

Research report

The changing academic profession in the UK and beyond

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This report was prepared for Universities UK by William Locke and Alice Bennion, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, The Open University.

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Preface

This research report provides a summary of the UK part of the international study of the changing academic profession, which has been supported by Universities UK and other national higher education bodies. The international study aims to examine the nature and extent of the changes experienced by academics, the reasons for these changes and their consequences. An earlier report, *The changing academic profession in the UK: setting the scene*, was published by Universities UK in 2007 as the study got underway in twenty countries worldwide.

The Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI) at The Open University has undertaken the UK element of this study of the changing nature of academic work and the conditions and environment in which it takes place, the drivers of these changes and the implications for the continued attractiveness of the profession. This report describes the changing academic profession study and presents some of the key results for the UK and compares them with both the international findings and those from a 1992 survey undertaken under the auspices of the Carnegie Foundation.

The report then explores some of the policy implications and the main challenges for higher education arising from this emerging evidence. These challenges are significant and far-reaching and the policies and practices designed to address them need to be informed by evidence, including the findings of the international changing academic profession study. Finally the report discusses the longer term trends and future issues affecting the development of the profession.

It outlines the basic drivers of these changes and explores, in particular, the likely further differentiation and restructuring of the academic profession, work and careers. In many ways these developments challenge traditional notions and customs and practices but, in conclusion, we argue they also create new opportunities for academics and other professionals supporting core academic activities.

Summary

This is a summary report of the UK part of an international study of the changing academic profession, which has been supported by Universities UK and other national higher education bodies.

The international study addressed six research questions:

- To what extent is the nature of academic work changing?
- What are the external and internal drivers of these changes?
- To what extent do changes differ between countries and types of higher education institution?
- How do the academic professions respond to changes in their external and internal environment?
- What are the consequences for the attractiveness of an academic career?
- What are the consequences for the capacity of academics to contribute to the further development of knowledge societies and the attainment of national goals?

The Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI), at The Open University, has undertaken the UK part of the changing academic profession study. It follows a similar international study in 1992. The target population for the UK online survey in the Spring 2007 was all academic professionals. The key findings of the UK study reported here include the following:

- In line with other professions, overall job satisfaction among academics appears to have fallen since 1992 by 2 per cent (table 1), although the levels of dissatisfaction have also declined at a more significant rate of 13 per cent
- There has been a decline in the number of hours academics reported spending on teaching. This may be the result of more accurate recording as much as an actual decrease in time spent on these activities
- The proportion of academics that reported a primary interest in teaching also decreased since 1992, whilst the percentage of staff claiming a primary interest in research rose by 9 per cent
- Comparatively, far fewer UK academics reported a primary interest in teaching compared with their international counterparts

- The amount of time UK academics reported spending on 'research', has increased since 1992 and more respondents reported undertaking applied/practically-oriented than basic/theoretical research
- UK academics perceived themselves to have little *personal* influence in helping to shape key academic policies
- Non-British respondents and all those (including British academics) who had studied for their doctorate abroad tended to assert a more international focus in their courses (77-80 per cent), when compared with their British colleagues with UK doctorates (62 per cent)
- Overall, older, established professors appeared to be the most satisfied group (57 per cent) of academics and older, established academics in other grades the least satisfied (34 per cent) and the most dissatisfied (25 per cent)
- The survey raises questions about whether part-time academics have the same opportunities and support, *pro rata*, as full-timers to engage in the full range of research activities
- On average, women academics reported spending 18 hours a week teaching and seven hours conducting research during term time, whilst men spent an average of 16 hours teaching and 10 hours conducting research.

The report explores some of the policy implications and the main challenges for higher education arising from the evidence emerging from the study. These challenges are significant and far-reaching and the policies and practices designed to address them need to be informed by evidence, including the findings of the international study.

The report also considers longer term trends and future issues. It outlines the basic drivers of these changes and explores, in particular, the likely further differentiation and restructuring of the academic profession, work and careers. In many ways these developments challenge traditional notions and customs and practices but they also create new opportunities for academics and other professionals supporting core academic activities.

Introduction

- 1.1 This is a summary report of the UK part of the international study of the changing academic profession, which has been supported by Universities UK and other national higher education bodies¹. The international study aims to examine the nature and extent of the changes experienced by academics, the reasons for these changes and their consequences.
- 1.2 This introduction describes the changing academic profession study and its precursor, the 1992 survey completed under the auspices of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in the United States. In presenting some of the key survey results for the UK in section 2, comparisons are made where appropriate with both the international findings and those from the 1992 survey.
- 1.3 Section 3 explores some of the policy implications and the main challenges for higher education arising from this emerging evidence. These challenges are significant and far-reaching and the policies and practices designed to address them need to be informed by evidence, including the findings of the international study.
- 1.4 The final section of this report focuses on longer term trends and future issues. It outlines the basic drivers of these changes and explores, in particular, the likely further differentiation and restructuring of the academic profession, work and careers. In many ways these developments challenge traditional notions and customs and practices but, in conclusion, we argue that they also create new opportunities for academics and other professionals supporting core academic activities.

The changing academic profession study

- 1.5 The core of the international study is a survey of academics in over 20 countries worldwide. So far, data have been supplied by the following 18 national research teams:

Argentina	Australia	Brazil
Canada	China	Finland
Germany	Hong Kong	Italy
Japan	Malaysia	Mexico
Norway	Portugal	South Africa
South Korea	UK	United States
- 1.6 A follow-up European study (see paragraph 1.14 below) will add partial data from a further five countries: Austria, Croatia, Ireland, Romania and Switzerland. Other countries may also join the study.
- 1.7 The international study aimed to address six research questions:

- (i) To what extent is the nature of academic work changing?
- (ii) What are the external and internal drivers of these changes?
- (iii) To what extent do changes differ between countries and types of higher education institution?
- (iv) How do the academic professions respond to changes in their external and internal environment?
- (v) What are the consequences for the attractiveness of an academic career?
- (vi) What are the consequences for the capacity of academics to contribute to the further development of knowledge societies and the attainment of national goals?

1.8 It focused on four themes:

- a. **Relevance** refers to the growing requirements to justify and account for the 'outputs' as well as the processes of academic work, such as the employability of graduates, the usefulness of research and the accessibility of higher education to disadvantaged students and communities.
- b. It is also clear that higher education is becoming increasingly subject to **internationalisation**, with greater mobility of students and staff, its growth as a trans-national business and increasing international collaboration in research and teaching.
- c. Both the demands for relevance and growing internationalism have contributed to new forms of **management** in higher education institutions, which have helped to shape academic work and provide some academics with opportunities to progress their careers in new ways.
- d. Finally, as the nature of academic work changes, the **routes into – and preparation for – the profession** are also being transformed, with alternatives to the traditional 'PhD – postdoctoral – first academic post' path becoming more prevalent.

Methodology

1.9 The Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI), at The Open University, has undertaken the UK part of the changing academic profession study. The target population for the UK online survey in Spring 2007 was all academic professionals as defined by, and reported to, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), i.e. including full- and part-time academic professionals who undertake teaching and/or research. It included senior academic managers (up to, and including, vice-chancellor/principal level) and medical practitioners, dentists, veterinarians and other health care professionals who undertake lecturing or research activities, if appropriate to the institution. It did not include staff without a contract of employment (i.e. working on a consultancy or fees basis) or non-academic staff that do not have any kind of academic role (i.e. non-academic managers and other professionals, student welfare staff etc).

- 1.10 In 2006/07, the academic year of the survey, the total number of academics included in this target population in the UK was 169,995, according to HESA. A total of 1,667 responses were received to the UK survey. The national datasets have been weighted according to four criteria: grade, subject, gender and institution type.

The 1992 Carnegie study

- 1.11 The *Changing Academic Profession* study also aims to follow up the First International Survey of the Academic Profession in 1992, sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in the United States and including 14 countries. The *Changing Academic Profession* questionnaire repeated 13 items from the earlier survey and allowed us to compare responses to these questions from the two surveys. Unfortunately, the 1992 survey was limited to England only² and so, for the sake of comparability, we have made direct comparisons with those respondents to the 2007 survey in higher education institutions in England only.

