had been a combination of their own efforts, personal contacts, and even patronage at key points. The view was also expressed that, despite the insecurity, 'casual' work and short term appointments provided staging points for potential academics on the way to a permanent lectureship, as they needed to establish a research record in order to obtain a permanent job, and could not do this without short-term funding. The fact that 'soft' funding is now less available, and that institutions are moving away from casual contracts, could therefore be seen as a double-edged sword. It was even suggested that, in future, academia could become more like the media so that young academics would have to take unpaid work in order to get a foothold, or depend on the support of their families in their early years, especially in arts subjects. Conversely, the effort required to achieve a permanent post could also lead to disillusionment:

> I've seen people work very hard to get to where they are and then stop … if people after a few years of being in a permanent job think: "Why did I work so hard for this? This isn't quite what I thought it would be … I assumed I would go back to having nights and weekends off" … and they don't. So I think some people do feel a bit disillusioned. *(Senior lecturer)*

Another key theme that arose was the importance of participating in lateral, university-wide activities in order to develop their networks and experience, for instance, sitting on working groups, assessment panels, or bodies such as Senate, so as to learn from others, pick up information about the University, and share and develop good practice. Others had found it helpful to establish a niche role, for instance, advising on ethics in their discipline, championing women, or leading a local partnership. Value was also placed on informal mentors and role models to give advice and support, particularly in pushing people "out of their comfort zone", for instance, when an application for promotion was not successful:

> colleagues within the School and also outside of the School and further up the ranks of the University were really supportive and helpful in giving me feedback [about an application for promotion]. So somebody who was quite senior in the University who I knew through a course I'd attended … and was involved in the Staffing Committee, met with me and gave me feedback and told me what I needed to do to get promoted … I didn't apply again this year because I knew I was going to take a couple of years to really get into that position. *(Lecturer)*

For some people, there was a feeling that such advice was as helpful, if not more helpful, than formal training programmes, which as one person said "make me think about stuff, [but] they don't actually change

me" (Lecturer). Similarly, developing a portfolio for an HEA Fellowship was only useful if geared towards genuine self-improvement:

> I didn't do the things I was doing because I was trying to fit in the Professional Standards Framework. I did them because I wanted to do them. *(Senior lecturer)*

The learning support manager said that they would only consider undertaking HEA accreditation if they wanted to move on to another job. They preferred the idea of learning sets, which could arise out of formal training, so that a small working group could put what they had learned into practice, and thought that more peer observation would be of benefit. Several respondents had attended one-day workshops which had enabled them to meet people from across the University.

One respondent felt that more could be done to incentivise postdoctoral fellows and help them to obtain lectureships. One element of a good practice would be to give graduating PhDs Fellow status, including an email address and library access. Another person said that mapping out a career too closely in advance was neither feasible nor desirable in that one also needed to be able to take advantage of opportunities that came along. This could involve a parallel move rather than career progression as such. Two learning support staff on professional services contracts felt that they had benefited by not being confined to a specific career path, and had developed their careers by moving between project-oriented roles, inside and outside the university sector.

Career obstacles

Although the staff review and development programme suited those who were successful and proactive, there were hints that those who were less confident, or did not have a regular mentor, could struggle, despite the opportunities and support the University offered. There were also time pressures and one respondent said that they were constantly making choices, particularly during term time, so that research tended to get relegated to vacation times. This person had therefore felt too busy to get involved in institutional development programmes, and was not aware of the UKPSF:

> I don't think that's because they don't promote it, because we do get emails all the time, but it's because I'm so busy that I'm thinking could I be bothered spending a day on this when I should actually be at home writing an article which is ultimately what is going to get me promoted. *(Lecturer)*

There was also a sense that the individual should be in the driving seat rather than the institution. At times, training tended to be offered to staff at the wrong times rather than letting them drive what they received according to their needs at any one time, therefore, provision of development programmes without diagnosis and dialogue was not necessarily helpful:

> a lot of training tends to get thrown at new staff at the wrong times actually and it's not quite the training or the timing that's needed, so I think if we let them drive it that would be something really helpful. *(Senior Lecturer)*

This person suggested that drop-in sessions could be used to determine what development staff was needed. Others referred to what they saw as over-bureaucratic mechanisms in applying for the various rewards and incentives on offer:

> You can apply for a discretionary payment, which my mentor recommended that I do this year, but I didn't bother because filling out those forms and having to sell yourself for the sake of, by the time the taxman gets it … it's not that much money and I'm not motivated by money so I just thought, well I just don't care … I just wanted promotion. I don't want more money in recognition of the fact that I'm actually doing my job properly. *(Lecturer)*

Although the University was proactive in supporting women's careers, and participated in Athena SWAN initiatives, a number of respondents thought that a major barrier was a lack of confidence in women, who tended to apply later in their careers for promotion than men. This lack of confidence also manifested itself in being hesitant to take on management roles, even at departmental level:

> academia is strange in that … we don't have to deal with other people that often, so when we do we are completely unprepared for it. *(Lecturer)*

Women in particular appreciated the opportunity to work from home and to be flexible about how and when they worked.

Despite policy intentions about the possibility of being promoted for teaching, the director of human resources said that "we have few role models of promotion through education." Similarly, although it was theoretically possible to move from a teaching-only post to a teaching and research post, the director was not sure how often it happened, and a senior lecturer with an arts background said that "I think in my discipline there will be no chance of a career in the University if you're a teaching-only staff", therefore, the University "are [only] happy to have people on different sorts of roles if it serves the University's agenda."

Two people who had come to the University from other sectors both felt that the University was overly bureaucratic, that there were too many people who had worked there for a long time, and that it needed a more facilitative culture in which people were not afraid of sharing ideas. Although both acknowledged that work was ongoing to change the culture, with some success, it was evident that such change is necessarily a gradual process, involving working with the willing (in this case likely to be younger staff).

Summary
The general picture at this pre-1992 University is of a well-supported group of staff. The relatively small size of the institution, with lower staff turnover than would be the case in a large conurbation, may be a factor in the achievement of a cohesive staff development programme, which is recognised as such by staff. The institution's person-centred approach, implemented in a spirit of partnership, also facilitates this and is encapsulated in the following statement:

> So it's not saying, "These are your options", it's saying "What do you need, what do you want? And can we deliver that?" *(Staff development manager)*

In turn, those who took advantage of what was available tended to be active in addressing their careers, with the energy and desire to do this over a sustained period.

2.2.5. Medium-sized post-1992 university

This is a teaching-focused university ambitious to further raise the quality of the student experience.

Strategy and direction
The University is very focused on improving the student experience. Several different professorial pathways have been introduced in order to recognise the different kinds of contributions that academic staff make to the University. The pathways are still fairly new so the number of staff to have been promoted through pathways other than research is still small, but the majority of interviewees felt that being promoted through the teaching and learning pathway all the way to a professorship was a real possibility at the University. The University has a very good pedagogically informed programme for staff development that seeks to support staff in the different aspects of being an academic and becoming more innovative.

The University has been significantly restructured over recent years. All faculties now have broadly the same structure and individual departments are expected to balance their books. The consequences of the waves of restructuring were reflected in the interview narratives. There was a sense that there had been too much constant change, and some questions were raised about the senior management's handling of change.

Staff development opportunities
The staff development programme at the University is very comprehensive. The level of pedagogic practice and theory that was embedded in the programme and its development was described as a particular strength. This enabled staff to better engage with the various aspects of being an academic, in addition to the more common topics of institutional staff development, characterised by one interviewee by the example of "improving the chairing of meetings." Staff take-up of the development opportunities was generally good, but was reported to feature the 'usual suspects'. The senior management representative felt that:

> the hindrance in some ways is staff just have this expectation that there will be CPD, rather than it being a big driver of, "You would want to do it, wouldn't you, because it's free and it's available?" *(Senior manager)*

There is considerable support to improve teaching and learning and the University runs an internal teaching fellowship scheme, while also supporting academic staff in applications for National Teaching Fellowship and HEA Fellowship.

The majority of the interviewees were aware of the UKPSF and saw it as partly useful, but there were also two interviewees (one mid-career academic and one research-only) who had not heard of it. The interviewee in a learning support role felt that it was not useful for people in non-academic roles:

> I think perhaps in other areas of, say Learning Resources and the Library, there's perhaps not as much imaginative thinking about further qualifications that people could do or more career development that people could have, and I wonder whether people in the directories, who are support staff, are perhaps not encouraged enough to see what they do as relating to academic activity and needing to understand better what the academic activity is that they fit into … There isn't really an equivalent of UK Professional Standards for non-academic staff to work towards. *(Learning support staff)*

The University has above average female representation in its academic workforce and is particularly good at supporting female academics to progress. The University has Athena Silver status and is committed to the AURORA programme. A complementary internal mentoring and follow-up programme of meetings has also been developed as part of the Aurora programme to enhance the impact on the participants.

The staff development programme includes support for those in their first three years of teaching, but one mid-career academic interviewed had seen no such support materialise in the first three years. The interviewee recalled having been sent promotional information in the post about the support programme before the start date, but that this had been the one and only time it had been mentioned. On reflection, it had perhaps been the overwhelming experience of the workload that had stopped the interviewee from asking questions about the support programme. This frustrating experience contrasted with the very positive experience of others, possibly pointing to significant differences in how individual departments enabled and implemented staff development policies. The financial pressures put on individual departments were identified as one reason why some departments were unable to honour policies, such as reducing teaching workloads to those new to teaching or those having received good REF results.

Many of the interviewees talked about the challenges of finding the time to undertake developmental activities. The interviewees also talked about their preferred mode of professional development, with a mid-career academic, for example, commenting that:

> It's not always stuff that you want to be taught, it's about getting together and discussing and trying new things. *(Mid-career academic)*

Individual staff annual reviews were reported to be taking place regularly and were talked about largely positively. The exception to this was the one interviewee with a fixed-term research-only contract who appeared to be completely out of the loop on the review process due to the nature of his contracts being fixed-term, albeit annually renewed.

The nature of academic work

Many of the interviewees talked about the knowledge and skills required for academic work. The senior management representative, for example, reflected on what professionalism is in academia:

> a lot of people will say an academic is; you go in, you know your subject, you're in an ivory tower, you just carry on doing your subject, great, you see some students, you excite them and then you go back to your tower. And of course that isn't what it is at all. And if you talk to any of our staff, they would say it's getting things in on time, it's marking under speed, you have to [learn] then do online marking. There's big technology changes that they're expected to do, different expectations. They're supposed to be able to work out how to deliver to different students who have different skills when they come in. It's really quite tricky and we do support certain aspects of that but I don't think any university does it as a profession and actually say, "As a profession these are the skills that we're looking for, as well as the subject skills and how do we best, right from the beginning, support them all the way through?" *(Senior manager)*

She further reflected on how some new members of academic staff "take to it like a duck to water", but others needed more support particularly as they may have expected academia to be only about subject knowledge, when it is about much more than that. Academic staff themselves reflected on the range of skills that they were expected to acquire, including softer skills like networking where it was not always transparent how they could be acquired:

> as soon as you get to certain higher levels, it's all about people and relationships and engaging and it's not so much about doing experiments. So in a way sometimes I feel a bit angry because the middle managers managed quite well not to tell us about those skills needed. *(Early career academic)*

Trying to do well in all the different aspects of the academic role was described as challenging. One interviewee felt this challenge particularly acutely and expressed that:

> it's a big call and so you end up feeling on a daily basis like you were just not good enough. *(Mid-career academic)*

Career progression pathways

In addition to the more typical professorial pathways (research/teaching, learning and assessment/enterprise and knowledge transfer) there are two further pathways of professional achievement and academic leadership. The introduction of these pathways was viewed very positively by interviewees, but there was still a clear imbalance, with far more staff gaining promotion through the research route. A long-serving academic at the University commented that:

> even at [this University], which has got a great reputation for learning and teaching, we've only got two or three professors who are professors who've taken the teaching and learning track, whereas we've got hundreds of professors who've taken the research track. *(Mid-career academic)*

Below the professorial level, the academic career pathways progress from Senior Lecturer to either Reader (for the research route) or Principal Lecturer (for the teaching and learning route). The Senior Lecturer grade is the norm with the Lecturer grade being the starting grade for those new to teaching until they have completed an HE teaching development qualification. Senior management have recently led staff roadshows to explain the progression pathways as the latest staff survey had identified this as an area requiring clarification.

These different progression pathways were not reflected in different types of contracts with the University tending to have academic staff on traditional academic contracts and teaching-only contracts only being offered for replacement teaching or in a small number of very specialist professional areas. The senior management interviewee with the remit for student experience saw it as part of her role to support academic staff to apply for promotions through the different non-research progression routes.

Pressure of work

The typical workload of an academic was perceived to have significantly increased over the last decade, and the scrutiny of academic activities had intensified. The human resources representative, for example, commented that:

> workload is higher than it was, say, fifteen years ago, and there is more scrutiny of what they do. *(Senior manager)*

The workload was certainly experienced as heavy by the interviewees, and many of the interviewees talked about the heavy workload curtailing opportunities to do research.

The numerous waves of restructuring had also clearly impacted on the daily experiences of the staff interviewed. One mid-career interviewee talked about how everyone's workload allocation had increased virtually year-on-year, as staff who were made redundant had not been replaced. The same interviewee lamented the loss of good cross-disciplinary links with the restructuring, which had grouped subjects differently.

Some of the interviewees had recently experienced a push to do more research in their departments, but that it was not clear how staff could achieve this on top of heavy teaching workloads. A mid-career academic commented that:

> It's not going to happen by itself, and the Dean saying, "I want it to double", is going to have no impact at all if something isn't done to take off some of the other responsibilities, especially teaching responsibilities for those staff who are involved in teaching. *(Mid-career academic)*

The same mid-career academic described the general management approach being dominated by a cost-cutting accounting culture as follows:

> It's very much, I think, cost centred rather than looking at profit, and there's a certain amount of money and you can't exceed that, so they'll try to cut costs, but at the same time then the teaching gets delivered but nothing else gets delivered. So it's an accounting culture rather than an entrepreneurial one. *(Mid-career academic)*

Some of the interviewees talked about having re-evaluated their motivations for academic work over the course of their career. A mid-career academic, for example, had recently decided that he did not want to continue climbing up the ladder, but would instead stay at his current grade in the hope of a better quality of life and good health rather than extra pressure. This choice had not, however, been easy:

> I do also find it quite difficult that I've chosen not to go for this job and chosen to close what would seem to be climbing up the ladder. *(Mid-career academic)*

Heavy workload and pressure of time had an impact on staff capacity to engage with staff development.

Social networks addressing issues of isolation

A number of the interviewees described their work as very solitary or isolating. One interviewee called for more mutual support instead of endless competition. Many interviewees talked about professional or social networks as being very important to maintaining their identity and supporting professional development. Three female interviewees, in particular, praised the encouragement, advice and direction they had via social networks such as Twitter. As the early career academic explained it:

> Twitter gets together these lone people at different institutions to get a bit of critical mass, and so you find these online communities where other people write about similar things, and you think, "Well I'm not the only one." *(Early career academic)*

She further reflected that her social network was perhaps more important to her professional identity than colleagues in her department:

> Sometimes I feel like I belong more to these unofficial kinds of transiently formed identities. And I think that's really important, that was important for me to recognise, that I'm not restricted to the people who are physically around me, but I can have my nurturing or my temporal other. *(Early career academic)*

The importance of continuing to engage with professional networks throughout one's career was asserted by a mid-career academic, who acknowledged the challenges of finding the time and money to do this.

> I think it's really important to get outside our bunkers and see how other people do it. So I encourage all of my colleagues to become external examiners if they can be, and definitely to get involved in professional associations. It's tough, though, it's tough; there's so much going on. And sometimes you need to go to specialist conferences and you can't afford to go to the professional association one but I think that … the professional association network is a really important part of an academic's identity. Or should be. *(Mid-career academic)*

The HEA subject centres were mentioned by two interviewees as having provided useful opportunities through the generation of peer networks.

Academic work outside of the norm

The interviewee in a learning support role was positive about the effort the University was making to reward support staff through, for example, the staff awards scheme, but felt that the University was unhelpfully prioritising the student experience over the staff experience, when both were strongly interlinked:

> I think a lot of people on [the] support side do feel – certainly the staff survey results suggests that people feel – that the University doesn't value its staff as much as it values its student experience. The student experience is absolutely paramount, the students must be happy at all costs, the NSS scores must be as high as possible – this is obviously what brings the students in and the students bring the funding but, I think people sometimes perhaps feel that there's not enough recognition and that you can't have a good student experience if you have a lousy staff experience and that the staff who are over-worked and over-stressed and constantly having more demands made of them, and who don't feel recognised will eventually either burn out or start to deliver a lower student experience. *(Learning support staff)*

This corroborates findings in the US where the decline of 'out of class' contact between students and staff, including informal advice and mentoring, attributed to an increase in part-time appointments and stretched full-timers, has created significant comment (Campaign for the Future of Higher Education 2015; Kezar and Maxey 2014, 2015).

One interviewee (a mid-career academic) in an academic role commented that there was a relatively good sense of a common purpose between academic and support staff, but that academic staff sometimes resisted this, because they are the ones "who bring in the money."

Another interviewee talked about the challenges of working in an unusual role that combined research and outreach within her department. Her own recognition of what was important in her role and what motivated her in academic work was crucial to maintaining her professional identity in the face of the norms of typical academic work that were being directly or indirectly imposed on her. She had learnt that it was sometimes best not to be upfront about all her activities, but rather to talk about them when she could also refer to their impact. She felt that to have her work recognised that she needed to evaluate her work and to keep feeding back the impact of her work. She reflected that she had realised that she was a "square peg in a round hole" and that she would have to put forward alternative measures of the value of her specific work. In pursuing her outreach work she hoped to inspire others. She was, however concerned that the norm of academic work was marginalising people with concerns about social impact:

> But I am concerned because I've talked to a lot of people, and especially women, who have dropped out because they didn't feel like the whole aspect was recognised and there was a very good article about social impact on the science career section. It was someone from America actually wrote that minorities, for example, minorities from disadvantaged backgrounds, they have a much stronger sense of belonging to communities and giving back to communities. And that's not rewarded in the academic system and so our current system is broken and it pushes out these people who are concerned about communities and about social impact. *(Early career academic)*

Improving staff and career development

One of the interviewees suggested that talking more about how people do their research internally would be very useful. She commented that:

> It would be really useful to demystify this notion of ' research' and how it's produced, because the product of research is lauded and celebrated and we have so much pressure on us with the REF and from the very first moment I got here there was pressure about the REF, but actually we don't help each other enough with the process of producing that stuff other than, you present your work at research seminars and … But actually the writing process is the thing that I find hard. *(Mid-career academic)*

She had recently organised a writing retreat for herself, and this had been a positive experience that she felt could be replicated in some form at the university.

The human resources director commented that the HEA's engagement with University human resources colleagues had been rather minimal. This could be an important area to develop in improving staff development in the future.

A mid-career academic made an insightful comment about universities tending to think too much in terms of traditional reward mechanisms. He argued that trust and respect are also key to motivating and rewarding staff. Identifying the building of trust and respect between senior managers and staff as an important component of the University's strategy for rewarding and recognising staff could be a useful recommendation for the higher education sector as a whole.

Summary
This University had seen significant restructuring and change, and staff reported increasing workloads and pressure of work. This was reported to lead to conflict between teaching and research as activities, and in some unhappiness with work–life balance. Local management implementation of policies was again highlighted as an important factor.

Peer-to-peer professional development and peer support outside the University were identified as important for academics, personally in overcoming the isolation of their specialism as well as professionally.

The University is unusual in having so many diverse professorial pathways to progression, and has taken action to increase awareness of the new pathways. Good practice, in managing the range of academic activity, could be identified in their approach of keeping all staff on the same traditional academic contracts preventing discrimination or less favourable treatment, but enabling promotion on diverse specialisms.

2.2.6. Large pre-1992 university

This University positions itself as one of the top 20 research led HEIs in the UK, aiming to improve this position while also to be recognised by staff as a fair employer.

A senior manager described its aim as building a culture of enhancement:

> We want everybody to feel that they are part of a university that is focused on enhancing that performance and giving them the tools they need to succeed. *(Senior manager)*

Strategy and direction
Senior staff set out their aspiration for a performance management system that would balance the needs of the organisation with the aspirations of the individual. Although there was an existing policy on staff review, it was generally not implemented by local managers, although specific departments did so. Senior staff expressed frustration at a lack of mechanisms for performance management and some hostility towards this from staff:

> So – classic example, we find it very, very difficult to reward excellent teachers here because there's no data, there's no matrix to say what excellent teaching is other than the fact that you might be a HEA Fellow and, as far as we can tell, you haven't killed any of your students. *(Senior management)*

Senior managers presented a strong view that staff review should be a positive developmental experience for staff, including mentoring and coaching. They were concerned that it was not happening consistently across the University. Implementing staff review was felt to be central to the success of any staffing strategy and so they were committed to developing a more effective staff review process, but felt this would be a cultural change for many staff.

The University was described by one staff member as having a drive to get staff accredited as Fellows of the HEA, and there was a concern that this could become another bureaucratic exercise. Some interviewees were aware of the UKPSF and others were not, and the HE teaching development programme appeared to be one means by which it had been brought to the attention of new and less experienced academic staff.

Staff profile

From the HESA data, the proportion of teaching-only staff as a proportion of those who teach increased from by 7% in 2013-14. However, the overall figures mask a disparity between part-time and full-time staff. Among all full-time academic staff, only 14% were on teaching-only contracts, 28% were on research-only contracts and 58% on teaching and research contracts. There were approximately half the number of part-time staff as full-time staff but the distribution is very different, with 78% of part-time staff on teaching-only contracts and 12% staff on research-only contracts, leaving just 10% on teaching and research contracts.

Senior staff stated the need to reconsider their current staffing mix in terms of teaching-only, research-only and teaching and research staff. There are currently three categories of academic staff: research-focused, teaching-focused, and teaching and research. This is a relatively recent development, so there was no sense of how individual staff might move between the three pathways over the course of a career, but all are academic staff on the same grading scales and teaching and research staff have some flexibility in choosing the focus for their cases for promotion. A main distinction between the three types of academic staff is in the workload allocation, with teaching-only staff allocated no time for disciplinary scholarship and research but some time for pedagogic research instead. There is, in addition, a second quite distinct teaching-only contract in use: 'Teaching Fellows' on grade six and seven, who do not have the same opportunities for promotion as the majority of academic staff. Interviewees raised concerns over the disparity in the opportunities for the two different types of teaching-only contracts, and even friction between staff in the same department undertaking similar work given the greater teaching workload of Teaching Fellows who have no time allocated for pedagogic research. The use of short-term rather than permanent contracts, and term-time-only rather than year-long contracts for Teaching Fellows, in addition to their lack of opportunities for progression, was also a cause of dissatisfaction to those interviewed.

For teaching-only academic staff aspiring to move to the teaching and research pathway, a cause for concern was whether they could simply request a change in their contract on the basis of their disciplinary research in a re-grading type of procedure, or whether they would have to wait until their department advertised a post and then compete with an international field of candidates for it. The support of departmental line management was seen as crucial to fulfilling their aspirations. The need to remain abreast of recent work in their own discipline was recognised as a requirement for HE teaching, but a source of some difficulty without time allocated in their workload for disciplinary scholarship and research.

There was a genuine concern from senior staff that teaching-only staff could end up in a career cul-de-sac where there was no opportunity for merit-based promotion, unlike their colleagues on traditional academic contracts. The culture of merit-based promotion at universities was seen as troublesome for professional services staff, who generally carry out the role they are appointed to do, and will only progress through appointment to a more senior role. The comparison to traditional academic merit-based promotion, where doing your current job well is grounds for promotion, was described as a source of dissatisfaction for professional staff. Having teaching-only staff on lower grades were essential to service delivery, but left them in an unhappy situation similar to professional services staff, unable to progress through achieving excellence in their current job. The dilemma of teaching-only staff who undertake academic work and have hopes of an academic career was sympathetically acknowledged:

> It's very, very difficult … Because people have ended up in those jobs, of course, who do want academic careers. And so they will continue to feel this sense of injustice that their excellent work is not being rewarded by promotion, when the nature of their contracts is it can't be. *(Senior manager)*

The situation for research-only staff was described in very similar ways, in that there is a conflict of interest between the institution's need for service delivery, and the development of the individual researcher. However, while development opportunities for research-only staff might be curtailed by the requirements of the research project, it was noted that they did have access to merit-based promotion up to grade ten. Early

career research staff were described as "workhorses" and the problem is exacerbated by the lack of staff review as an opportunity to raise issues of professional development with a Principle Investigator.

Reward and recognition

The University now has multiple pathways for promotion as the three categories of academic staff – research focused, teaching-focused, and teaching and research – have different criteria for promotion. Teaching and research staff can opt to demonstrate excellence in research, or teaching or enterprise, with satisfactory performance demonstrated in a complex selection of other factors. However, teaching-only academic staff may only apply for promotion on the grounds of teaching excellence, and research-only academic staff on the grounds of research excellence. This relatively new development has resulted in a couple of cases of promotion on the grounds of teaching excellence which have been widely publicised throughout the University.

> As with many pre-92 universities, we've struggled with this whole idea of getting teaching on as good a standing as research for promotion, but we have had a couple of prominent cases that have gone through now. *(Learning support staff)*

However, there is a widespread perception among staff that the published criteria for promotion for the new teaching-only pathways are more ambiguous than the traditional research excellence criteria. Some staff mentioned the difficulty of providing evidence in relation to teaching excellence, perhaps compared with the more familiar metrics associated with research assessment.

Senior staff felt that the promotion criteria were clear, although the decision about whether they have been met will always be subjective and they need to be interpreted for different disciplines. Senior staff did raise the difficulty of evidencing excellence in teaching compared to excellence in research, as did other staff:

> 'Teaching Excellence', I get the impression it's a phrase that's used sector wide that no-one really knows what they mean by it. You know, "We demonstrate teaching excellence", well, how do you define that from what everyone else is doing? Does the fact that I gave good student feedback mean that I am demonstrating teaching excellence or does it mean something somewhat more substantial than that? *(Teaching-focused academic)*

There is a double bind also found elsewhere in the sector, where the criteria for promotion for teaching-only academic staff is still research, but pedagogic research rather than disciplinary research. Given the vast majority of newly appointed teaching-focused lecturers will have recently finished a PhD in disciplinary research, and lack familiarity with pedagogic research, this is a substantial challenge. Teaching-focused academic staff expressed concern over their competence to undertake pedagogic research, lack of clarity about what it was, and their own direction in relation to it. The centrality of research in promotion criteria for teaching-focused staff was also viewed ambivalently by senior staff interviewed, who questioned the amount of pedagogic research required by the university and wanted to value other contributions, such as industrial collaboration.

There are a number of prizes for outstanding teaching or 'University Teaching Fellowships' each year that come with development funding, and the university also puts forward candidates for National Teaching Fellowships, some of whom have been successful.

Both discretionary increments and one off bonus payments are possible as ways of rewarding staff who have gone beyond their usual role, or generated funding, and the process requires the individual to apply and their line manager to make a recommendation. However, the decision to apply rests with the individual and the rewards are seen as very much at the discretion of line managers with practice varying substantially between different departments.

A criticism of both the promotion and one off bonus payment systems made by the senior staff interviewed was that the application is made by an individual, with an endorsement by their head of department. They felt this removed responsibility from line managers for the promotion decision, and wished to move towards a system where promotion or bonus payments arose out of the staff review process and required the line manager to put a member of staff forward.

Although there is a staff review system, it is acknowledged that it is not implemented throughout the university as this is in the hands of local line management. It was viewed benignly by at least some staff, as

one person reflecting on the lack of opportunity to discuss their career in day-to-day interactions commented on their experience of appraisal many years previously:

> a really helpful way for people to reflect where they are, what they are working on, "If you want to aim for a particular promotion then these are the kinds of things you should focus on." It's a chance also to get backing for things like MA courses or conferences and other events that you might want to go to for professional development. *(Learning support staff)*

Staff development

The staff development function was split between different locations in the University and there was limited provision. Senior staff expressed the aim that an effective staff review system when established would feed into the staff development programme.

The University has offered an HE teaching development programme linked to HEA Fellowship for many years but is currently rethinking its CPD provision against the revised UK PSF. Completion of the PG Certificate is a probationary requirement for all new academic staff whatever their pathway.

The academic development unit also offers support with curriculum design and development, and learning teaching and assessment issues as well as strategic input on university quality assurance cycles and regulations. Academic developers are currently encouraged to teach and research themselves, to inform their practice although they are not on academic contracts:

> …if you're going to talk to teaching staff about developing their teaching, you have much more credibility if you can say, "Actually, I've tried this in my own teaching" or "I've empathised with the situation." So it does help tremendously*. (Learning support staff)*

However, the opportunity for learning enhancement staff to do research has been very much at the discretion of line managers, so has been encouraged or curtailed as local line management arrangements have changed over time. For learning enhancement staff, gaining a professional qualification and forming external professional networks has been very important to career development.

There is central funding for professional development, such as attending conferences, events or specialist training, and a teaching enhancement fund to which individuals and small teams can apply for funding particular projects. Professional development of this kind is very much appreciated by staff as it enables their self-defined goals or projects, and is not dependent on immediate line management or departmental funding.