Future developments in the *Changing Academic Profession* study

- 1.12 The international dataset is being collated and produced by the German national research team (INCHER) at the University of Kassel. It is intended to make the full international dataset (and, therefore, the UK dataset) publicly available on a *Changing Academic Profession* study website, together with detailed descriptions of the project and methodology and some reports. This is planned for next year, once the national research teams have had sufficient opportunity to utilise the survey results in national and international comparative studies. When the international dataset is made public, it will be open to all researchers to utilise in their studies of the academic profession. The UK dataset is extensive, and there is much scope for further analyses of the results.
- 1.13 Members of the international team have negotiated a book series with Springer Publishers that will draw on the *Changing Academic Profession* study. The series, entitled *The Changing Academy*, will include an overview of the findings of the changing academic profession study and separate volumes are planned on:
- governance and management
 - the internationalisation of the academy
 - personal characteristics, career trajectories and identity
 - the balance of teaching and research
 - the academy in emerging economies.
- 1.14 A follow-up study to the survey is being supported under the European Science Foundation's higher education and social change research programme. This involves Austria, Croatia, Ireland, Romania and Switzerland, with the German national research team leading. It is investigating how academics view major developments in the socio-economic environment for higher education, as well as changes in their institutions.

The research is exploring how they interpret and ultimately shape their professional roles under these changing circumstances. It is focusing on the themes of 'governance, management and evaluation', 'academic career settings' and 'professionalisation'. The five countries not originally involved in the changing academic profession study are also undertaking a cut down version of the survey (about 80 per cent of the original questionnaire) in order to provide additional basic comparative data.

2. The changing academic profession survey: key findings

Introduction

2.1 This section summarises some of the key findings of the *Changing Academic Profession* survey for the UK, which was undertaken in 2007, and, where appropriate, compares these with the 1992 study and the current international findings. An overview of some of the main themes of the survey – ‘The changing academy’ – looks at responses from the sample as a whole. Subsequent sub-sections analyse these and other aspects of the survey according to different types and categories of academic staff. They focus on:

- the internationalisation of the profession
- different academic career trajectories
- the casualisation of the academic workforce
- and whether participation in academic work is broadening.

The changing academy

2.2 Initially, we provide an overview of the responses to the survey, highlighting major trends in the data both across countries and across time, by including comparisons with the earlier survey. The focus here is on overall responses concerning the attractiveness of the academic profession, the changing nature of teaching and research, and the management of institutions.

Attractiveness of the profession

2.3 Recently there has been a resurgence of interest in the analysis of job satisfaction in Britain which is regarded as critical to both individual employees’ overall well-being³ as well as organisational productivity and performance⁴. In line with other professions⁵, overall job satisfaction among academics appears to have fallen since 1992 by 2 per cent (table 1), yet levels of dissatisfaction have also declined at a more significant rate of 13 per cent.

Table 1

Overall satisfaction with the academic profession (per cent), 1992/2007

1992		2007	
1. Very Satisfied	8	Very High	8
2	41	High	39
Neutral	24	Medium	39
4	21	Low	8
5. Very Dissatisfied	7	Very Low	7

2.4 Nevertheless, there were other indicators of a decline in morale within the profession as illustrated in table 2.

Table 2

Views of the profession (percentage answering 'strongly agree' or 'agree'), 1992/2007

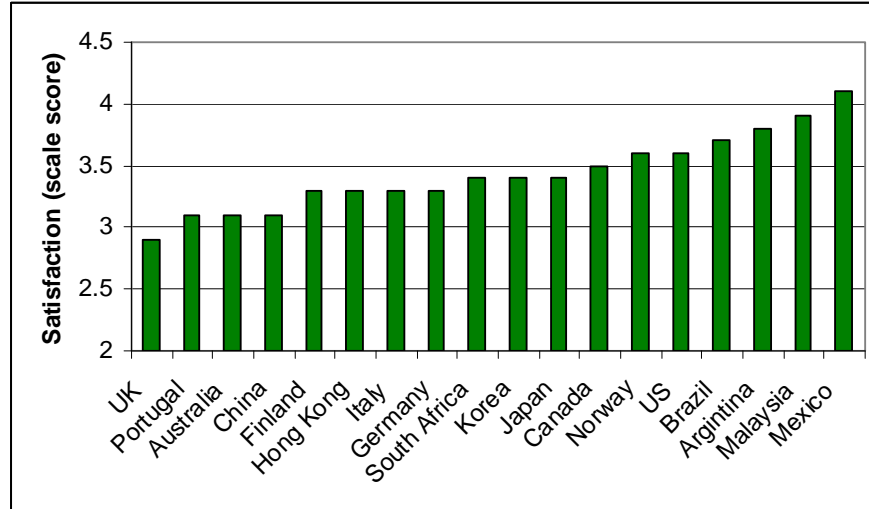
	1992	2007
This is a poor time for any young person to begin an academic career in my field	42	49
If I had it to do over again, I would not become an academic	20	27
My job is a source of considerable strain	47	52

2.5 As Watson has pointed out⁶, individual academics can simultaneously express dissatisfaction with institutional and higher education sector level issues and a strong commitment to their department and a sense of fulfilment from their own teaching and research. In addition, their motivations are as much intrinsic as extrinsic.

2.6 However, UK academics do seem more dissatisfied than their international colleagues. Chart 1 provides mean scores of a composite scale consisting of a series of questions about satisfaction with academic work⁷. The scale is scored from 1 (negative) to 5 (positive). From this analysis, UK academics reported the lowest levels of satisfaction of all the countries in the study, with a composite score of just 2.9.

Chart 1

Satisfaction with academic work by country



2.7 Other studies have highlighted the complexities of researching job satisfaction⁸ emphasising the variations which exist between different groups in the workforce. Within academia, the situation is no different with commentators in the UK highlighting variations between, for example, research-only and teaching-only staff⁹; pre-1992 and post-1992 university staff¹⁰ and junior and senior staff¹¹. The survey responses presented later in this report substantiate these findings by illustrating variations according to gender and ethnicity, and academic grade, age and time spent in the profession.

The changing nature of teaching

2.8 Since the 1992 survey, there has been a decline in the number of hours academics reported spending on teaching. This may be the result of more accurate recording as much as an *actual* decrease in time spent on these activities. Increasingly, academics in the UK are being required to complete time allocation schedules in an attempt to provide their institutions with more information about the costs of different activities. This has meant that individuals are now far more aware of how they spend – and account for – their time. Also, activities which may have been incorporated in a broad notion of ‘teaching’ in 1992 may now be disaggregated and included in the categories of ‘service’ or ‘other’ academic activities’ which saw a rise in the 2007 survey (table 3).

Table 3

Median hours per week spent on different academic activities, during and outside of term time, 1992/2007

	1992		2007	
	Term time	Outside term time	Term time	Outside term time
Teaching	20	5	15	6
Research	10	20	10	25
Service	2	2	4	4
Administration	8	5	5	5
Other	2	3	4	5

2.9 Given the decrease in the number of hours spent on teaching, it is unsurprising that the proportion of academics that reported a primary interest in teaching also decreased since 1992, whilst the percentage of staff claiming a primary interest in research rose by 9 per cent (table 4).