The nature of working life

There was a ubiquitous sense that working life was challenging, particularly that there was not enough time to complete all the tasks staff wished to do, perhaps an inevitable consequence of the open-ended nature of academic work, and that feeling overworked was prevalent.

Many interviewees reported quite painful experiences in their working life, some presented as inherent in the nature of the job, some caused by specific problems. The nature of academic work is that it is not a nine-to-five commitment; where experiments, fieldwork or collaboration can require work at all hours and places, and arises from a passion for the field. Perceived increases in bureaucratic tasks were seen as a great frustration and waste of time. There was an overall sense of an increase in the pressure of work for all staff:

> It's all about getting student numbers up, it's not about the quality of the teaching or the quality of the degree that we're producing. They want more numbers, more students, cram them in there and do the best you can with less, basically, the people doing the teaching, etc. etc. … So something's got to give at some point! *(Academic)*

Teaching Fellows in particular appeared overwhelmed by the amount of work they had to undertake. Workload models may not accurately reflect the amount of time required for conscientious completion of their pastoral role, the development of teaching materials, updating of the curriculum and marking. Aspiring to a traditional academic post because of their love of their discipline and the security of a full-time permanent post with preferable contractual terms, they felt frustrated both by a lack of recognition for their teaching and a lack time for their disciplinary scholarship. However, other staff also reported that departmental workload models underestimated the time required for teaching and service tasks.

Of course, the pleasures of work were also discussed by respondents, including the freedom, creativity, and professional autonomy to pursue a shared passion for their discipline. Seeing students or junior colleagues develop over the years was also described as a very rewarding experience for staff. A lack of petty restrictions, like dress codes, was also valued.

A research-only member of staff spoke eloquently on the pressures of generating their own salary from research projects, and the difficulties for staff on short-term research contracts. While they might have a series of contracts over many years, if there was no bridging funding staff were forced to take on other smaller contracts between larger contracts, and could end up taking on multiple fractional contracts to ensure that there was no gap, with the consequence that the contracts would overlap and add up to more than 100% of a full-time job.

Different respondents noted the disparity between evaluating teaching and research activities in that, for research, grant income and publications were well understood as measures of success. However, in teaching there were no equivalent measures, which could be seen to incentivise doing little beyond 'turning up'. Lack of collegiality in sharing teaching and service responsibilities was raised by one interviewee:

> It is very cynical but it is true. The reward for doing good work is actually to keep doing it, to get more work or to keep doing what you want to do, keep doing what you're doing. […] Yes, and a reward for being a bad lecturer is not to do lecturing! *(Early or mid-career academic)*

For staff who teach, the requirements of teaching take precedence and disciplinary scholarship and research appears to be fitted around teaching commitments. Despite a commitment to teaching, release from this pressure and the provision of time to think was a developmental opportunity and sabbaticals were recommended as a way of achieving this. There may be a vicious cycle for those with no time to prepare grant applications or even applications for sabbatical leave, and therefore the automatic granting of a sabbatical to all academic staff was seen as an important way that the university could support staff. All three teaching-only staff interviewed were undertaking disciplinary research or aspired to undertake disciplinary research, and perhaps it is unrealistic to expect those who have pursued a PhD in their chosen field to willingly give up their studies in their area, although they will escape the pressures of the REF.

Conversely a research-only interviewee also observed that their lack of interest in undergraduate teaching had hindered their career, as so many research posts are dependent on short-term funding:

> I think you have to recognise your own skill set in this sort of profession, which is quite important, and the one thing I don't particular – well, it might be more that I'm good at it –but I don't particularly like teaching, and I know that's hindered me because I know there are academic posts that I've now been told I should've applied for, and probably would have got them … I really don't have an interest in it and don't really want to …. You have to put a lot of time and effort in to do that sort of activity, and to me that's not something that I have an interest in, but I know that's hindered me. *(Research-only academic)*

Staff primarily identify with their disciplinary colleagues and so the importance of external relationships within the discipline was expected, but the value of like-minded colleagues in other HEIs was also extended to learning support staff.

Summary

This successful research-led institution is grappling with the same pressures as other institutions in the sector but this case study has provided a particular focus on how the separation of the teaching and research functions affects individual academics' careers.

A recurring theme was the discrepancy between local line management and institutional policy. Sympathetic disciplinary colleagues who are the head of department or research group appear crucial for the development of individual staff, reviewing drafts, looking over applications, finding funding opportunities and offering support and advice. Implementation of institutional policies is subject to considerable local variation and therefore very hard for individuals to influence.

There is a tension between developing staff and service delivery for all staff, and this may be exacerbated by increasing pressure on resources. Staff at the early stages of their career, or in less established roles, may be more adversely affected by this pressure.

The workload allocation within departments is critical in enabling or hindering careers as time is the most precious resource to staff who are under increasing pressure, and an essential pre-requisite for engagement in all professional development activities.

In conclusion, a traditional role including both teaching and research seems to be most desirable to academic staff, with people on either teaching-only or research-only contracts experiencing reduced opportunities for progression.

2.2.7. Small Russell Group university

This University is one of the smaller research-intensive universities, which undertakes teaching and research across a wide range of subjects. It has high proportions of international students and academics, and has a deliberate strategy of recruiting "the best" academics in their disciplines from around the world. It is based on several campuses located in a large conurbation and has recently begun transnational activity.

Academic staff profile of the institution
In the most recent year for which there are data, the University increased the proportion of full-time academic staff by 5%. However, over 15% of the full-time academic population left the University during that year and over 20% joined, although this spike in turnover was not unusual for Russell Group universities during the year of the REF 2014 submission. Most academics in indefinite posts are on similar contracts, but some are given 'teaching and scholarship' roles – as distinct from 'teaching and research' or 'research' roles – with a higher teaching load.

Of those who teach at the University, just over a third are reported to HESA to be on teaching-only contracts and over two thirds of these work part-time (HESA 2015). According to the Human Resources Director, this may be skewed by clinical faculty. The University has nearly as many atypical staff as 'mainstream' academics, and this category grew faster than the latter group in 2013-14. More than a third of the atypical staff are 25 years or under, whereas only 3% of mainstream academics were in this age group, suggesting that a significant number of graduate teaching assistants on hourly-paid contracts are being employed by the institution.

Staff survey
Many (80% or more) people felt part of the University and felt supported and valued by colleagues for the work they do. Staff also felt proud to work at the University and believed that the institution delivers a good service to students and other stakeholders. The areas highlighted for improvement included communications (especially laterally across the institution), and senior management listening to people's views and responding to them.

Academics were less likely than the sector as a whole to feel they had a good work–life balance and more likely to feel unduly stressed at work, and this had worsened since the previous survey. A significant minority of academics did not understand the reasons for recent changes in the University.

Policies
A recent teaching and learning strategy included a greater focus on 'the student experience', reflecting changes in the environment in which the University operates and the expectations of its students. It described a research-informed education, with new interdisciplinary initiatives, a renewed focus on international students, and a growth in provision for online learning. A key element informing the development of this strategy would be a new annual student survey. For staff, it sought to provide training and staff development opportunities related to teaching, academic support, and pastoral support for all staff, and to ensure that all staff delivering academic programmes are active in scholarly activities. It aimed for all staff who teach to have achieved, or be working towards, a teaching qualification or HEA Fellowship by the academic year 2018-19. However, the new Human Resources Director thought this might not attract universal enthusiasm and was against the idea, "because I just don't think it's the right way to drive good behaviour."

Asked about the requirement for all teachers to gain a teaching qualification, a late-career academic interviewed said:

> It might be a bit too late for me but, I mean, a lot of the teachers are going to come from our *current* [i.e. post-doctoral] researchers, I would suspect, and the transition from research to teaching is probably not that easy for some people or they're not naturals at it and something like that I think would be good. *(Late-career academic)*

The existing academic development programme is already mapped on to the UKPSF. There is a teaching awards scheme, which mirrors the National Teaching Fellows Scheme (NTFS) and an annual teaching and learning conference.

The criteria for promotion and recruitment cover research, teaching and 'enabling' activities (in support of research and teaching). The areas of actual achievement for a particular individual are determined by their specific role designations and the focus of their contribution derived from their appraisals (e.g. teaching and scholarship, teaching and research, principal investigator). The UKPSF is explicitly referred to in the promotions criteria for teaching. Academic staff are also expected to contribute to relevant public engagement and enterprise initiatives.

The annual appraisal process was described as variable by several interviewees. There is an annual discretionary staff bonus scheme and increments for the retention of staff where necessary. It appears to operate on a very devolved basis. One late-career academic (teaching and research role) felt there was scope for more imagination about the use of increments for those at or near the top of their pay scales who might contribute more if there were financial incentives to do so.

The human resources and professional development functions

The academic and professional development function has been separated from the human resources function for several years. The former undertakes a certain amount of research and development as well. The heads of these two functions meet regularly and there is one post that jointly reports to both. However, the Human Resources Director thought there was not enough joint working, and therefore insufficient capacity for organisational development, particularly in the leadership of professional services. The human resources function is limited, with a head of HR in each of the faculties, and is seen as transactional rather than strategic, keeping the institution out of trouble rather than adding much value.

Nevertheless, the senior leadership is very interested in HR issues and committed to being a fair employer. Collegiality is very much part of the culture and practices within the institution. The new Human Resources Director is beginning to develop a new strategy – for the institution as much as for human resources – and engaging people in its development of that. It will be referring to people management rather than human resources management.

The head of school interviewed was quite critical of the Human Resources Department in the past, although he implied it had improved a little recently. He was not sure whether this was due to a lack of resources or the quality of the individuals providing the service, and he referred to previous "weak leadership". He described the reward and recognition practices in the institution as "rather old-fashioned" and biased towards those who have won research grants or published a book. He singled out the appraisal process. He felt that broader contributions should be recognised, such as ideas for short courses and, in particular, leadership, including leadership of teaching:

> I think there needs to be more recognition that people are making additional contributions. I think this institution has been let down … for many years by the HR side of things. *(Head of school)*

> I think they [HR] see themselves as a sort of fourth pillar and they don't *quite* know how to interpret their roles. I think there are individuals who *get* it but others who really are *not* equipped with the skills and understanding to actually take on the role … it's quite surprising, the gap in knowledge. So sometimes it seems to be that their default is to halt a process or maybe stand back from the process of having to manage somebody who's failing on all levels – there's a huge cost and they don't quite understand that sometimes. *(Head of school)*

Devolution of decision-making

The HR Director referred to the differences between the faculties, and not just the disciplinary differences, but "almost a kind of philosophical approach to how things are done as well … how that works and what it means." Some are more collegial, others more managerial, taking a more performance-driven approach with

very clear indicators and people dismissed for failing to reach the targets set. She was concerned with this "hotchpotch approach" and whether it is resulting in people being treated differently in each faculty.

The head of school interviewed reported that a lot of power, responsibility and authority is devolved to schools, which "are like mini empires". He reports to the equivalent of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor who is relatively "hands off" but supportive. He had taken on the role earlier in his career than he had expected to, having indicated that he would be willing to become head at some point. However, the previous head had left and no one else sufficiently senior was interested at the time. Nevertheless, he was pleased that he had decided to take the role. He thought there was insufficient training and induction for new heads of schools, and he described what there was as "pretty terrible" and "quite shoddy".

In general, the head of school interviewed felt the institution was supportive of academic staff:

> It is very good, it's always been. It's a very flat hierarchy, it's quite a porous hierarchy as well and it's a "can do" place. It's somewhere, if you've got an idea, people won't just dismiss you, you really can *do* things and it's always been like that. So in that sense, *yes*, I think it's very supportive. *(Head of school)*

The HR Director illustrated the diversity in practices between schools using the example of an academic moving from a teaching-only role to a teaching and research role. In one school, someone in a teaching-only role who had developed research activity would be prioritised to move into a vacancy when one became available, whereas in another school they would have to apply through open, external competition and hope to be the best candidate.

The interviewees described different approaches to 'teaching and scholarship' roles; with some schools employing them and others ensuring that every academic gets time for research, if only in the summer months.

Lack of clarity in aspects of the role

The 'teaching and scholarship' roles appeared to be ill defined, and this caused some uncertainty. Specifically, 'scholarship' seemed to be a fluid concept. The key issue was whether those in 'teaching and scholarship' roles could undertake sufficient research, achieve a satisfactory publication rate and participate in bids for research income, so as to compete for promotion on a par with those who had been appointed to 'teaching and research' posts.

Promotion criteria were thought to be ambivalent; clearly giving preference to research performance, and less clearly offering progression for achievements in teaching and supporting learning. One early career academic thought that academics needed to be more involved in determining the criteria for promotion in order to make them fair for everyone, regardless of their role. Not knowing whether focusing on teaching would disqualify him from becoming a professor was making it hard to plan his career development and realise his ambitions.

Career obstacles

Several early career academics described how taking a break after completing their doctorate, or not immediately following it up with publications, had had a detrimental effect on their careers. It had been a "mistake", one interviewee felt. Yet, all of these admitted to being exhausted at the completion of their doctorate and not ready to return to research immediately. One early career academic (learning support and teaching role) had taken a break between undergraduate and postgraduate study, had then progressed to complete a Masters and a PhD quite quickly, but admitted:

> I wasn't very strategically astute about the hyper-competitive nature of the industry or about the things that I might strategically need to do to position myself … I know that I could've put myself in a better position to get a regular academic employment – although conditions are very tough and it might not have happened – but had I published more research, some research as a student, a postgraduate student or a very recent postdoctoral student *(Early career academic)*

One of the mid-career interviewees had obtained a lectureship before he had finished his doctorate:

> Getting a permanent job before I had my doctorate has meant that I've not had to be as sharp-elbowed as most people necessarily are … but I think you'd get a different profile and different type of behaviour out of my younger colleagues who just need to scrabble about with little posts and they need to kind of crawl across each other to get ahead. I was spared that, so I'm fortunate for that. *(Mid-career academic)*

A number of interviewees referred to the importance of learning how – and getting the opportunity – to write research grants. Those that had not managed to do this, or did not learn until later in their career, felt disadvantaged by this.

Another early career academic (learning support and teaching) said:

> I very much admire the success of this School in research and it's great to be part of the environment, but the recruitment to permanent positions in this School, in all the time I remember, has been very driven by REF strategy and we don't typically have a strong sense, we don't typically appoint to full-time academic positions people who aren't the strongest research achieving candidate on the slate. *(Early career academic)*

He went on:

> At the moment, teaching isn't incentivised … I don't want to belittle these things but there are various awards and marks of recognition but nothing really that's as meaningful as a pay rise. I'd say there's lots of teaching excellence – don't get me wrong – and the vast majority of my colleagues are committed to good teaching and enjoy teaching, but teaching excellence isn't incentivised the way research is excellence is. It's kind of quite stark. *(Early career academic)*

A number of interviewees mentioned that, to get on in academia, you have to be proactive and draw attention to yourself.

Career turning points

Most staff interviewed referred to research successes – grants, conference presentations, books published – as key turning points in their careers.

A number of early career academics described the uncertainty and insecurity of fixed-term post-doctoral positions. One of the key turning points so far in their careers was finding a permanent contract – even if this was a 'teaching and scholarship' role – which allowed them to feel more secure, relax, and stop worrying about what to do next. They were pleased to be employed at a reputable university and appreciated being wanted by their new employer.

The REF had been a difficult experience for the Director of Research in one of the schools. He was critical of the process for internal review of individuals' research output and, in particular, how external reviewers had been managed. This experience had made him more resolute to "do things properly" and to be clear about processes. In turn this would help in having the "difficult conversations" that are so necessary in providing leadership. He felt that the significant decisions for the next REF will be the level of resource that will be deployed to enable individuals to produce the quality outputs required.

One mid-career academic described how there had been annual monitoring of outputs for the REF (which was also mentioned by interviewees in other schools), which "was felt throughout the School to be very intrusive and disabling in lots of ways." He described the REF as a "brooding presence" during the previous few years.

The University's approach to the REF was highlighted as a key example of the growing distance between the 'centre' and the schools in recent years.

Central provision for academic and professional development

All early career academics were required to complete the postgraduate certificate in teaching as part of their probation, and those interviewed were enthusiastic about taking up other CPD opportunities where they felt these were relevant. In the conurbation, opportunities outside the university were also available.

A mid-career academic (in a teaching and research role), who had taken the postgraduate certificate, described the hostility to it from most of his colleagues:

> It was always seen as an imposition and as something that simply had to be borne while grinning, more or less. It's never been thought of particularly seriously as formative in a very important sense. And I think I would probably agree that the sort of formative things in terms of teaching were teaching, watching other people do it … It's just that you've got to tick the box, for better for worse. *(Mid-career academic)*

The Head of School referred to academics' lack of understanding of what 'professional development' means:

> It's always difficult because you say to colleagues, as part of their appraisal, "What professional development and training do you require?" and they just laugh it off. Some do say they want specific training on using certain types of software, but *mostly* people don't quite know what they want. So I think it's not *helped* by academics being a little uncertain as to what that *means* actually. *(Head of school)*

Aspirations for the future

Early and mid-career academics interviewed would be content with gradual progression, although all aspired to professorial status. Those involved in learning support (student welfare and experience, or e-learning) and teaching were keen to keep this balance in their work, but frustrated that they could not achieve academic promotion if they stayed in this role. They acknowledged that they would have to apply for a more conventional full-time lecturer or senior lecturer role (with more time for research) at this or another university if they were to progress their career. Interestingly, one thought their administrative/management experience would probably make them well placed for head of an academic department.

Several interviewees, even those early in their careers, recognised that the more competitive environment within which institutions operate, resulting from higher tuition fees, was causing a shift in research-intensive universities towards improving teaching and students' experience of learning. One felt:

> this procedure has to become a little bit more democratic and from the bottom up, to get insights and knowledge about how this transition can happen and how we can develop both our teaching and our research capabilities in academic institutions. *(Early career academic)*

Summary

In response to external drivers and internal needs, the University is beginning to address the reward and recognition of different contributions of staff to its range of activities, but it is a devolved institution and there is variation between academic units in the way in which policies are interpreted. Examples of this included annual appraisals and the treatment of academics in 'teaching and scholarship' roles. The Human Resources Department is also realising that it needs to develop a more strategic approach in supporting organisational change, and it has the support of senior management in this.

The REF remains a strong driver of activity and research is key to individual career development and departmental reputation. It appeared that the REF strategy had contributed to a perception that the 'centre' was becoming more distanced from the departments. For early career academics, gaining a permanent position is a significant turning point in their career and, particularly, one that enables them to pursue their research interests.

Nevertheless, there is support for a greater emphasis on learning and teaching and students' experience of these. Young academics were forging new roles and seeing opportunities for career enhancement. The challenge for the University is to recognise and reward their achievements in the professional development, career development and promotion processes.

2.2.8. Large post-1992 university

This institution was a teaching-focused post-1992 university keen to contribute to the community it serves across multiple campuses over a large geographical area.

Strategy and direction

The University is located across multiple campuses over a large geographical area. It has strong links with further education colleges across this area and counts its core activities as including teaching and learning, widening access to education, and research and innovation. Senior managers saw the academic promotion pathways as fairly open and transparent. These views were reflected in the majority, but not all of the interview narratives with academic staff. The University's human resources and staff development structures were somewhat fragmented and a senior management interviewee commented that:

> we have no overall organisational development strategy to which these things are then aligned. So I think that is the glue that is missing in terms of bringing these disparate functional areas together and ensure that they're aligned in terms of resources, purposes, timescales, to deliver on what the university needs. *(Senior manager)*

Academic promotion pathways

There are three different career pathways for academic staff: learning and teaching pathway, research pathway, and academic enterprise pathway. These can be pursued as single pathways or as a minor, and a major component. One senior manager summarised the balance between the three pathways as follows:

> The Research pathway is still the most prevalent … there are substantial numbers on the Learning and Teaching but there would be significantly fewer on the Academic Enterprise pathway. *(Senior manager)*

A teaching-only promotion pathway has been recently introduced. The introduction of this pathway arose from what one of the senior managers emphasised as "an actual imbalance – not just a perceived imbalance, an actual imbalance" in the promotion opportunities for teaching-only staff. This promotion pathway was also introduced mindful of the need to provide equal opportunities for those staff who were being moved to, or were being encouraged to move to, teaching-only contracts because of unfavourable assessments of their REF outputs.

In consultation with the trade union, bonus points at the top of the scale had been removed, and four professoriate tiers had been introduced, where salary progression is not automatic but has set targets to enable progression to the next point in the band.

The majority of staff are on traditional teaching and research contracts and, as such, would all have two different line managers: the Head of School for their discipline and the Research Institute Director for their area of research. The Head of School would have responsibility for teaching and human resources-related matters, while the Research Institute Director would have responsibility for research targets and research-related matters. Senior managers indicated that a significant number of staff are now in teaching-only or teaching and scholarship roles, but that their contract might not (yet) reflect their change to a teaching-only role. The latest HESA figures suggest that over 40% of full-time staff, and nearly 70% of part-time staff are on teaching-only contracts. These figures were neither confirmed nor contested, but one of the senior managers commented that across the sector there had been some:

> …gaming, others would say data optimisation, depending on what euphemism you want to use for it but the reality is that institutions have looked at the contracts that staff have been on in the lead-up to the REF, so that the metrics, in terms of research power or whatever and obviously they were doing this in the vacuum in which we didn't know how the funding would play out, so there were all kinds, as I say, of strategising, in terms of optimising the funding to institutions. *(Senior manager)*

There were also differences in the balance of type of staff across different faculties "depending on their traditions and where they see their objectives." From a senior management perspective the REF was seen as a positive tool to provide external validation for the general direction the University wanted to move towards. Those members of staff who had ambitions and clear potential to be 'REFable' in the future were

linked to research institutes and given an opportunity to demonstrate their productivity before being moved to, for example, a teaching-only contract.

Staff development opportunities
The staff development programme was largely described in positive terms. A mid-career academic suggested that "everything is there if you wanted to take up on them" (Mid-career academic). The University runs learning and teaching awards that are available to academic staff and to professional support staff, and the University supports staff in applying for National Teaching Fellowships. There is a drive for 75% of all staff to have HEA accreditation by 2018. There is now a student-led teaching award scheme, and (staff nominated) professional awards for academic support and clerical staff. There is also good recognition of the need and provision of internal and external (particularly online) programmes for staff to engage in, for example, leadership and management training. There is evidence of regular appraisals and a culture of giving feedback and encouragement.

A senior manager, however, felt that heads of schools did not always make the most of the appraisal system because:

> you can have a performance conversation in a developmental way but if that is not done skillfully, "Our union did not agree a performance based [system]" and that's where the tensions come and then if heads of school are not good at having those kinds of difficult conversations in a supportive kind of environment, then they want to address that poor performance and they go to the HR armoury, they will find themselves not well served. *(Senior manager)*

The early career academic who spent half of her time of teaching and half on research felt that the University staff development initiatives to improve her teaching had been good, but that she was more reliant on her external networks built during her PhD for enhancing her research activity. This was despite being linked to a research institute, having a Research Institute Director as a second line manager and having been brought in specifically to be research-focused. The staff development team were, however, conscious of the need for them to improve their provision to enhance research training, initially focusing on PhD students.

Career development routes
The staff interviewed had very different kinds of routes into academia with only one interviewee having had what is often described as the traditional route into academia, that is, an undergraduate degree, postgraduate study leading to a PhD, followed by post-doctoral positions and then a lectureship. Clear differences emerged between the older and the younger cohorts of academics in terms of what had been expected at the start of their academic career. The fast-track mid-career academic, for example, reflected that:

> I'm probably one of the very last people in my age bracket who got their start in their career in a university or higher education institution anywhere in the UK system, particularly that got their job without a PhD. Now that would be very common with people I suppose in their 60s, but much less common with people in my age bracket … But I was very conscious of that, so immediately began a part-time PhD as a member of staff as soon as I got my first research post in the university. *(Mid-career academic)*

In line with the increasing competition for academic posts, a research-only academic suggested that more work needs to be done to support doctoral students in identifying career pathways other than into academia:

> It's much more difficult for some disciplines to create multiple career pathways for researchers than it is for others. And I think there's work to be done [more] around the social sciences and health sciences, creating career pathways for us there, in addition to what exists. *(Research-only academic)*

Workload and work–life balance
One mid-career academic with a traditional teaching and research role estimated spending approximately 20% of term-time on teaching, 20% on research and 60% on administration, but added that:

> the administration is probably higher than that, which will affect primarily the research, but not the teaching, because the teaching has to be done. So it always ends up affecting your own personal research time. *(Mid-career academic)*

The mid-career academic further reflected that there used to be more time to do research in the summer months, but that this time has been eaten up, for example, by increasing administrative work and the increase in the number of students who have to re-sit exams and coursework, resulting in increased examination-board work over the summer. Thus the reality was: "a constant battle and often my work is done at home, late at night, and all weekend" (Mid-career academic). The situation was exacerbated by the type of academic contracts that the University offered:

> the thing with academic contracts is you have no fixed hours of work … I don't necessarily think it's very helpful when you don't have contracts that give any indication of how long of an actual leave of absence and a holiday that you're entitled to is. [It's not] helpful in this day and age, when it's all pervasive, when it's day, night and weekend. It would be helpful if there were established norms for how much free time you could expect to have, other than statutory holidays. *(Mid-career academic)*

In contrast, the research-only academic had actively sought part-time work in other areas to make sure that she could continue working on research contracts that closely aligned with her own research interests, and typically arose from her internal and external network established during her PhD. This research-only academic appeared intrinsically motivated to continually stretch her own skills and knowledge through research.

Reward and recognition

The interviewees expressed differing views on the reward and recognition procedures at the University. A mid-career academic asserted that:

> If you're personally ambitious and you work really hard, the reward and recognition structure is very good in this institution. *(Mid-career academic)*

The same mid-career academic explained that the best advice to academics starting out would be to:

> always keep your eye on what it is that the institution seeks to reward, so that you can be sure that the sort of work you're doing aligns with something in those criteria. *(Mid-career academic)*

An early career academic was also positive about the reward and recognition procedures, and saw the promotion criteria for the research-focused route as very clear:

> I know what I need to do if I want to get promotion, for example, how many publications, external funding, supervision of the PhD students and research collaboration outside here or maybe [with an] international network. *(Early career academic)*

There were, however, others who felt frustrated with the promotion criteria. A late-career academic, for example, talked about his own experience where:

> there was a position that came up and I couldn't apply for it because I wasn't at a suitable grade and that to me is a waste … so you can meet all the desirable essential criteria in the world but unless you're at a grade in the organisation you're not allowed to apply and it doesn't make sense to me. *(Late-career academic)*

Another mid-career academic also felt that the promotion criteria were almost impossible to meet, had been very frustrated by having her application for promotion turned down, and was now trying to rebuild her confidence:

> I applied to be promoted twice. So I applied three years ago to be promoted to Senior Lecturer and was turned down by the faculty and was told to do more faculty work, so I'm Faculty Rep, I'm on every board and meeting you can think of. And then I applied last year under the new Learning and Teaching criteria and I was turned down again because it was felt that I didn't have enough scholarly activity but then when you look at your job, look at your remit, how are you supposed to do all of this, you know, it's just crazy. *(Mid-career academic)*

She also expressed some frustration about previous teaching experience as not counting enough in the promotions criteria and about having to start again in a new institution:

> And I suppose when I look at colleagues who've been here 20 years maybe, who have been promoted and earned their stripes, I'm thinking, "What's this about?" I think if you've been a Senior Lecturer elsewhere, maybe there should be parity when you come into another institution? *(Mid-career academic)*

The interviewees felt that there were equal opportunities for members of staff in research-focused and in teaching-focused careers to be promoted. The early career academic for example commented that:

> I think it's very balanced. If you teach you get rewards, you research, you contribute to REF [and] you can get a promotion. Certainly if you teach only, you can get a promotion, so I think it's a balance. *(Early career academic)*

She also saw specialisation in teaching or research as a positive development as it enables individuals to concentrate on what they want to do, or what they are interested in. There were also some dissonant views expressed about the types of skills that the University recognised and rewarded. A late-career academic, for example, felt that the recruitment and appointment policies did not enable universities to operate effectively with businesses outside of academia.

Academia and interaction with the outside world

A number of interviewees talked about the reasons they had entered academia or had wanted to return to academia. A mid-career academic suggested that it was useful to have experience of work outside of the higher education sector, even if only to appreciate the kind of work and the way of working in HE in full that is different from elsewhere, such as the pace of working and the level of autonomy. A late-career academic felt that he could be the catalyst between the commercial world and academia, but described realising the differences between the two worlds (after having become an academic) along the following lines:

> I just suddenly realised, "Hang on a minute, we're all trying to achieve the same thing", one is pushing for answers, solutions, innovations, because … their marketplace demands that they are ahead of the game or need to change or all the rest of it and the other one is pulling back in the opposite direction because it has procedures and protocols that stifle that innovation. *(Late-career academic)*

He suggested that to improve interaction with the commercial world, universities should be more willing to take risks, for example, in the costing models for delivering training. Taking more risks, for example, in how to cost training, the university could win more business and the businesses would benefit, but risk-taking behaviour seemed not to sit well within standard University strategies and policies.