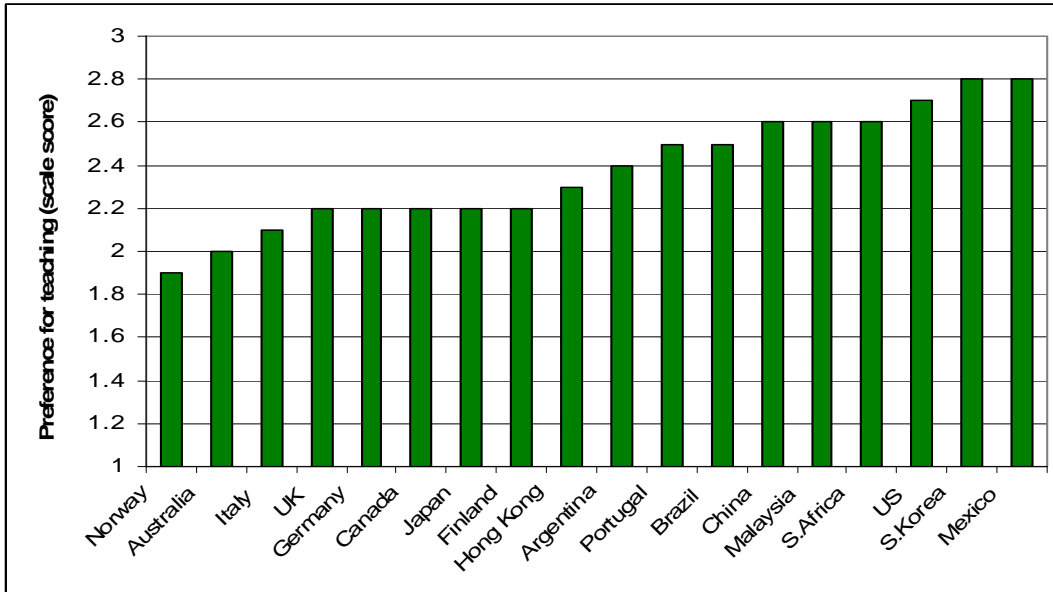
Table 4

Primary interest (per cent), 1992/2007

	1992	2007
Primarily in teaching	12	11
In both, but leaning towards teaching	32	28
In both, but leaning towards research	40	37
Primarily in research	15	24

2.10 Comparatively, far fewer UK academics reported a primary interest in teaching compared with their international counterparts (chart 2). The scale used in this question ranged from 1 indicating an interest primarily in research, to 4 indicating an interest primarily in teaching.

Chart 2
Preference for teaching by country



2.11 In the 1992 survey, 30 per cent of academics in England reported to be teaching entirely at undergraduate level while, in 2007, this figure had decreased to 21 per cent. A more detailed examination of academics' views of teaching expressed in the 2007 survey revealed that, although undergraduate education still took up the majority of academics' teaching time, there were significant differences between institutions and depending on respondents' grade, age and career stage.

2.12 Over 80 per cent of academics in the UK reported being involved in the following teaching activities: classroom instruction/lecturing; individualised instruction; the development of course material; face to face interaction with students outside of class; and electronic communications (email) with students. After Mexico (69 per cent) and Malaysia (49 per cent), the UK, at 42 per cent, had the highest proportion of academics reporting involvement in ICT-based learning/computer-assisted learning.

The changing nature of research

2.13 The amount of time academics reported spending on 'research', however, had increased since 1992 (table 3 above), which may reflect the growing pressure on academics to produce high quality research outputs suitable for submission to the periodic UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). It also followed an increase in the number of research-only staff employed since 1992 and a growing emphasis on research for career progression within, and between, institutions.

2.14 More UK academics reported undertaking:

- applied/practically-oriented than basic/theoretical research
- multi/interdisciplinary research than investigations based in one discipline

- socially-orientated research intended for the betterment of society than commercially-orientated research intended for technology transfer.

These emphases may have reflected the priorities of funders, academic publishers, institutional managers and others who can influence the type of research that is supported, as much as academics themselves.

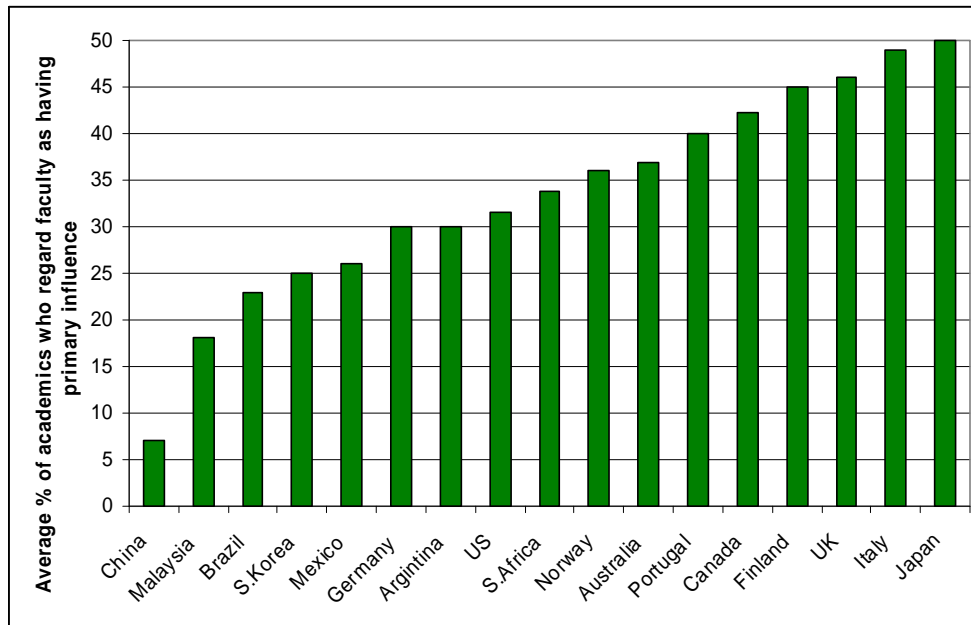
- 2.15 However, they put into perspective the conventional claim that the UK is more focused on basic research than on its application. This claim is sometimes accompanied by the argument that there should be a realignment of funding towards more applied areas and an emphasis on the identification of impacts as a criterion in screening research projects for funding alongside conventional peer assessment. For example, the UK research councils now expect the research they fund to have ‘a societal and economic impact’, requiring researchers to demonstrate an awareness of the wider environment and context in which the research takes place and to engage actively with the public at both the local and national levels about the research and its broader implications¹².

Managing a changing profession

- 2.16 Respondents were asked which party had the primary influence on a given series of decisions among: government and other external stakeholders, institutional managers, academic unit managers, academic committees/boards, individual academics and students¹³. Among the countries included in this study, the UK (at 46 per cent) had one of the highest average percentages of academics who regarded ‘faculty’ (committees and boards and individual academics) as having primary influence over the range of decisions included in the survey questionnaire (chart 3).

Chart 3

Academics' (committees/boards and individuals) primary influence on decisions made (average, per cent)¹⁴



2.17 Generally, it appears that academics in the UK perceived that 'faculty' influence has increased since 1992. However, when the relevant figures are disaggregated, it is clear that, apart from research and international linkages, the primary influence was seen to lie with academic *committees and boards* rather than *individuals*. Areas where academics did **not** see themselves as exercising the primary influence included 'determining the overall teaching load of faculty', where academic unit managers appeared to have most say, and 'selecting key administrators' and 'determining budget priorities', where institutional managers held sway.

2.18 Indeed, UK academics perceived themselves to have little *personal* influence in helping to shape key academic policies (table 5). Since 1992, there has been a considerable reduction in the proportion of UK respondents who feel they had personal influence at the department level (down by 23 per cent to 37 per cent) and faculty level (down by 19 per cent to 19 per cent). Respondents' perceptions of personal influence at the institutional level stayed the same at just 9 per cent.

Table 5
Personal influence in helping to shape key academic policies (per cent)

	At the level of the department or similar unit	At the level of the faculty, school or similar unit	At the institutional level
Australia	42	17	7
Argentina	41	24	14
Brazil	63	40	23
Canada	60	27	11

China	32	32	28
Finland	38	14	8
Germany	57	21	12
Hong Kong	36	16	7
Italy	43	22	7
Japan	47	28	13
South Korea	58	28	20
Malaysia	48	31	12
Mexico	61	44	23
Norway	36	12	11
Portugal	45	22	7
South Africa	56	34	10
UK	37	19	9
United States	65	42	19

2.19 This placed UK academics' perception of their personal influence among the lowest of the countries participating in the changing academic profession study, along with their colleagues in Norway, Hong Kong and – at the school and institutional levels – Australia.

Internationalisation

2.20 The international dimension of higher education is becoming increasingly important, complex and difficult to predict. Key analyses of internationalisation in higher education point to a broad range of dimensions in play¹⁵. Internationalisation is generally defined as increasing cross-border activities amidst the persistence of national boundaries. For example, universities are increasingly required to provide an education that fosters global knowledge, transferable skills and the acquisition of languages in order for graduates to perform professionally and socially in an international and multicultural environment. The most comprehensive definition of internationalisation is given by Knight¹⁶:

‘internationalization of higher education is the process of integrating an international/ intercultural dimension into teaching, research and service functions of the institution’. (Knight, 1999: 16)

2.21 The academic profession survey covered each of these dimensions of internationalisation and some of the significant findings are included in this section. For the purposes of the analyses of the results presented, the respondents have been categorised in the following subsets:

- British respondents, who studied for their doctorate at a UK higher education institution
- British respondents, who studied for their doctorate abroad
- Non-British respondents, who studied for their doctorate at a UK higher education institution
- Non-British respondents, who studied for their doctorate abroad

Internationalisation of teaching

2.22 As illustrated in table 6, non-British respondents and all those (including British academics) who had studied for their doctorate abroad tended to assert a more international focus in their courses (77-80 per cent), when compared with their British colleagues with UK doctorates (62 per cent). However, a smaller proportion of non-British respondents believed that the number of international students had increased since they started teaching. This may have been a reflection of the shorter time this group had spent in the UK academic profession than their British counterparts. Of those respondents who gained their doctorate abroad, 85 per cent of the British and 47 per cent of the non-British academics had studied in English-speaking countries.