A mid-career academic talked about the role of the University in serving its community and expressed her pride in working for a university where there is:

> quite a widening participation agenda, there's a lot of poverty … and the students who are coming to us are migratory students (they come in, they travel, they go home), we have a lot of mature students, who are balancing their family, their lives, tragedy, issues in their lives and they're studying! We're privileged to be able to engage in that process with them and to help them attain their professional qualification that's going to enable them to use all their expertise to enhance the lives of other people. *(Mid-career academic)*

Different roles and contracts

Short-term contracts were experienced as being very challenging for career development and many of the staff interviewed had experience of being on a number of different short-term contracts (sometimes in different HEIs) before they were made permanent. A mid-career academic, for example, commented that:

> I think being made permanent was mammoth, because up until that point you were so focused on doing what needed to be done on a day-to-day basis and had no long-term plan. Couldn't write a three-year grant application when you didn't know if you were going to be [in] post three months later. You're not necessarily given roles and responsibilities because people see you as contract staff, so the permanency transformed everything and the evidence is very clear … once I was made a permanent member of staff, things changed fairly rapidly for me, both in terms of the confidence that I had within the organisation and the respect that I had from colleagues. I suppose because I wasn't regarded as someone who might be gone or whatever. *(Mid-career academic)*

A research-only academic had chosen short-term research contract work to keep her research active alongside other part-time work, but was very clear in stating that "it's hard work balancing both". She went on to highlight the risks in this kind of work, with some universities not being timely about payments for contract work, and suggested that contract research work "has to be strategically thought through, from a personal level" (Research-only academic).

The interaction with academic members of staff with those on non-academic contracts was described as positive. The interviewee in a learning support role, for example, explained that her area of work was delivered through "a shared ownership and shared partnership approach", which meant that academic support staff did not feel side-lined, but instead worked positively with academic members of staff. Depending on their work, academic support staff were also encouraged to engage in developing their teaching. The academic support staff interviewed, for example, had completed an HE teaching development programme at her institution. She felt that this gave her credibility in her student-facing work and in her interaction with academic staff.

UKPSF

All of the interviewees were positive about the support and recognition for teaching at the University. One mid-career academic, for example, suggested that HEA accreditation was being presented not as something that:

> "You need to get this for the University", but rather in the ways of, "This is recognising you for all of the great work that you do and we think it's important that you get that recognition." *(Mid-career academic)*

However, one late-career academic reflected how, since gaining HEA accreditation had become compulsory, it had become "a cumbersome burden" to achieve it, rather than before when it had been voluntary, it had been an incentive for recognition.

All of the interviewees were aware of the UKPSF, although it should be noted in this case study that the staff development office had acted as 'gate-keeper' and selected the interviewees. A mid-career academic saw the UKPSF as useful as:

> another one of those guidebooks, or road maps, that help to keep you on the straight and narrow when you're trying to juggle very many things as we all are now, as part of our jobs. *(Mid-career academic)*

The UKPSF was also discussed favourably by the interviewee in a learning support role who suggested that:

> the senior fellow and at the management level that I'm now at, it's very useful because you absolutely have to be able to articulate your work at that level. And it gets you to dig deep into your practice and to think about everything that you do and the approach that you take. *(Learning support staff)*

Summary

This University had well-developed pathways for academic specialisation. Senior managers were explicit in linking judgements about REF performance to changes from a teaching and research role to a teaching-only role for academics.

As in other case study institutions, the pressure of work, increases in administrative responsibilities and the difficulty in fulfilling all aspects of an academic role to a high standard was a common refrain. The particular

challenges for short-term contract staff in accessing professional development opportunities and establishing a career was also foregrounded.

The University appears to have been successful in raising the profile of their strategic goal to achieve 75% of staff who teach being HEA Fellows by 2018 with good recognition of this among those interviewed. An interesting nuance on this is the observation that, ironically, as take up increases Fellowship becomes less of a marker of engagement and achievement in teaching, and more a chore that everyone must undertake.

2.3. Individual vignettes

These six vignettes of the working lives and careers to date of individual academics interviewed in the case study institutions were selected to represent the range of roles and contractual conditions.

2.3.1. Early career academic (teaching and student experience), Russell Group university

An early career academic had studied for his doctorate at the University and before he had finished was offered the opportunity to design a module that he exclusively convened and taught (initially as an hourly paid teaching assistant). This allowed him to eventually complete his thesis some years after starting. Even before finishing the thesis, he was asked to take on an 'administrative' role in student welfare and student experience, a developmental and strategic role, together with his small amount of teaching. The major role is monitoring student engagement and retention, improving and enhancing student learning, reviewing students' experience, their feedback, NSS results and, generally, what they're going through and making recommendations for improvement and creating a more supportive culture. He was keen for his voice to continue to be heard, respected and appreciated, and said that his recommendations seldom meet resistance:

> I'm really trying to create and sustain a culture where we are talking to each other about the students and what they're going through and it's worked well thus far. So, as I say, it's a 0.8 [FTE post], nominally administrative but *really* what I'm doing is the sort of work that the Senior Tutor would [do] in other schools … We perform what's called 'administrative' [tasks] but there's a certain point at which it's not *really* 'administration' is it? It's recognising that these are the sorts of things that would be in the hands of a member of faculty but, as I said, there aren't enough hours in the week and it shouldn't be that way.
>
> The contribution that I make has changed the culture of the school (I *know* that, I've been told it by every colleague, you know, so apologies for bragging but it helps to be honest about it) and I know that it's been *instrumental* in making *so* many important vital changes, that I'm sat here and I'm *not* an administrator, you know. I am an academic and I'm using my academic insight and knowledge to perform these roles. So really there should be an academic contract [for me], it shouldn't just be Teaching Fellow because … that's a dead end … and where's the progression? In my ideal world, it should be Lecturer, which then enables the progression based on demonstration of administrative excellence/teaching excellence/enhancement contribution.

There was one exception when his recommendations were not followed, however, when he proposed that all academics should teach the first year so that they would understand more about who the student cohort is, build a better rapport with them, and improve retention. This had been resisted.

Talking about the future, he thought that moving to the University centre might be an option, but he would be reluctant to relinquish his academic role for an administrative role.

> Really the ideal would be, I *suppose*, to have a full contract that is on an academic pathway but that has principal administrative responsibility, so administration and teaching, with the option then to move into research as and when – to publish [my] thesis. I think really what it would be is something like 0.5 student experience, 0.3 teaching, 0.2 research … but that kind of flexibility, and then at certain points … I would be able to vary that ratio according to our needs.

At some point, he might wish to focus more on his research, but he would prefer to take a sabbatical to do this, which would mean:

> *Really* segregating it, rather than having to try and fit it all in to the same timeframe … it's unmanageable to do teaching, research, senior tutor *and* student experience, I mean it's a fiction.

However, for the moment, he felt he was in a unique position, which he loved, but felt was not properly recognised and rewarded:

> I *know* that what I would like is to have my teaching recognised. So what … I get 5s [out of five] across the board from students. I get, "This is my favourite module." At graduation, they're pulling my [hand] off because they want to say "thank you". And then the welfare side of things, you know, a mother said to me, "I firmly believe my daughter wouldn't be alive were in not for you" – and that's the most powerful thing I've ever heard. Talk about job satisfaction! And that's great because somebody feels I have enriched their lives in a wonderful way. Career wise? No. No. From [head of school], lots of support. From [head of school administration], "My god, you're amazing" From colleagues, "[Name], what you do for the school is fabulous, great." But they're not HR, you know … I can't *cite* any of this!

In summary, this early career academic had managed to 'get his foot in the door' of the academic profession by dint of the excellent student feedback as a teaching assistant, and his willingness to combine teaching and leading a module with a learning enhancement role focused on improving the student experience. Having proved his valuable contribution, he remains on a combination of part-time, fixed-term contracts and faced with real dilemmas about how to consolidate his position as a recognised academic without compromising his professional values and commitment to student learning.

2.3.2. Teaching Fellow, pre-1992 university

This Teaching Fellow had undertaken undergraduate and postgraduate studies in the same university and started teaching during her master's degree. Since the first year of her PhD she had been a module leader, teaching seminars and lectures. She described herself as excited and grateful to have these teaching opportunities early in her career, she was delighted that colleagues had faith in her ability to do it, and felt she had a lot of support in doing so:

> I loved the teaching from the very beginning and it's been clear to me for a long time that it really suits me to be involved in that side of what we do at the University and what we do in Higher Education generally.

Her PhD took five years and she continued to teach throughout. In her final year, while writing up year her PhD, she was appointed a 0.5 FTE Teaching Fellow. Two years later she was promoted, initially to cover maternity leave, which was a turning point in her career. However, full-time Teaching Fellows in this University are only employed for nine months of the year, which is 0.7 FTE over the year, are not paid June to September and are unable to claim unemployment benefits as they are employed. However, she felt fortunate that she had been able to take up some hourly paid work over the summer which was developmental, although never guaranteed. She described the nine month full-time contract as having a massive detrimental impact on her career development, her opportunities and her capacity to do her job properly.

She had requested her nine month full-time salary be paid over 12 months so that her tax and student loans repayment are based on her actual earnings. However, this had the unfortunate consequence of limiting the hourly paid work she had been undertaking in the summer to 0.25 FTE.

> So it's incredibly difficult and it is really frustrating, I have to say. it's very frustrating because it feels like there's always something in the way of us actually sort of fully contributing to the department.

A particular problem and major hindrance in her career was the lack of time for preparation as Teaching Fellows start their paid work one week before the undergraduates arrived so she said that most do their teaching preparation over the summer when they are not paid, as well as evenings and weekends. With about 14 hours of contact time a week, plus personal tutoring of large numbers of students, preparation and marking was substantial and she felt frustrated that Teaching Fellows had no time for curriculum development, income generation, sharing practice or professional development activities. Her hourly paid work over the summer had been developing a new programme in which she would have a key role, but that was an unusual opportunity for any Teaching Fellow.

In her department there are roughly the same number of Teaching Fellows as traditional academic staff, all Teaching Fellows are on Grades 6 or 7 while Lecturers start on Grade 8. However, Teaching Fellows have double the contact hours of traditional academic staff and so undertake about 75% of the total contact time

experienced by students. The Teaching Fellow speculated that there is a historical legacy in modern languages where language acquisition was previously undertaken by native speakers on nine month contracts, from an old-fashioned view that being able to speak the language was all that was required to teach it. She strongly believed that language teaching was no less skilled or demanding than teaching literature or cultural studies in the modern foreign language context, and that from a contemporary perspective, the teaching of literature, cultural studies and language acquisition undertaken by staff with PhDs should be treated as the highly skilled work it is.

On acquiring her first full-time permanent post she had developed three modules based on her research, but she was only able to teach them when traditional academic staff were on sabbatical. She very much enjoyed bringing her literary research into the classroom. She felt a vocation to teach but when first in the Teaching Fellow role she believed there was no possibility of making a career of teaching at university. She described those in a Teaching Fellow role as being seen very much as second-class citizens in the University, and said that she had been advised to focus on research, and that she must publish.

> I really like the research but I like doing research that I take into the classroom and that's the motivation to do it for me; I want to be able to explain better or get them more interested, you know, that excites me, whereas sitting in a room, the ivory tower researcher, is not me at all.

The Teaching Fellow contract actually stipulates that Teaching Fellows must keep up with their research, but there is no time allocated to that as 80% of their workload is teaching and 20% administration. The number of hours allocated for teaching tasks was widely thought to be an underestimate of the actual time staff spent on them. In terms of her own research she was publishing her PhD as a book, but the work on that had been undertaken in her own unpaid time during the summer. She aspires to do more research, but is very much focused on how useful it is to students, and is planning to co-author a textbook with other Teaching Fellows.

Opportunities for progression are extremely limited for Teaching Fellows, they can receive one off bonus awards but they cannot be promoted. They can request re-grading from Grade 6 to Grade 7 on the basis that Grade 6 staff are only teaching language acquisition not cultural studies or literature. However, the case can only be accepted on the grounds that the University requires that type of teaching to be done, and the fact that it has been done by that particular person for a number of years is not *de facto* evidence that it is required. In fact, she expressed a fear that more interesting and challenging tasks that were development opportunities would be taken away from Teaching Fellows if they raised the fact that they were incommensurate with their current grade.

While traditional academic staff are required to undertake a postgraduate certificate leading to Fellowship of the HEA, Teaching Fellows are not, and she had been unable to attend more than a few workshops due to timetabling commitments. She found them very useful and hoped to take the experienced teacher route to HEA Fellowship, as she saw it as an asset to her future career given that she is focused on teaching.

Despite her frustrations with the limitations of the Teaching Fellow role, she was hopeful that the University would develop a better career structure for teaching-focused staff.

> it's been quite frustrating, to be honest, but I absolutely adore my job, I love teaching. I get up in the morning and come in to work and I'm smiling at the thought of going into the classroom. I could live without all the stuff that surrounds it but I absolutely adore being in the classroom with the students. And things like Graduation Day, which we had last week, I don't know, I suppose it's something about wanting to see the effect of something that you've done and see all these lovely, enthusiastic, intelligent young people, going out into the world and you feel like, "I had something to do with that", you know, "I know that these are brilliant people who are going out into society and they want to participate, they want to do something useful with their lives and I've had some small opportunity to encourage them to feel that way about themselves and to go out and do something brilliant", it's really rewarding, immensely, immensely, rewarding.

In summary, this Teaching Fellow appears to be caught in a contractual trap, which requires her to work longer than she is paid for, while preventing her from undertaking the research and publishing that is expected for her to establish herself in an academic career. The opportunities for progression in this

teaching-only role appear very limited, including being unable to gain recognition as an HEA Fellow through undertaking a postgraduate certificate.

2.3.3. Academic and practitioner, post-1992 university

This interviewee had entered academia following an earlier career as a professional practitioner and was now an extremely experienced academic with a teaching-only role. She stated that "I feel equally valued on a Teaching contract, compared to colleagues on a Research contract, I think everybody has their strengths." Her professional identity was still very rooted in her occupational area and many of the academic roles she had held related to preparing students for practice, for example, coordinating student placements and developing innovative teaching and learning tools. She had been the first generation to go to university in her family and expressed her personal commitment to making a difference to communities and her pride in working for a university with a strong widening participation (WP) agenda. She described being motivated in her work by the transformation of learning "where you're making a difference to people and you can see them actually progress in their careers."

At her university she had held a substantial number of different roles with responsibility for curriculum development, quality enhancement, professional body accreditation and various administrative and management positions alongside her teaching, and had successfully juggled the different demands placed on her although she reported that she had been described as a workaholic. At times this had been extremely difficult and she was forced to move away from some responsibilities, now spending less time teaching as she spent more time on institutionally focused activities.

She described the university as providing many opportunities for professional development to staff on both research and teaching pathways. Personally she had found it difficult to "carve out the time" for developmental activities from her multiple roles. She was energetically and creatively engaged in developing innovative teaching, and dissemination with many projects, but described herself as not having written as much as she would have liked. Reflecting on her experience of having had two careers, first as a professional practitioner and then as an educator in professional practice, it was clear that she felt a vocation to educate practitioners. She stated that she had "no desire to do a PhD" but still wondered whether she would have been more successful within the University following a more traditional academic track despite the great satisfaction she derived from her teaching-only role:

> sometimes I think, "Oh, did I make the wrong choice? Should I have gone down a pure academic [route]… and sat [down for] the last 4 years and written 25 articles?" But I don't think I would have had the wealth of experience that I've had and the engagement with students that I've experienced. And I think, through our regional partnerships, I've actually enhanced the profile of the University.