Table 6
Views regarding teaching (percentage strongly agreeing/agreeing)¹⁷

	All	British/ UK doctorate	British/ doctorate abroad	Non-British/ UK doctorate	Non-British/ doctorate abroad
In your courses you emphasis international perspectives or content	66	62	78	77	80
Since you started teaching, the number of international students has increased	61	64	67	58	58
Currently, most of your graduate students are international	31	31	44	38	45

Internationalisation of research

2.23 A higher proportion of non-British academics who had studied for their doctorate abroad stated that they researched collaboratively with international colleagues (78 per cent). An even higher percentage of this group maintained that their primary research had an international scope or orientation (90 per cent), especially compared with British academics – even those who had studied for their doctorates abroad (67 per cent).

Table 7
Research characteristics (per cent)

	All	British/UK doctorate	British/ doctorate abroad	Non-British/ UK doctorate	Non- British/ doctorate abroad
Collaborate with international colleagues	61	65	70	71	78
Primary research has an international scope or orientation	65	66	67	82	90

2.24 British respondents with doctorates from abroad appeared more likely than their colleagues to have co-authored publications with authors outside the UK (table 8). The UK had one of the highest proportions (61 per cent) of respondents from the 18 countries currently included in the study reporting that they collaborated with international colleagues on research projects. Non-British respondents with doctorates from abroad in the UK survey were slightly more likely to have published outside the UK.

Table 8
Publication characteristics (per cent)

	All	British/ UK doctorate	British/ doctorate abroad	Non-British/ UK doctorate	Non-British/ doctorate abroad
Over 25 per cent of publications co-authored with colleagues located outside the UK	42	44	50	36	39
Over 25 per cent of publications published outside the UK	55	57	50	42	62

- 2.25 Fewer British academics (18 per cent) who had studied for their doctorates in the UK stated that over a quarter of the external funding for their research came from international organisations, compared with 27 per cent of non-British academics who studied for their doctorates abroad.
- 2.26 The data cast an interesting light on the process of internationalisation within the UK context. Whilst it might be expected that non-British respondents, and particularly those with non-UK doctorates, would be more likely to emphasise the international orientation of their teaching and research, perhaps the degree of difference with their British counterparts was a little surprising, given the long history of growth in international student recruitment to the UK and the importance given by the regular research assessment exercises to research that is internationally recognised.
- 2.27 The UK survey also revealed that relatively few British academics had studied or worked abroad, and those remaining may have relied in part on the internationalisation of the UK profession for their international links. Furthermore, these international links were heavily orientated towards English-speaking countries, in particular, the United States and Commonwealth nations. This phenomenon might be termed 'armchair internationalism' as distinct from genuine internationalisation. Further research is needed to explore the implications of this form of internationalisation for the development of teaching and research. For example, it may have implications for:
- the internationalisation of the curriculum
 - the experience of international academics in the UK
 - the styles of scholarship and intellectual traditions
 - the range of research collaboration with academics in developing countries outside the Commonwealth
 - disciplinary differentiation and interdisciplinary knowledge¹⁸.

Career trajectories

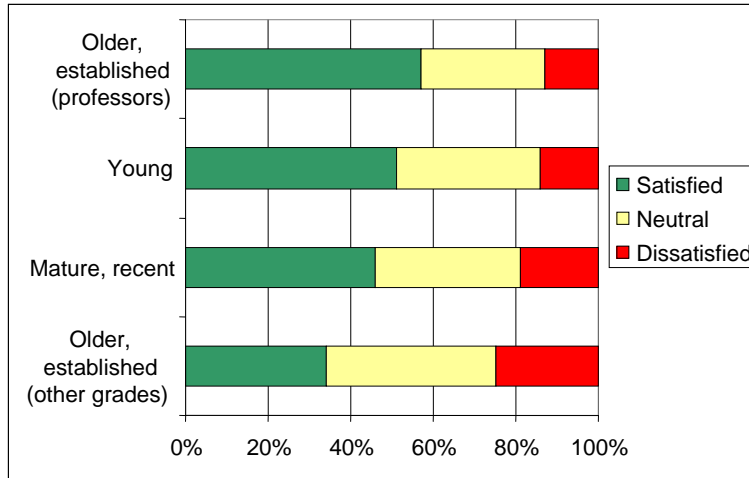
- 2.28 Academics vary in their responses to the changes and new influences in higher education, and this may be partly explained by differences in status within the academic hierarchy, subject characteristics and generational variations¹⁹. With the expansion of the UK higher education system, there has not only been an increase in the numbers of young people entering the profession via the traditional PhD route but also in the numbers of academic staff entering the profession at mid-level having already pursued a career in another profession. This section explores survey responses by age, length of time in the academic profession and grade.
- 2.29 For these purposes, academic respondents have been categorised as either: 'young', 'mature, recent' or 'older, established', with the last of these further differentiated by whether or not they are professors. The first group (young) includes respondents under the age of 40, the majority of whom entered the profession via the traditional route direct from formal education, including a PhD and perhaps postdoctoral study. The second group (mature, recent) comprises academics who were over the age of 40 and have entered the profession within the last 10 years. Many of these academics had a previous career in another profession. The third group (older, established) represents academics over the age of 40 who had been in the academic profession for over 10 years. This group is further divided between professors and those on other academic grades.

Satisfaction and commitment

- 2.30 Overall, older, established professors appeared to be the most satisfied group (57 per cent) of academics and older, established academics in other grades the least satisfied (34 per cent) and the most dissatisfied (25 per cent) of all four categories (chart 4). This may be linked to their views on their current working conditions, as a majority of all academic staff (66 per cent) reported a deterioration in working conditions since the beginning of their careers.

Chart 4

Overall satisfaction with the academic profession (per cent)



2.31 There were, however, variations across the academic workforce. Older, established professors in the UK viewed their working conditions most positively in the UK, with the exception of ‘secretarial support’, ‘teaching support staff’ and ‘research support staff’ (table 9), whilst young respondents were most likely to rate these support staff as excellent or good. Older, established respondents who were not professors were the most critical of the facilities, resources and personnel in support of individual work, especially support for research.

Table 9

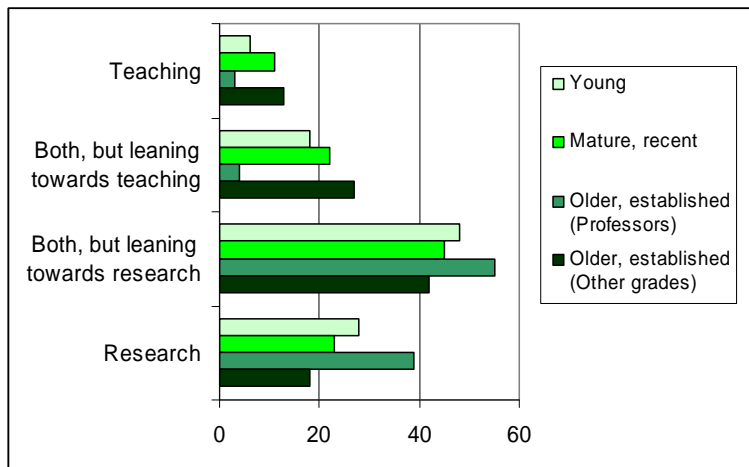
Evaluation of facilities, resources and personnel in support of individual work (per cent rated excellent/good)

	All	Young	Mature, recent	Older, established (professors)	Older, established (other grades)
Classrooms	37	37	32	38	30
Technology for teaching	42	44	44	44	37
Laboratories	43	41	36	47	32
Research equipment and instruments	39	32	29	46	28
Computer facilities	45	47	40	51	40
Library facilities and services	52	48	46	49	51
Your office space	42	46	42	59	41
Secretarial support	34	40	30	32	29
Telecommunications	52	53	49	56	50
Teaching support staff	35	39	37	28	38
Research support staff	32	35	30	33	28
Research funding	17	17	14	20	11
Mean score	39.2	39.9	35.8	42	34.6

Academic activities

2.32 There were also major differences between these groups of academics in the types of academic activity they were involved in, which may be linked to the feelings of satisfaction and commitment discussed above. More older, established non-professors stated a primary interest in teaching or teaching and research but leaning more towards teaching than any other group, although this was still a minority. The highest percentage of academics stating a primary interest in research or both but leaning towards research was found among older, established professors. Fewer older, established academics on other grades than professor had a primary interest in research than in the other groups, although this was still a majority.