She felt local line managers were extremely supportive; she had a very positive experience of annual appraisal and encouragement to apply for promotion. She had in fact applied for promotion and been rejected, however, when she felt ready to give up, her managers were insistent that she should reapply, spending time examining all the criteria for the new teaching promotion pathway and encouraging her to enrol on a leadership programme. Feeling cast down by rejection she had found gaining Senior Fellowship of the HEA helped validate her experience:

> I did my Senior Fellowship for the HEA, so I finished that and got that in November, which kind of re-boosted my morale and made me feel much more positive about my competencies and my ability. There was really brilliant support here within the University.

Promotion through the teaching pathway at this University requires scholarship activity, and while she felt that the University viewed scholarly activity as a form of research:

> I think the university definitely recognises 'scholarly activity' as professional activity, community activity, anything that enhances learning and teaching is viewed as 'scholarly activity' but you know what it's like yourself, I think there's certain academic snobbery, not necessarily within this institution, about, "How many articles have you published and when?" and sometimes that saddens me because I think there's so much other fantastic work going on that's demonstrating 'scholarly activity'.

She accepted the teaching-focused promotion pathway's emphasis on scholarship activity and seemed to blame herself for focusing her efforts on her innovations and collaborative partnerships rather than writing for publication:

> I think if you are on a Teaching contract you do have the opportunity to engage in scholarly activity and it's about finding the time to do that. I've been remiss in terms of not writing as much as I would have wanted to have written.

Given what she described as a supportive and developmental working context her only suggestion for change was close alignment between the UKPSF and teaching pathway promotion criteria:

> I think if they were to align the Senior Fellowship with the Senior Lecturer, I think that might be helpful because I think it demonstrates certainly your expertise and your competence as an educator and the contribution and leadership that you contribute to the University and how you're actually helping other staff develop, mentor other staff, how you're developing the team, how you're future-proofing programmes, you may not be described as a 'leader' but you're actually leading innovation and curriculum development.

In summary, this academic and professional practitioner in a teaching-only role felt as equally valued as her colleagues undertaking research in this WP-focused university. However, she had concerns that she might have been more successful following a more traditional academic route via a PhD and research publications, and expressed doubt whether scholarship activity is really seen as equivalent. Nevertheless, gaining Senior Fellowship of the HEA with the support of the University had helped to validate her choices.

2.3.4. Mid-career academic (teaching and research), Russell Group university

This academic had been in academia throughout his working life and had progressed through to a PhD from undergraduate studies and started as a permanent lecturer while finishing his PhD. Over the course of his career he had worked in a range of institutions including teaching-focused and research-intensive universities across the country. He had worked in his current institution for several years and was currently a Reader in his department while also having a faculty-level management role. The management role was in theory meant to take less than a third of his time with 40% devoted to research, and the rest to teaching and administration. In reality, research time was being squeezed by the other responsibilities.

A key early career turning point had been the award of a first big post-PhD grant that had affirmed his research standing and capability. He was conscious that, in progressing up from his position as a Reader, research grants were also likely to shape his next career turning point. He described the award of large research grants as being a combination of hard work, good ideas and "being in the right place at the right time." The current academic promotion criteria for the University did not account for this element of chance and he felt that:

> the next step to becoming a Chair is something that is, to a degree, within my control, but whether it happens in two or in five years' time is partly down to chance, and that's part of the consequence of what I feel to be harder institutional barriers about saying , "We need these quantifiable outcomes."

He had only taken up one formal staff development training opportunity in his current institution. He had engaged in more staff development training earlier in his career, particularly around developing his teaching in his first academic appointment. He was aware of some colleagues having been on leadership and management training that they had found useful, but felt that he learnt more efficiently within the given time constraints through learning by doing, observation of others, and self-reflection. He explained that, in formal staff development training, there would still be some "translation" he would need to do to contextualise the training. As such, he felt that:

> trying to be a kind of reflective learner in-post seems as important as trying to carve out additional time to go through formal management training, which may or may not connect up.

His future aspirations related both to teaching and research. He hoped to maintain and enhance his "reputation for doing good quality research", but also to "continue to be an interesting and engaged teacher." He reflected that it had been easier in some ways to build rapport with students earlier in his career. At later stages of an academic career it was something that had to be worked at.

> when I was younger … having an easy rapport with students is in some ways very easy, and that's something that's shifted over time, because you can't just rely on your positionality, you can't just rely on who you are to make a contact with students. You've got to, I think you've got to, work at the teaching in different ways … I'd hope I would still enjoy being in the classroom for that percentage of the time that I'm there over the next 20 years because I do think that's an important part of the job.

In summary, this academic on a teaching and research contract had taken the traditional route into an academic career. Now in a Russell Group university, he felt that being successful in winning research grants was the key to career progression. He had undertaken development opportunities earlier in his career – mainly around teaching – but felt that a more reflexive, experiential form of learning was more appropriate at his stage.

2.3.5. Mid-career academic (teaching-only), pre-1992 university

This senior lecturer had worked at the University for ten years and had been appointed on a teaching-only contract in a practitioner discipline. She had no aspirations to undertake research and preferred to pursue what she termed "scholarship" in their own time, rather than what she described as "hitting targets" and "jumping through hoops". Her role was divided between teaching, management and scholarship. Committees and cross-University working groups represented about 5% of her time and everything else was "just fitted in". She was fully aware of the UKPSF and saw it as a helpful peg for self-reflection, as well as a tool for identifying people who are struggling. She had aspirations to be promoted to a Chair on the basis of her teaching and education responsibilities, at the same time recognising that teaching-only academics could be "regarded ... as second class" by their colleagues. Although she had undertaken the University's programmes for senior managers and leaders, she felt that it was unlikely that someone on a teaching-only contract would be able to achieve the level of Pro-Vice-Chancellor. She wanted to be a strong voice for teaching, and a role model for women's leadership, seeing herself as becoming more involved in teaching development and supporting the needs of individuals, for instance, through confidence-building workshops:

> I think it's really good to have strong voices that actually say, "Well we wouldn't be in our roles if it wasn't for the students and that side of things as well", so I think that message should come through a little more clearly sometimes. It does not affect me directly but I've seen the effect on some of my colleagues and particularly the female colleagues who feel that there [are] less opportunities for them.

She thought that the University's promotion criteria would support these aspirations, although there was still a sense that top-notch researchers would progress whatever their teaching was like, whereas excellent teachers had to "tick all the boxes":

> I think sometimes … when people move and progress I their careers, they can be superb researchers, useless teachers, and get promoted, and … it's a bit concerning at times. I'm not saying everyone should be brilliant at everything, but I think there should be parity in that. So sometimes I have felt, for someone on an education-only contract, I have to meet all the criteria whereas you can be a top-notch researcher and rubbish at your teaching or admin and still get on, and I think that's a little bit unfair.

She had carved her own niche as a teaching-only professional through her management and teaching-development activity, reinforcing this with roles across the University which had enabled her to develop a strong profile and supportive networks. Although she had achieved what she perceived as a positive status, despite being out-with current University policy that the majority of academic roles should encompass teaching and research, she had had to be very active, even persuasive, in doing this. An interesting feature

in the narrative was that being released from research gave her a sense of what might be seen as a new form of 'academic freedom', based on pride in and ownership of her work rather than REF criteria:

> A lot of my research is theoretical, so my papers take a long time and … when I do produce something I'm proud of what I've done … I want it to be something that I feel I really am proud of and happy with as opposed to "I have to hit certain target journals and go with the pressures of the REF" … you [may need to] change route or lose quality just because you have to jump through hoops, and I'm not particularly happy with that. So I love the fact of being able to produce what I can.

In summary, this academic was in a teaching-only role by choice, and did not see it as a disadvantage to her career. She was opening up space for herself in the interstices of other activity as and when she was able, and this seemed to be a stronger source of motivation than REF outputs. She suggested that action the University might take to support those in teaching-only roles could include continuing to promote and make visible the value accorded to teaching, particularly for women, for instance, by running confidence-building sessions in which women might learn to "self-promote"; providing female mentors; encouraging individuals to apply for promotion sooner rather than later; and providing practical help with this, for instance, via workshops.

2.3.6. Late-career academic (teaching and scholarship), Russell Group university

A late-career academic in a 'teaching and scholarship' role in a science discipline had progressed through the research route, from PhD to further research and publications, despite being the first person in his family to go to university. But the unit he had been associated with had been transferred, leaving insufficient critical mass for the research he had been doing. At the same time, it had become more difficult to win research grants due to the concentration of funding in larger research groups. However, opportunities had become available for focusing more on teaching, doctoral supervision and, eventually, directing taught programmes. He was moved into 'teaching and scholarship' role in the mid-2000s after a staff review, prior to the 2008 RAE:

> unless you were returnable to REF [sic], with a 4 or 4* (or whatever it was for that particular one), you were told that you wouldn't be returned and therefore you stood the chance of … there was no threat of redundancy but the *implication* was that maybe there would be or maybe you would have to go through performance management or whatever. So it was quite a bit of pressure on those who were either publishing in areas which didn't have a high impact factor or those people who were researching in an area with no critical mass, that would mean no future research income into the institution, and I fell into both of those categories.

Twenty per cent of academic staff left at this point, but this academic had been supported by the then director of his institute and was given the role of Director of Graduate Students, which was still seen as being involved with research. He was later offered an additional course director role by the retiring incumbent. So he identified the support he had received from high-level individuals as key turning points in his career, even though the opportunities were not necessarily of his own choosing. Subsequently, he has managed to get himself on to faculty level committees and the university's PhD Examinations Panel. He applied for, and gained, promotion to Reader three years previously and, although there had not been any advice on how to do this, he had been supported by his line manager and the institute director. He describes his role now as: "supporting teaching, policy making, policy creating … I think what we try to do now is be a lot more *collegiate* in the way we do things."

He had now been asked, and agreed, to become director of a series of programmes. He did not think he would automatically receive additional pay but would have to go through the annual pay review process to argue for an increase on the grounds of having taken on more responsibilities. He also did not think he would be awarded a chair because he did not have a research portfolio:

> There's been the odd person whose main remit *has* been teaching but they've also done research as well and because I'm now virtually all management and policy making and academic lead …

Asked about professional development opportunities for those, like him, leading teaching:

> A lot of the older ones of us just don't do these things, one, because it *is* time consuming and apart from what you learn, what else would you get out of it and how would that help? Maybe it would.

In summary, this late-career academic had taken a traditional route into the profession, but was now a 'Reader' in a teaching and scholarship role. While this had proved less secure than a 'teaching and research' role, he had managed to achieve promotion to leadership roles largely through the support of particular line managers. However, he felt he had been promoted as far as he could be, without significant research grant funding which was no longer feasible in his field. He was fairly sceptical about further professional development opportunities.

3. Discussion and conclusions

3.1. Discussion of key findings

In this section, we discuss a selection of key findings drawn from the institutional case studies, individual vignettes and themes identified as emerging from our analysis. The selection of these key findings and the discussion is also informed by the national context and the research literature – as reviewed in the previous report (Locke 2014) and updated earlier in this report – and, of course, the aims of this research project. The discussion of the key findings is divided into six areas:

1. The challenge for academic staff of trying to 'do it all';
2. Workload and a particular challenge for part-time staff;
3. The CPD opportunities valued by staff;
4. Opportunities for career progression;
5. The pressure to measure teaching excellence;
6. The importance of local line management.

The challenge for academic staff of trying to 'do it all'

The widespread perception of increased pressure on academic staff and resources in recent years has been noted, but the great pleasure that so many academic staff take in their work and the open-ended nature of academic tasks may also make it extremely difficult to establish boundaries around work (Gornall 2012).

As academic staff workloads increase, and work–life balance suffers, one response to the increasing difficulty for academic staff in 'doing it all' is a Fordist specialisation, resulting in the move to teaching-only and research-only academic contracts. Other approaches include maintaining most academics on teaching and research contracts but varying individuals' roles. These responses may reflect institutional recognition that all these functions are essential to the mission of the university, and a desire to encourage and reward staff working in all areas. However, interviews with those in research-only and teaching-only posts revealed that many of them felt different but not equal. The difficulties of contract researchers in building a career over a series of short-term, project-funded posts has long been recognised, and addressed by the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers* first agreed in 2008, but the present study also explored the experience of staff on 'teaching-only' contracts, which the HESA data reveal is a rapidly growing and significant group in UK higher education.

Different career pathways were not be seen as equal by interviewees, and teaching-only contracts were sometimes regarded as tantamount to giving up hope of time for disciplinary scholarship. Existing staff on traditional teaching and research contracts saw a move to a teaching-only contract as a consequence of their failure to produce the right kinds of outputs for the REF. Some academics who have pursued doctoral study over many years, sustained mainly by their love of their subject, may understandably be unwillingly to give up their disciplinary research. Academic identity appears to be so bound up with disciplinary identity that failing to participate in the ongoing development of the discipline can be seen as a career dead-end, and staff on teaching-only contracts may feel stigmatised. Such teaching-only posts may be taken up by those early career academics desperate to achieve job security, in the hope that they will later achieve a traditional teaching and research academic post. Some disciplinary scholarship is essential simply to stay current at the level required to teach in higher education and, if focusing on teaching, outreach, pastoral care, administration, or curriculum development is adopted at the expense of this disciplinary scholarship, then subject knowledge gained through doctoral research may have a 'use by date' after which it will no longer be current.

It may be that the problem of workload and balance of work across different functions can be addressed more flexibly by institutions than by using different categories of staff contract and career pathways, with the associated danger of creating 'second class citizens'. The balance between teaching, research and other responsibilities is very likely to change over an individual academic's career. The traditional collegiate model – where substantial and time-consuming non-research roles like admissions tutor, programme leader, or head of department are rotated between senior academic staff – shares the burden among those who have already established their careers, and restricts the effect of so much time spent away from research. We found some evidence in the case studies of a new approach where these roles are being assigned to less

established staff on teaching-only contracts which do not offer the usual possibilities for progression. This could benefit more established academic staff in a department by lightening their workload and enabling them to focus productively on research, but is likely to have implications for the long-term career prospects of early career staff taking on these substantive roles.