Chart 5
Primary interests in teaching and research (per cent)



2.33 Given that a higher proportion of older, established academics on other grades than professor stated a primary interest in teaching (chart 5), it is hardly surprising that a higher percentage of this group reported involvement in various teaching activities, ranging from curriculum development (84 per cent) to face-to-face interaction with students outside of class (94 per cent). Older, established academics on other grades than professor spent the highest percentage of their teaching time on undergraduate teaching (66 per cent). Conversely, professors spent the least time on this (52 per cent).

2.34 As is the case for teaching, the different groups of academics reported on here appeared to be involved in different types of research (table 10). A higher percentage of older, established professors were conducting basic/theoretical research (65 per cent) which was multi/interdisciplinary (68 per cent) and international in scope or orientation (81 per cent). A higher percentage of mature, recent academics than other respondents reported an emphasis on socially-oriented research or research intended for the betterment of society (50 per cent).

Table 10
Research emphasis (per cent)

	All	Young	Mature, recent	Older, established (professors)	Older, established (other grades)
Basic/ theoretical	55	61	57	65	48
Applied/practically-oriented	66	62	66	66	70
Commercially-oriented/ intended for technology transfer	17	15	16	11	18
Socially-oriented/intended for the betterment of society	41	46	50	41	42
International in scope or orientation	62	67	65	81	58
Based in one discipline	39	36	42	36	46
Multi-/interdisciplinary	62	67	65	68	54

2.35 Given that older, established professors reported spending more time on research, it was not surprising that a higher percentage reported involvement in research related activities such as supervising a research team (69 per cent, compared with 25 per cent for all respondents) and writing academic papers (96 per cent, compared with 49 per cent for all respondents).

Casualisation of the academic workforce

2.36 Academics employed on non-standard contracts are a numerically significant part of the labour market in higher education. Concerns about access to formal academic development for this staff group have been articulated in many countries, including the UK²⁰. 10.4 per cent²¹ of those academic staff responding to the UK changing academic profession study were working part-time at the time of completing the survey and 84 per cent were permanently employed at their current higher education institution. The following section of this report looks at this segment of the workforce in relation to the academic activities they performed and their satisfaction with the profession. Table 11 compares the profiles of part- and full-time staff included in the survey responses.

Table 11
Profile of part-time and full-time staff (per cent)

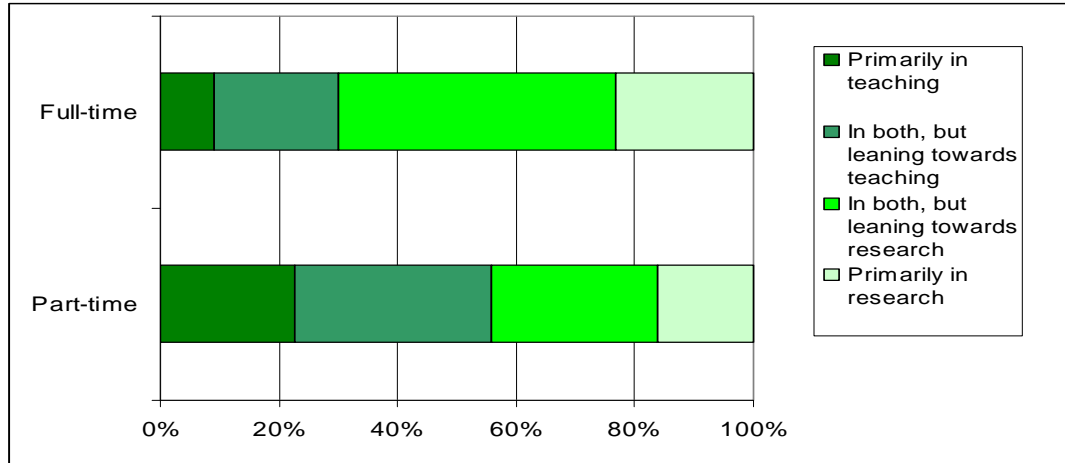
	Full-time	Part-time
Gender		
Male	54.3	21.8
Female	45.7	78.2
Grade		
Professor	19.4	4.9
Senior lecturer/researcher/ reader	38.9	29.3
Lecturer	30.2	36.6
Researcher	6.4	13.0
Other	5.0	16.3
Contract duration		
Permanent	87.0	61.0
Fixed term	11.0	35.0
Other	1.0	4.0
Familial status		
Married/partner	79.1	84.4
Single	16.9	13.9
Other	4.0	1.6
Dependants		
Children	41.2	57.4
No children	58.8	42.6
Career breaks		
Yes	14.5	45.5
No	85.5	54.5

Academic activities

2.37 Unsurprisingly, a higher percentage of part-time staff (55.8 per cent) was primarily interested in teaching or teaching and research but leaning towards teaching (chart 6). There were also differences between the types of teaching that full- and part-time staff reported being engaged in. Compared with full-time academic staff, a higher proportion

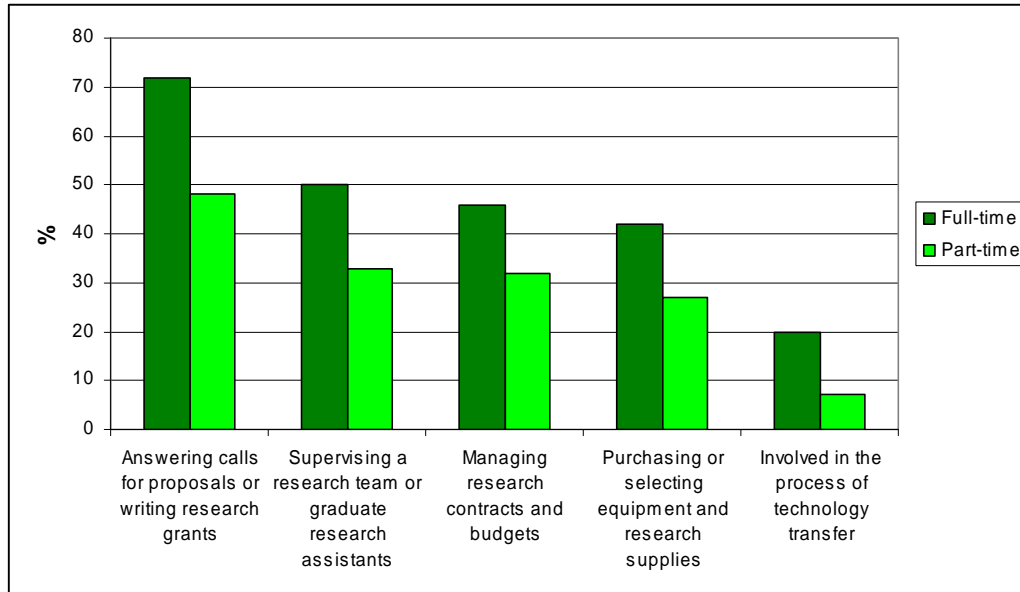
of part-time staff reported spending over 75 per cent of their instruction time teaching at undergraduate (57 per cent) and postgraduate (18 per cent) level.

Chart 6
Primary interest in teaching and research (per cent)



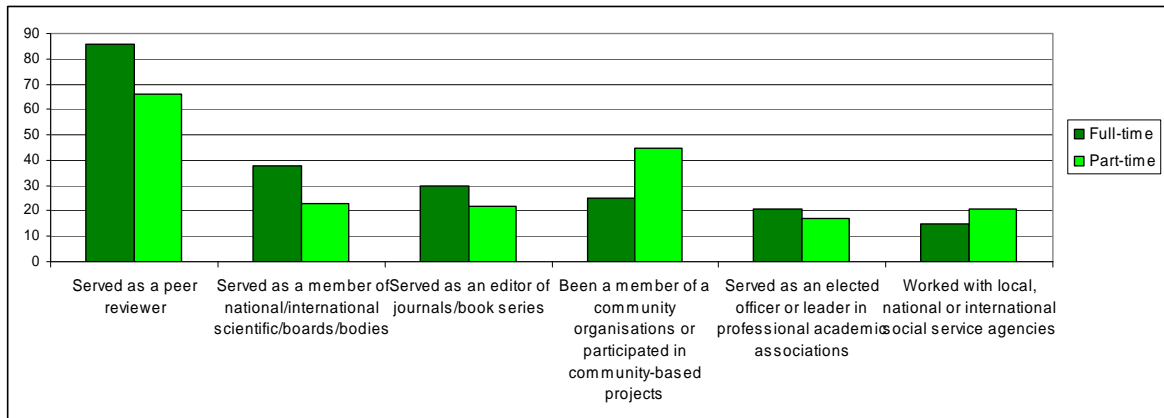
2.38 In contrast, part-time staff appeared to be engaged in similar forms of research to their full-time counterparts. The only significant difference was the emphasis that part-time staff placed on research which was socially-orientated and/or intended for the betterment of society. 58 per cent of part-time staff characterised their research in this way compared with 44 per cent of full-time staff. More substantial differences were apparent between the types of research activities that academic staff were involved in. As shown in chart 7, full-time staff reported a greater involvement in activities associated with developing and managing research projects than part-time respondents. Other factors may also have been in play, since part-time staff were also more likely to be on fixed term contracts, in lower grades and orientated more towards teaching than their full-time colleagues. But this raises questions about whether part-time academics have the same opportunities and support, *pro rata*, as full-timers to engage in the full range of research activities.

Chart 7
Involvement in particular research activities (per cent)



2.39 On service activities, a higher percentage of full-time academics claimed involvement in the range of activities presented in chart 8, apart from membership of community organisations and involvement with local, national or international service agencies. As with research activities, it seemed to be the case that part-time staff did not have the opportunities that were available to full-time academics (or chose not) to engage in the kinds of scholarly activities recognised by research funders and promotions panels.

Chart 8
Involvement in service activities (per cent)

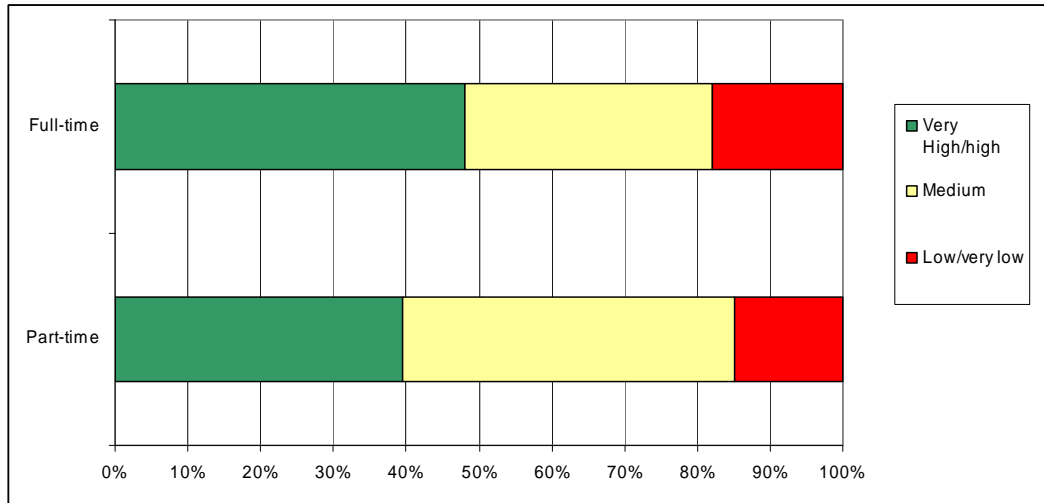


Satisfaction

2.40 Chart 9 illustrates academics' feelings of overall satisfaction with their current job. Although a lower percentage of part-time staff stated that they were satisfied or highly satisfied, fewer also reported that they were dissatisfied. There may be a number of

reasons why part-time staff were less inclined to rate their overall satisfaction with their current job as high or very high. For example, part-time staff rated the range of facilities, resources and personnel at their current institution less favourably (2.9 on a scale of 1 to 5) than their full-time counterparts (3.1). More specifically, part-time staff were less likely to rate their own office space (31 per cent) and secretarial support (24 per cent) as excellent or good compared with their full-time counterparts (47 per cent and 34 per cent respectively). Unsurprisingly, a higher percentage of staff in continuous employment rated their satisfaction with the profession as high or very high (49 per cent) compared with those on fixed term contracts (41 per cent).

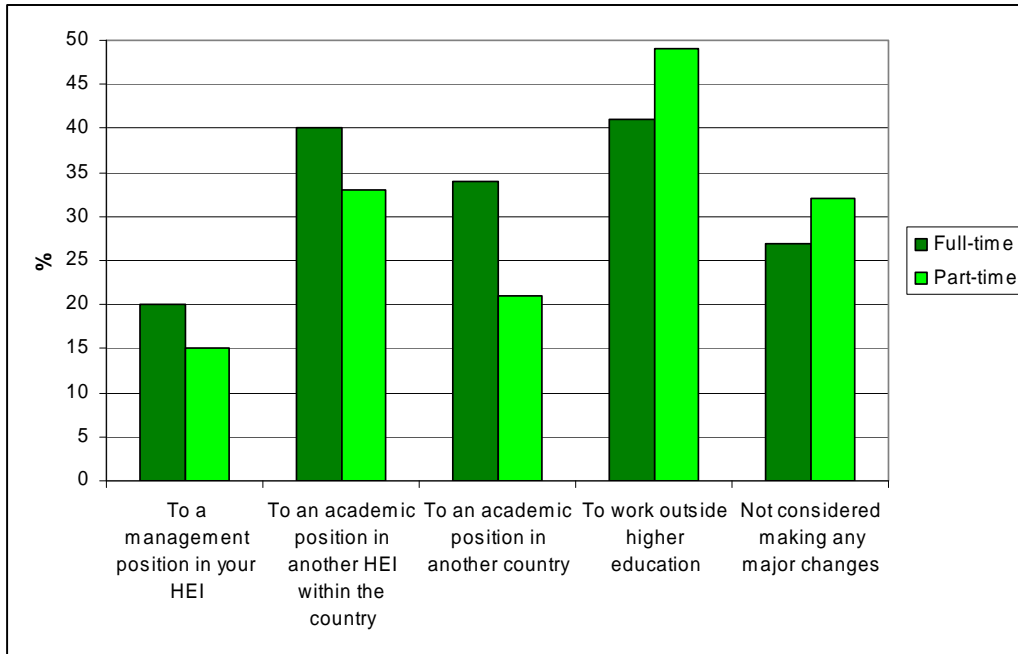
Chart 9
Overall satisfaction with current job (per cent)



2.41 Interestingly, when asked whether they had considered making any major changes to their employment situation, fewer part-time staff reported that they had considered making a change within the academic profession but more had considered leaving higher education altogether (chart 10).