The process of workload allocation within departments was seen by several interviewees as critical in enabling or hindering academic careers, as time is the most precious resource for staff under increasing pressure and an essential pre-requisite for engagement in any professional development activities. There has been limited investigation of different workload models within HE (e.g. Barrett and Barrett 2008), with wide variation in practice and different models in operation even in different departments within the same university. A very widespread concern expressed by interviewees was the mismatch between nominal time allocated for teaching duties and the actual time it took staff to complete them. The equitable and transparent allocation of work seems central to all academic staff careers and more attention should be paid to it. An alternative to the use of teaching-only contracts would be to allocate teaching responsibilities and research responsibilities according to the agreed focus of the individual academic staff member. There was evidence from some of the case study institutions that this was an established practice before the introduction of teaching-focused or research-only career pathways, and that concern about REF returns was encouraging the change to this contractual distinction. Flexibility within a single academic contract has the benefit of adjusting workloads from year to year as funded research projects start or end, research leave or secondments to industry are undertaken, or curriculum development is required, without permanently fixing staff to a teaching-only role or research-only contract.

We found that the vast majority of early career academic staff interviewees aspired to a traditional academic role including both teaching and research. Staff in the later stages of their careers, including the recently retired, or staff who are involved in work outside the academy, such as practising artists, architects, lawyers, or social workers, may be very happy to take up part-time teaching-only contracts. However, for early career staff aspiring to a full-time traditional academic post, both teaching-only and research-only contracts risk trapping them in short-term, part-time positions with little opportunity for professional development or career progression.

Workload and a particular challenge for part-time staff

A consequence of the workload problems set out above is that full-time academic staff are frequently working hours in excess of their nominal 37-hour week. For fractional staff this also creates a problem in that a 0.5 FTE academic post may require working hours far more than half a 37-hour week. This puts pressure on part-time academic staff, either to subsidise their employer by working in non-working time, or in limiting themselves to their contracted hours and not performing all the tasks normally expected of an academic. In the former case, the reasons for the decision to work part-time, such as family commitments or ill health, may severely constrain their non-working time making additional hours impossible. In the latter case, academic staff have limited discretion over which tasks to undertake. The tasks that are most unavoidable often centre on teaching and marking commitments, which must happen within fixed timeframes. Personal scholarship, writing funding bids, or writing for publication can have a more flexible timeframe, and so may be more easily sacrificed if there are constraints on time. However, the pressure of performativity on academics, who are only as good as their latest publication or research grant (Ball 2003), means that these are the very activities that are most important for career progression. This creates a double bind for part-time academic staff, that may be exacerbated the longer they stay in part-time employment, and affects even those in established full-time positions who move to part-time work for personal reasons.

Structural inequalities in society at large still mean that mothers are generally paid less than fathers and that the mothers of young children choose to work part-time in far larger numbers than their fathers. There may be equality implications if part-time academic staff are systematically disadvantaged in their careers, as women are over-represented in this category (at 55% of the total of part-time academics compared with 40% of full-time academics in 2013-14).

The present study was not able to distinguish between part-time staff who had chosen to work in this way and 'under-employed' staff who wanted to work full-time. Academic staff who are engaged in professional

practice outside the university may be fully employed and content with the combination, while early career academic staff aspiring to a full-time position may be more frustrated.

The CPD opportunities valued by staff

As discussed in section 2.1 of this report, on the themes emerging from our analysis, finding time to engage in CPD activity was a common problem for staff. However, the case studies also shed some light on the kinds of activity that are valued by different categories of staff.

For those on teaching-only contracts, time for essential disciplinary scholarship may be the most valuable CPD activity of all. Extending opportunities for study leave or sabbatical to this category of staff could allow them to continue scholarship in their discipline, although the form it takes will vary depending on the nature of the discipline. For example, in vocational subjects such as education, it is commonly a requirement for teacher educators to regularly take a term's leave from the university to return to practice in a school or college, and other vocational disciplines might also value staff who refresh their experience as practitioners in engineering or business during a period of leave from the university. Human resource managers concerned with retention might fear that teaching-only staff would use the opportunity of study leave to write funding proposals, produce research outputs, or apply for new posts with a traditional academic contract involving teaching and research, as this seems to be what the majority of staff aspire to. However, such study leave could also enable the development of textbooks, other course materials or e-learning resources which are not highly valued in the REF but which would be of direct and immediate benefit to the institution and its students.

Research-only and learning enhancement staff both have limited opportunities to engage with teaching and the UKPSF. Job security and prospects for career progression tend to come more easily with a traditional academic role in teaching and research, so many staff aspire to this. It is often in the interests of these categories of staff to have the opportunity to undertake some teaching and gain a teaching qualification aligned with the UKPSF.

The traditional CPD offering of staff development training workshops was somewhat taken for granted by academic staff, with many being required to participate in them. However, for professional development and career progression, the opportunity to take on broader responsibilities or gain new experiences seemed far more important to interviewees. So, for example, for teaching-only academic staff, the chance to design or lead their own courses would be a valuable learning experience. For research-only staff, the opportunity to supervise research students or act as principal investigator would be parallel developmental opportunities. For learning support staff, the opportunity to be involved in funded research and development projects could raise their profile and enable them to make useful contacts outside the university.

The opportunity to network with colleagues outside the institution was valued by all categories of staff. Making funding available for attending relevant meetings and conferences was a highly valued form of professional development that could be individualised to meet specific staff needs. Local line managers may also experience a tension between developing their staff and ensuring service delivery, heightened by increased pressure on resources. Staff at the early stages of their careers, on short-term contracts or in a teaching-only or research-only role may be more vulnerable to the adverse effects of this pressure. Therefore, making professional development funding available centrally rather than from local budgets might ensure greater equality in access to such opportunities.

Opportunities for career progression

An important feature of the traditional academic contract is the opportunity for merit-based promotion and progression from lecturer through to professor. This is deeply entrenched in university culture and valued by academic staff, and where there is no opportunity for merit-based promotion there is frustration.

Traditionally, academic promotion criteria have been founded on valued contributions to the academy such as publications and research awards. As these are closely connected with research activity, many institutions have recently sought to redress this imbalance by establishing promotion routes primarily on the basis of teaching. The case studies revealed quite a variety of practices around teaching promotion routes and there is no established sector norm. Teaching promotion routes genuinely seek to reward staff for their achievements in teaching, but perhaps because they are not long established in many institutions, the

criteria appeared to be less well understood by staff. There are also fewer successful applicants than for traditional research-based promotion available to share their experiences with colleagues. A specific problem for teaching promotion routes arose where 'pedagogic research' was specified as a criterion for promotion. Reintroducing research as a criterion for teaching promotion presents two particular difficulties, firstly the contradiction of reinforcing the perception that research remains the true measure of academic worth in a promotion route designed to challenge this perception. Secondly, it can create a particular challenge for academic staff in disciplines where pedagogic research methods are totally unfamiliar, specifically those outside Social Sciences.

Many staff interviewed had experienced a personal and ethical dilemma between the strategic pursuit of goals that will gain reward and recognition, particularly promotion, and taking time for the pastoral care of students, developing teaching materials and courses, outreach activity and supporting colleagues. This suggests that institutions aspiring to provide the highest quality in research, teaching and the student experience may not have fully aligned their promotions policies with these goals. Staff interviewed were deeply interested in developing their own knowledge through their disciplinary research and in their students' learning. Promotions criteria that separate these dual interests, creating what Rowland (2006) has called "a fracture in academic life", can generate a conflict between what could be mutually supportive interests and place staff in an uncomfortable predicament.

The pressure to measure teaching excellence

The difficulties of evaluating research have been the subject of much debate since the advent of the first Research Selectivity Exercise in 1986 but, in the UK, public discussion of the difficulties of evaluating teaching has only started recently. It is beyond the scope of this report to assess the merits of various indicators of good teaching, but a key finding of the present study was that academic staff felt great uncertainty about how to demonstrate they were effective educators. Nevertheless, new promotion routes for teaching are driving staff interest in demonstrating their capabilities in this area. However, there was also little consensus within and between case study institutions on whether staff should seek to demonstrate that they had been innovative or creative in their teaching, undertaken pedagogic scholarship, or simply been 'excellent' teachers. Given the contested nature of 'teaching excellence', it is unsurprising that there were no agreed means of demonstrating it evident from our research. One interviewee suggested that academic staff from quantitative disciplines, who are accustomed to metrics as an indicator of research excellence, can find it difficult to accept qualitative evidence and assessment.

Many institutions have developed prizes for teaching excellence, often linked to the National Teaching Fellowship scheme, and we found examples of this being used as evidence for teaching excellence in applications for promotion. However, there may be a conceptual difficulty in awarding a prize for something exceptional and, at the same time, aspiring to have all academic staff achieve excellence. Student feedback was also raised by some interviewees as one potential way of demonstrating excellence in teaching but, given how few courses are taught by a single member of staff, this does not appear fit for the purpose of providing evidence for individual promotion. Engagement with the UKPSF through attainment of HEA Fellowship and a qualification in teaching in HE was also suggested as evidence for excellence within teaching. An interesting nuance to this was the suggestion that, if it became mandatory for all staff to achieve Fellowship or qualification, it would no longer be seen as a demonstration of an individual's commitment to teaching.

The importance of local line management

A recurring theme in the case studies was the discrepancy between institutional policy and local practice. The devolution of powers to faculties and departments means the implementation of institutional policies may often be subject to considerable local variation and not easily amenable to change by the university leadership. However, sympathetic disciplinary colleagues who hold roles such as principal investigator, head of department, or leader of a research group appear crucial for the development of individual staff – reviewing drafts, looking at draft applications, finding funding opportunities, and offering support and advice. Ensuring that all line managers are fully aware of policies and processes is clearly an appropriate goal for all institutions, but cannot always ensure that the spirit of the policies is observed. Formalising opportunities for mentoring, or centralising access to professional development opportunities, such as

funding for conferences or research leave, might ameliorate variation in local practice, but eliminating it entirely seems unlikely and, possibly, unnecessary.

There is a tension for all line managers between developing staff and service delivery and this may be exacerbated by increasing pressure on resources. Staff at the early stages of their careers, or holding teaching-only or research-only contracts may be more vulnerable to the effects of this pressure than established academic staff holding traditional higher status teaching and research roles, who are therefore more autonomous.

3.2. Conclusions

Reflecting the increasing diversity of the workforce, there are now multiple players and stakeholders involved in the delivery of higher education, a situation that is likely to become more rather than less complex as time goes on. These players are likely to have different perspectives on the challenges and dilemmas raised in this report. However, the aim of this study has been to raise awareness of the fact that developments that are occurring are more nuanced than simply, for instance, government/institution or employee/employer dichotomies. These developments are likely to require multiple, co-ordinated approaches. The content of this report, reflections on which are outlined below, are therefore intended to inform actions that may be planned by institutions, national agencies and the individuals themselves.

A major finding is that it would appear from the most recent HESA data available that academics on teaching and research contracts now represent a minority of the academic population in the UK. While we have concerns about the submission of this information by institutions, and therefore the accuracy, reliability and validity of these data, this could be a symptom of a trend that is already apparent in some other advanced national higher education systems, such as the US and Australia (see, for instance, Campaign for the Future of Higher Education 2015). If this shrinking of the traditional academic 'core' were to continue, it would indicate a significant alteration to the structure of the academic workforce in the UK – amounting, perhaps, to a tectonic shift – with serious implications for the future prospects for the profession and for individual academics. In particular, the growth in teaching-only contracts and roles, having been more prevalent in non-Russell Group, pre-1992 universities, now seems to have spread to the Russell Group and the 'newer' universities. Given the (albeit limited) qualitative evidence of the restricted professional development and career opportunities for teaching-only and research-only academics – that is, the majority of the academic population – presented in this report, serious and urgent consideration needs to be given to rethinking, reforming and revitalising academic-career structures and the professional development available to support these. Without a committed and motivated workforce, it will not be possible to achieve the goals and reforms that policy makers seek.

It is no surprise that research and the REF still loom large in the minds of most of those we interviewed (even among those who mainly focus on teaching) as the key to a successful academic career and professional self-fulfilment. Despite several case study institutions revising their promotion criteria and reward and recognition schemes in order to raise the status of teaching and learning, there still appeared to be a gap within institutions between the intentions professed by senior managers and the lived experience of academic and learning enhancement staff. Apart from the slow evolution of organisational cultures and the influence of national policy and funding, the global higher education environment of research-based rankings, regional science policies, and prestige communities within individual academic disciplines exerts a significant influence on institutions' and individuals' behaviour. In some of the case study institutions, there seemed to be a wide gap between official policies and actual practices in many areas of the study. Examples included promotion and recruitment, workload allocation, line management and annual review, and informal and individualised professional development opportunities. In particular institutions, there were local variations in the ways in which institutional policies were interpreted and implemented (or not), and this (sometimes justifiably) reflected differences in disciplinary cultures and ways of working. However, even where these different means were shown to be effective in achieving the same ends, inequalities of opportunity arising from this were not always being explicitly addressed. In some cases, although a policy had been formulated, it was not clear how it could be implemented; for example, how to reward excellent teaching when there was no agreed definition or way of evaluating this.

Another common refrain from the case study institutions was the heavy (and increasing) workload and the resulting erosion of work–life balance for many academics. Existing efforts to manage this, such as workload

allocation models, were being undermined by a widespread perception that these do not reflect the reality of people's actual tasks and activities. With the greater emphasis on 'the student experience' in a marketised environment, individuals' research time was increasingly being squeezed unless they had a large research contract to 'buy them out' of their teaching. However, as one interviewee pointed out, "you can't have a good student experience if you have a lousy staff experience" and, if staff are over-worked, stressed and do not feel recognised, this is likely to have an impact on the quality of students' education. Coupled with a growing sense of the impossibility of undertaking all aspects of the work to the highest standard, and mounting scepticism of 'the cult of excellence', this represented a key constraint for many interviewees on their engagement in professional and career development activities, both for themselves and for the benefit of others (e.g. as mentors). Consequently, there was greater appetite for learning by doing, peer-to-peer support, observing others and self-reflection which leads to actual improvement in teaching and learning, than for attending formal training courses that can feel like 'box-ticking' exercises and may not result in learning that an individual can apply to their own circumstances. The equitable and transparent allocation of work is central to all academic staff and careers, and more research, development and practice-based case studies should be initiated in order to enhance our understanding of how workload allocation models can be used to improve the working lives, effectiveness and efficiency of academic staff. This should also allow sufficient time for professional development activities and for more experienced academics' involvement in the professional development of their less experienced colleagues and to support their career progression.