Chart 10

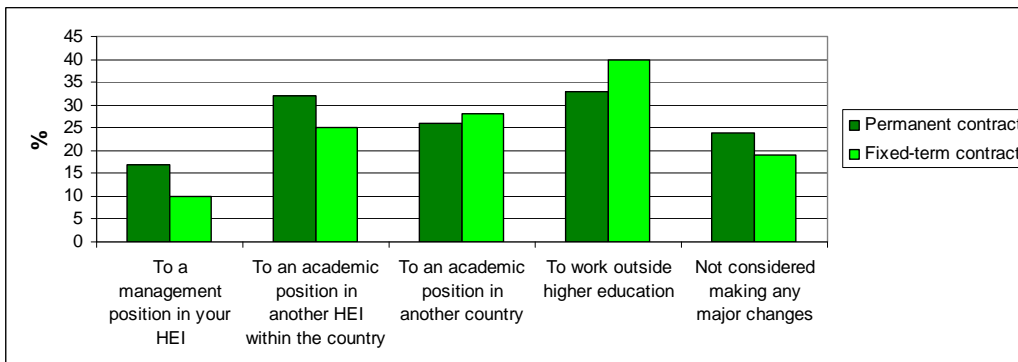
Considered action towards major job change (per cent)



2.42 There were also interesting differences between academics on different types of contract (chart 11). More academics in permanent employment had considered changing to a management position compared with those working on fixed term contracts. This may highlight the restricted opportunities available to staff on these latter contracts. Given that academics working on fixed term contracts appear to be less satisfied with the profession, it is unsurprising that a higher percentage had considered a move to work outside of higher education altogether.

Chart 11

Considered action towards major job change (per cent)



Broadening participation in academic work?

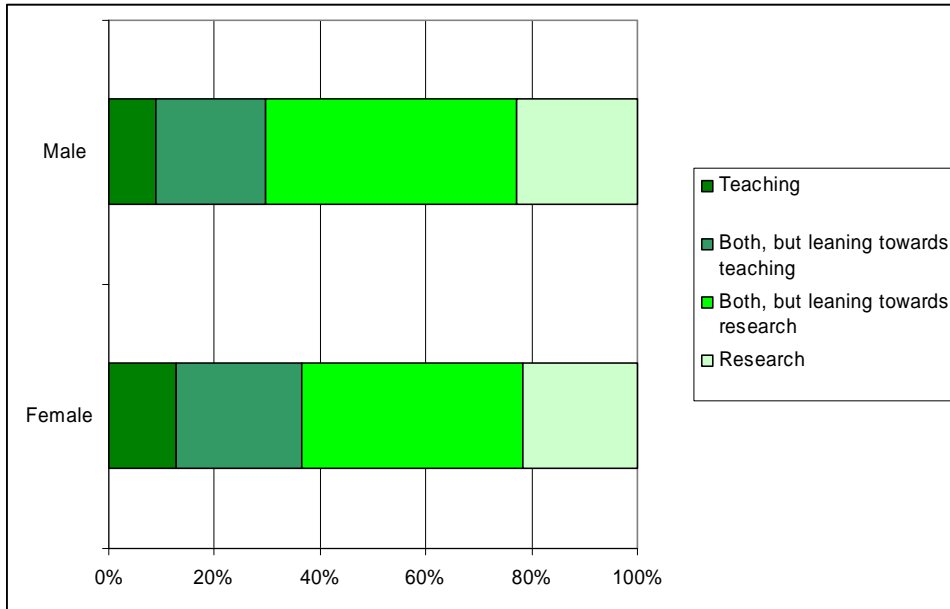
2.43 UK higher education institutions have gone through a series of major changes over the last few decades, including expansion, widening student participation, the impact of equality legislation and the introduction of human resources management and practices. One notable change has been the continuing growth in the number of women working and studying in UK higher education. However, while women academics are more apparent in numbers, they still tend to be underrepresented in the higher grades within universities. A similar tale is true of black and minority ethnic groups, especially those of UK nationality²². This was mirrored in the survey data, where just 10 per cent of female black and minority ethnic respondents held professorships. It is worth asking what these changes have meant for academic careers and the university. The following section focuses on these two overlapping groups of staff in relation to the work they do, their overall satisfaction and commitment to the profession and their views and feelings about the management of their institutions.

Academic activities

2.44 As illustrated by chart 12, a higher percentage of male academics reported being primarily interested in research or both teaching and research but leaning towards research. This mirrors the findings of others, such as Pritchard²³, whose study of gender inequality in British and German universities found that not only were men more involved in research activities but they were also twice as likely to be entered into the UK RAE. Pritchard also reported that female academics in the UK submitted fewer research grant applications and were less productive in generating publications. Despite efforts to eliminate unfair bias against women and black and minority ethnic staff in the 2008 RAE, inequalities remained, with the chance of a permanent female academic being selected rising from 46 per cent in 2001 to 48 per cent in 2008 compared with 67 per cent, from 64 per cent in the same year, for men²⁴. According to the UK survey, women academics on average spent 18 hours a week teaching and 7 hours conducting research during term time, whilst men spent an average of 16 hours teaching and 10 hours conducting research.

Chart 12

Primary interests in teaching and research (per cent)



2.45 Given the time that women reported spending on teaching, it is unsurprising that they also reported spending more time on teaching related activities. However, men spent more of their teaching time concentrating on doctoral instruction, whilst women spent more of their time at the undergraduate and Masters level.

2.46 Across the board, a higher proportion of men were more involved in research related activities compared with female staff (chart 13). Again, this is unsurprising given the greater emphasis that male academics place on research (chart 12). There were, however, significant differences within gender groups as only 12 per cent of female black and minority ethnic staff stated an involvement in managing research contracts and budgets compared with 23 per cent of non-black and minority ethnic female staff.

Chart 13

Involvement in particular research activities (per cent)

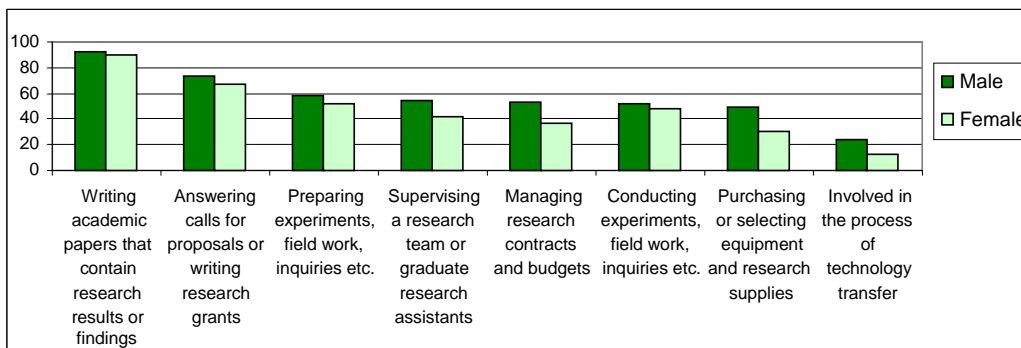
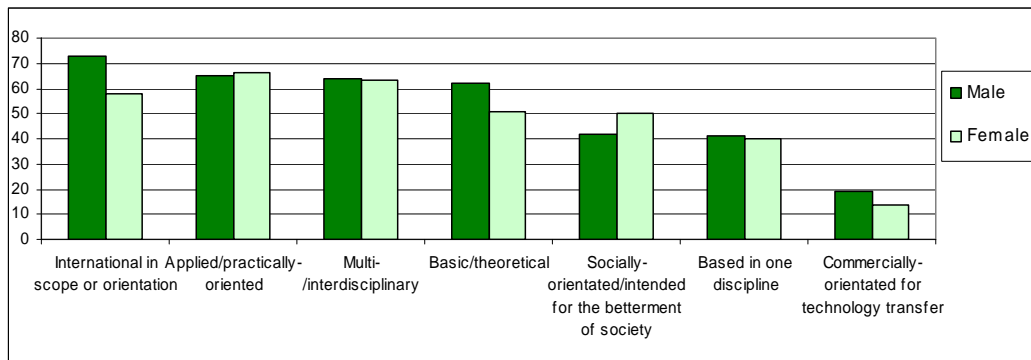


Chart 14
Characteristics of research (per cent)



2.47 Men appeared to be more involved in the types of research activities (for example, writing proposals, international scope) that are highly valued by research councils and within the RAE (charts 13 and 14). The findings that women had less time to research and were less involved in the types of research activities valued by assessment and promotion frameworks may be evidence of prominent obstacles to women in reaching top university positions.

2.48 Ethnicity appeared to accentuate differences between male and female staff when it came to service related activities (table 12). A smaller proportion of female black and minority ethnic staff reported serving as a peer reviewer; as a member of national/international scientific boards/bodies or as the editor of journals/book series. Interestingly, though, a higher proportion of female black and minority ethnic staff reported serving as a member of a community organisation or participating in community-based projects.