Even in a limited sample of eight institutional case studies and 62 interviews, the diversity and differentiation of the academic workforce was apparent. In particular, the current experience of early career academics was quite different from those who commenced their careers even ten years ago, let alone in the 1990s or before. Early career academics often experienced a big jump from undertaking a doctorate to teaching in higher education. Many faced an extended period of insecurity, punctuated by a series fixed-term contracts with no guarantee of bridging funding between research projects or teaching posts. Others were employed on multiple part-time posts, funded by different income streams, including from teaching programmes. Some of those we interviewed expressed frustration with the lack of clarity about career progression and promotion prospects and several of those on teaching-only contracts were concerned about not being able to progress their research. Mid-career academics talked of the significance of supportive senior colleagues in advancing their career progression, such as line managers, heads of department and principal investigators. They referred to learning from faculty-wide and university-wide roles and responsibilities and the importance of connections and networks outside their institutions, including via social media, in combatting isolation and for reflecting on their own relative strengths and weaknesses. These external links were not often recognised within their institutions, including by the individuals' line managers. Professional practitioners moving into higher education mid-career spoke of initial dissonance with academic cultures and a continuing frustration with the lack of recognition of their original sources of professional expertise.

For these and other reasons, we should no longer think of an academic career as a linear progression or as having a common trajectory or, perhaps, continue to regard 'academic' as referring to a single, homogenous profession. In that sense, and in common with other professions, there may be less singularity to academic careers than has been assumed in the past. Furthermore, several interviewees felt that mapping out a career too closely in advance was neither feasible nor desirable, as they needed to be able to take advantage of the opportunities that came along. Likewise, all academics, and particularly those in the early stages of their career, needed to attend to their own employability as well as their students'. Those who were active in addressing their own career needs, with the energy and desire to do this over a sustained period, would be better able to achieve the extent of career progression they anticipate. Institutions, managers within them, and indeed agencies such as HEFCE, UUK and indeed the HEA may need, therefore, to make greater allowance for the different timescales involved in developing a career, be more permissive of a variation of activity at different stages, and take this into account in provisions for promotion, progression and development. This would be one element of adjusting the 'fit' between individuals, what is available in practice, and the 'lived reality' of working in higher education. The academic career landscape may have shifted such that some of the data categories and definitions used by HESA no longer sufficiently reflect institutional and individual realities and could become increasingly misleading rather than informative.

The differentiation and diversity of roles, careers, starting points and trajectories, together with the demands for more individualised, personalised, and contextualised development opportunities, indicates a need to reconsider what we mean by initial and continuing professional development for academic and learning

enhancement staff. At present, there seems to be a gap – maybe in some cases a gulf – between what appears to be for the university's benefit (such as formal, standardised training for largely operational purposes) and what might be seen as more beneficial for the individual academic and learning enhancement professional, both in the provision of staff development and in the mechanisms for reward and recognition. In achieving a better balance between these sets of needs, we might begin to think of more collective approaches to both professional development and the development of the profession. That is, approaches which build on evidence-based and more accurate understanding of the actual experiences, needs and concerns of individuals as well as the organisation's need for development. There is a significant role here for some experienced academics, as developers, mentors and coaches, as well as heads of department, middle managers and line managers, especially in relatively devolved organisational structures, despite the challenge of finding the time to do this. These senior staff will also need to be carefully selected, prepared, trained and supported in this developmental role, but they can play a significant part in interpreting and implementing institutional policies and in helping early career academics to navigate through a university's structures and to think strategically about their career and professional needs. Through these more collective approaches to development, the profession might then be in a position to rethink its ideas about the skills, knowledge and other qualities required of academics in their various guises, and in a rapidly changing environment, in ways that ensure consistency of delivery and quality, but are not overly prescriptive and are flexible enough to accommodate individual needs.

3.3. Recommendations

In recognition that there are a number of players who are likely to contribute to the development of the academic profession and others working in higher education, the recommendations are targeted at five main groups:

For the Higher Education Academy (HEA):

1. To continue to review and revise the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) and ensure that:
    a. it reflects the full diversity of roles and circumstances of academic and learning enhancement staff working in UK higher education institutions;
    b. it complements the professional frameworks for researchers (e.g. the *Concordat to support the career development of researchers* (Vitae 2008)), learning support staff (e.g. SEDA's Professional Development Framework (SEDA, nd) and all those undertaking key academic roles and activities, regardless of their contractual status.
2. To raise the profile of a revised UKPSF, nationally and within higher education institutions, so that it is universally regarded as an essential focal point and resource for initial and continuing professional development for academics and learning enhancement staff.
3. To enhance the HEA's existing engagement with higher education institutions' human resources departments and the Universities Human Resources organisation (UHR) to support the current development of academic and learning enhancement career pathways, and the forms of professional development and approaches to reward and recognition required to support this.

For higher education policy makers and sector bodies:

4. To consider the implications of policies and funding arrangements for the staff of higher education institutions, the career opportunities available to them, and the attractiveness and viability of an academic or professional career in higher education.
5. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to consider the reliability and validity of data on the increasing range of types of academic contracts and roles, especially in relation to staff on teaching-only and 'atypical' contracts.
6. To consider whether there should be a 'Concordat' for those focusing on teaching that is equivalent to the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*.

For higher education institutions:

7. To ensure consistency between those policies and functions that impact on the recruitment, development, reward, recognition, motivation and aspirations of academic and learning enhancement staff in a holistic approach to organisational and individual professional development.
8. To recognise the importance of building trust between senior management teams, middle managers (such as heads of school and department) and staff, for instance, via the clear communication of career development pathways for different categories of staff, so that staff also have the opportunity to feed their ideas and experiences into policy formation and implementation (including those drawn from experience of other professional occupations).
9. To retain a clear distinction between employment contracts and roles, so that a common (perhaps, universal) academic contract can accommodate a number of different roles (including, for instance, teaching, research, teaching and research, knowledge exchange, and public engagement), and also permit individuals to focus on different activities at different times in their career, as well as across different areas of interest.
10. To ensure that promotion criteria and practices recognise each of the core activities and purposes of the institution, including education, knowledge exchange and academic citizenship, for example, as well as research and REF outputs.
11. To improve the opportunities and conditions, including security of employment, professional development opportunities, approaches to reward and recognition and flexible career prospects for those with teaching-only and research-only contracts or roles, and to ensure these are comparable and equitable to those in traditional teaching and research roles.
12. To support a broad conception of professional development activity, to include informal and peer learning, such as mentoring, coaching, observation and reflection, together with an inclusive approach that, for example, might offer study leave for those in teaching-focused roles (e.g. to develop a new course or devise learning resources).
13. To consider the impact of workload models on individual careers and allow flexibility in their management, in particular, by heads of school and department, so as to take account of informal as well as formal opportunities for developmental activity.

For middle managers, such as heads of school and department and research team leaders:

14. To ensure clear communication with academic and learning enhancement staff about institutional policies and practice in relation to career progression and development opportunities, both formal and informal.
15. To adopt a flexible approach to developing the potential of early career staff, taking a medium-term to long-term view of what they might offer.

For academic and learning enhancement staff:

16. To give attention to their future employability, including the skills, experience and knowledge that may be required during their career for recruitment, progression and promotion.
17. To understand that academic career progression is no longer necessarily linear, nor guaranteed, and therefore to be proactive and informed about what is required and what is available within an individual's home institution, disciplinary community and more widely, and to take both formal and informal opportunities when they are available.
18. For early career academics with aspirations towards a teaching and research role, to consider whether a 'teaching-only' contract will provide them with the opportunities they seek to develop their research activity, publish and apply for research funding. If they do accept such a role, to work with their line manager in seeking both formal and informal development opportunities.
19. For early career academics with aspirations towards a teaching and research role, whether a 'research-only' contract will provide them with the security they seek, and the broad experience needed for traditional teaching and research role. If they do accept such a role, to work with their line manager in seeking both formal and informal development opportunities.

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Appendix 1: Biographical data questionnaire

Shifting landscapes: meeting the staff development needs of the changing academic workforce

Biographical data

Questionnaire for completion by interviewees

Institution: ……..

Name of interviewee:…….

[Note: This page to be removed when the questionnaire is anonymised for purposes of analysis.]

1. Anonymity Code: (for completion by researcher): anonymised

2. Sex: M/F

3. Age band (please tick one):

50+		30-39	
40-49		20-29	

4. Ethnicity (please tick one):

Black or British – Caribbean		Asian or Asian British - Bangladesh	
Black or British – African		Chinese	
Other Black background		Other Asian background	
Asian or Asian British – Indian		Other (including mixed)	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani		White	

5. Current post job title e.g. lecturer, senior lecturer, principal lecturer, teaching fellow, senior teaching fellow, research fellow:

……

6. Current post type of contract e.g. permanent, fixed term, full-time, part-time

……

7. Doctoral level qualification e.g. PhD/professional doctorate (please tick whichever box applies to you):

Awarded a doctorate		Working towards a doctorate		Not planning to undertake doctoral study	

8. Job description – if you are willing to let us see your job description, we would be grateful if you could enclose this when returning the questionnaire.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Appendix 2: Information and consent form

Research Project for the Higher Education Academy

Title of Project: Shifting landscapes: meeting the staff development needs of the changing academic workforce

Information and consent form

I understand that you have kindly agreed to take part in a research project that a team from the UCL Institute of Education is undertaking for the Higher Education Academy, entitled *Shifting landscapes: meeting the staff development needs of the changing academic workforce*. The team members are William Locke (Principal Investigator), Dr Celia Whitchurch, Dr Holly Smith, and Dr Anna Mazenod.

The aim of the project, as determined by the Higher Education Academy, is to inform a broader understanding of the roles and careers of staff in UK higher education and their staff development needs in relation to promotion and transition across and between teaching, learning-support and research career routes. For more details about the project please refer to:

https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/project/10359

We hope that you will agree that we can record the interview for the purpose of analysis. Transcripts will be stored securely in accordance with the IOE policy on the UK Data Protection Act. The identity of those interviewed, and their institutions, will remain anonymous both for the purposes of the project and any publications that arise out of it. Any personal details will be password protected for the duration of this study and destroyed at the end of it. We anticipate that the findings will be of value and interest to the higher education community generally, and we will provide respondents with copies of any published material.

We would like to ask you to sign a form consenting to the interview, and to inform you that you may withdraw from the study at any time and your data will not be used. The consent form is overleaf, and I can collect the signed copy when we meet. The semi-structured interview will last about 40 minutes.

The project has received UCL Institute of Education research ethics committee approval. If you have any questions please ask your interviewer or if you have any questions afterwards contact Principal Investigator William Locke (w.locke@ioe.ac.uk).

Research Project for the Higher Education Academy

Title of Project: Shifting landscapes: meeting the staff development needs of the changing academic workforce

Researcher:

Interview with: .....

Date:.....

Declaration by researcher:

I, ... confirm that the contents of this interview, and the identity of interviewees and institutions will remain anonymous and confidential. The information obtained will be used only in relation to reports provided to the Higher Education Academy, or publications arising from this.

Interview transcripts will be stored securely in accordance with the IOE policy on the UK Data Protection Act.

Interviewees are free to withdraw at any time from the study and their data will not be used.

The project aims to be of value and interest to the higher education community, and the research team will provide respondents with copies of any published material.

Statement by the interviewee:

I, ...

agree to be interviewed by ..... on the basis outlined above.

I agree that the interview may be recorded.

Signature: .....

Date:.....

Appendix 3: Interview schedule (staff – career)

Shifting landscapes: meeting the staff development needs of the changing academic workforce

Interview topics for academics and learning support staff

Past

1.1 Could you talk me through how you came to be in your current role?

- *What was the subject of your first degree? Postgraduate study?*
- *Previous posts?*
- *Have you worked outside the HE sector?*

1.2 Can you tell me about any significant turning points in your career?

1.3 Could you tell me about any factors that have helped or hindered you in developing your career?

Present

2.1 Could you describe your work in your current role, e.g. teaching and research, teaching-only, research-only, learning support? If the latter, can you be more specific?

- *How many years have you been in your current role?*
- *Who is your current line manager (e.g. Head of Department)?*
- *Could you estimate what proportion of your time you spend on teaching and research, and any other key areas of activity you have mentioned?*

2.2 What reward and incentive mechanisms are available to staff in your institution (for example, access to discretionary increments, promotion, career development)?

2.3 What formal or informal professional development opportunities are available to you, within or external to your institution?

- *Are there any institutional career pathways within your institution?*
- *Are there any key relationships inside or outside your institution that are important for your professional development?*

2.4 Are you aware of the UK Professional Standards Framework? If so do you feel that it is relevant to the type of work you do?

Future

3.1 What are your career aspirations for the future?

3.2 In what ways does your institution support the aspirations of academic staff generally, and more specifically the aspirations of teaching-only, research-only and learning support staff? What else might the institution do to support such staff?

3.3 Is there anything else you would like to say that might be relevant to our study?

Appendix 4: Interview schedule (senior manager – policy)

Shifting landscapes: meeting the staff development needs of the changing academic workforce

Interview topics for senior managers

1. Can you describe your current role at the university in relation to staff management and development?

2. Could you describe in broad terms the Universitysity in relation to staf
   - *How does this relate to the Universityhe Universitysity in relation to*
   - *Would it be possible for you to provide copies of any relevant policies and strategies?*

3. Can you give an overview of trends in staff patterns at the University, such as the balance of teaching and research staff and teaching-only staff?

4. What formal or informal professional development opportunities are available to academic staff generally, and more specifically to teaching-only, research-only and learning support staff, within or external to your institution?
   - *For example, study leading to qualification/award?*
   - *Study or training not leading to a qualification? Being mentored?*
   - *Presenting at seminars/conferences?*
   - *Authoring of published papers/monographs?*

5. What reward and incentive mechanisms are available to academic staff generally, and more specifically to teaching-only, research-only and learning support staff in your institution?
   - *Access to discretionary increments?*
   - *Promotion? Would it be possible for you to provide a copy of your policy or criteria around promotion? Can people be promoted for teaching or other work such as knowledge exchange?*
   - *Career development?*
   - *Institutional teaching awards? Application for National Teaching Fellowships?*

6. In what ways does your institution support the career aspirations of academic staff generally, and more specifically of teaching-only, research-only and learning support staff? What else might the institution do to support such staff?
   - *For example, are there any specific career development initiatives, e.g. knowledge exchange or community engagement pathways?*

7. Could you tell me about any factors you see as helping or hindering teaching-only, research-only and learning support staff in developing their careers?
   - *At your institution or in the higher education sector more broadly?*
   - *Is it possible to move from teaching-only post to a teaching and research post? How often does that happen?*

8. Are you aware of the UK Professional Standards Framework? If so do you feel that it is relevant to the work of academic staff at your University?

9. Is there anything else you would like to say that might be relevant to our study?

Appendix 5: Steering group membership

Professor Debby Cotton, Head of Educational Development, Professor of Higher Education Pedagogy, Plymouth University

Sarah Cutforth, Project Manager, Higher Education Academy

Prue Griffiths, Communications Manager Research, Publications and Impact, Higher Education Academy

Dr Ruth Pilkington, Academic Lead (CPD), Higher Education Academy

Dr Geoff Stoakes, Head of Research, Higher Education Academy

Kandy Woodfield, Lead for Social Science and Research, Highe

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HEA has knowledge, experience and expertise in higher education. Our service and product range is broader than any other competitor.

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