Table 12
Involvement in service activities (per cent)

	Black and minority ethnic		Non-black and minority ethnic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Served as a peer reviewer	62	48	66	58
Served as a member of national/international scientific/boards/bodies	31	24	28	25
Served as an editor of journals/book series	31	16	24	18
Been a member of a community organisations or participated in community-based projects	12	26	17	21
Served as an elected officer or leader in professional academic associations	9	16	14	16
Worked with local, national or international social service agencies	12	22	9	11
Been substantially involved in local, national or international politics	6	4	4	3
Served as an elected officer or leader of unions	0	2	5	4

Management

2.49 Female academic staff felt they had less personal influence than their male colleagues at all levels of their institution, as illustrated in table 13. For female staff from black and minority ethnic groups, the proportion who reported having personal influence was further reduced.

Table 13
Personal influence in helping to shape key academic policies (per cent)

	Black and minority ethnic		Non-black and minority ethnic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
At the level of the department	57	25	50	42
At the level of faculty, school	20	17	23	19
At the institutional level	9	3	10	7

2.50 This pattern was repeated in a number of management related issues, including views on administration, faculty involvement (chart 15) and institutional management (table 14).

Chart 15

Views on administration and faculty involvement (percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing)

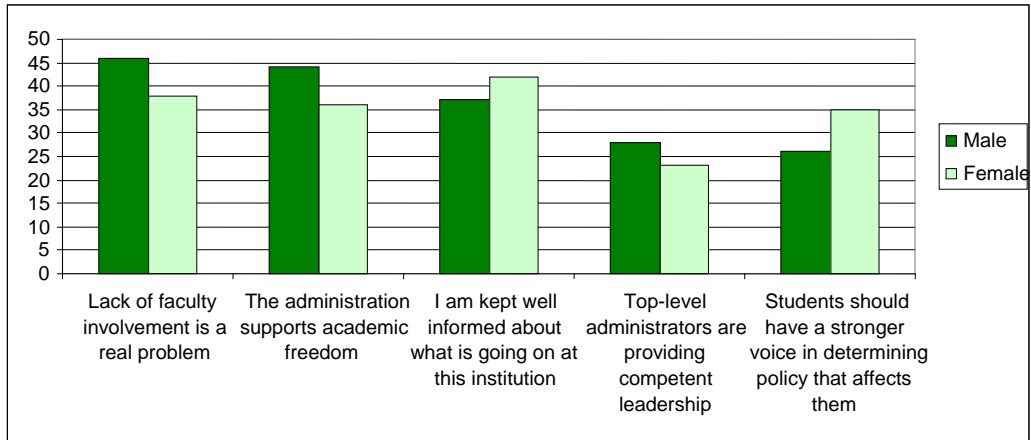


Table 14

Views on the management of own institution (percentage agreeing/strongly agreeing)

	Black and minority ethnic		Non-black and minority ethnic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
A cumbersome administrative process	59	83	77	80
A top-down management style	66	70	75	72
A strong performance orientation	66	83	70	66
A strong emphasis on the institution's mission	44	63	60	65
A supportive attitude of administrative staff towards teaching activities	47	38	44	44
Professional development for administrative/management duties for individual faculty	33	28	47	37
A supportive attitude of administrative staff towards research activities	43	37	35	31
Good communication between management and academics	23	13	23	22
Collegiality in decision-making processes	18	21	20	21

3. Policy implications

3.1 This section explores some of the implications of this emerging evidence from the study for policymakers and leaders at institutional, national, UK and international levels. It explores the key challenges for higher education implied by the survey findings and other relevant evidence. These challenges are significant and far-reaching, but the policies and practices designed to address them need to be informed by evidence, including the findings of the international study.

3.2 In particular, this section focuses on the following issues:

- Academics' engagement with their institutions
- The diversity of academics and academic activities
- Academic mobility and immobility
- The uneven development of academic labour markets
- Attracting and developing talent

Academics' engagement with their institutions

3.3 The UK survey provides evidence that some academics feel disengaged from the governance and management of their institutions and alienated from their leadership. The shifts in the balance of governance in UK universities have been well documented²⁵. Increasingly 'business-like' management styles have tended to go hand-in-hand with more corporate-style governance arrangements in higher education institutions, with a reduction in the size of governing bodies which have for some time included a majority of external members drawn largely from business sectors.

3.4 In parallel, academic self-governance has been weakened, the influence of academic senates has declined and the academic community seemingly marginalised as a consequence. Institutional management has been strengthened, professionalised and often centralised and this process has been reinforced by the tendency to combine academic departments into fewer, larger schools²⁶. Whether these developments have brought about a crisis in the governance and management of higher education institutions in which the collegial tradition of dualistic or shared decision-making between academics and other stakeholders has largely been replaced by 'managerialist corporatism', is open to debate²⁷.

3.5 The academic profession in the UK consists of a diverse range of academic staff both in their demographic profile and in the roles they undertake. Often treated as a homogeneous entity, individual academics are positioned, within much of the existing literature on governance and management in the UK, as rational actors, performing largely similar roles and operating on the basis of a core of common academic and collegial values.

- 3.6 As we have argued elsewhere²⁷, adopting such an approach can be problematic in explaining changes in the academy. It has also generated a dominant discourse about academics which is preoccupied with loss, alienation and the retreat of 'the profession'. According to this argument, academic work has been industrialised, academics themselves have been proletarianised, their autonomy eroded and they, themselves have been de-skilled. The result, according to this discourse, is that the profession is demoralised and disaffected, and disengaged – or worse, actively excluded – from institutional decision-making.
- 3.7 However, in an attempt to move beyond this dominant discourse, we have analysed the UK survey results according to a number of different variables including institutional type, age, gender, professional grade and mode of employment²⁸. Some of these findings are reported here and elaborated elsewhere²⁹.
- 3.8 We have argued that academics differ in their responses to the changes and new influences in higher education – whether this takes the form of active support, compliance, resistance or subversion – and that this might be partly explained by differences in status within academic and institutional hierarchies, in the characteristics of different disciplines and between generations¹⁹. Our analyses have indicated particular variations between academic staff at different stages of their career and with different career trajectories.
- 3.9 Clearly, there will be those individual academics who are being marginalised by these developments³⁰, some who make compromises in order to reconcile their preconceptions of academia with their experiences of working in a corporatised university³¹ and some who embrace the changes, including for the purposes of their own career advancement³². Indeed, academic values and identities are becoming an increasingly contested area which higher education managers and decision-makers need to understand and address in crafting a vision for their institution³³.
- 3.10 These variations in the changing academy make the generalised analysis of academics' engagement with their institutions problematic. The UK survey results illustrate the distinctions and bring into question the dominant discourse of academic loss, alienation and retreat. They suggest that a more nuanced and differentiated approach is required if institutions and academics themselves are to achieve and sustain professional renewal.
- 3.11 In particular, institutions seeking to distinguish themselves in the markets for higher education will need to develop forms of governance and management that suit their particular mission and circumstances, rather than comply with external diktats. For example, they may wish to:
- adopt a holistic view of institutional decision-making that encompasses all features of their operations, including academic, financial, legal, estate and others
 - ensure information flows to and from academic units and within larger academic divisions

- find effective ways of communicating and engaging with different groupings of academics, including those who are part-time and fixed term, as well as other institutional staff and students
- involve academic and other groupings in relevant kinds of strategic decisions and at appropriate points in the decision-making process
- ensure that risk management does not become risk aversion, and compliance does not lead to acquiescence, thus stultifying innovation and creativity
- minimise the administrative burden on academic and other professional staff
- and, finally, balance their institution's commitment to teaching, research and other activities and ensure that all are supported by sufficient facilities, resources and personnel.

The diversity of academics and academic activities

- 3.12 As the findings presented in this report and elsewhere suggest, there are differences of perception emerging from an increasingly segmented academic population, depending on: the type of institution in which the respondent is employed; their grade; their age and the time they have spent in the profession; their gender and ethnicity; mode of work and contract duration; and even subject discipline. Indeed, several of these categories overlap with each other – as the national statistics confirm – with women being over-represented among part-time academics in some subjects, younger academics more likely to be on fixed-term contracts and both being underrepresented in the more senior grades, for example.
- 3.13 Increasingly, also, the academic role itself is being fragmented. Those expected both to teach and research are now in the minority, and their responsibilities may range from simply teaching to also assessing students, leading courses and designing the curriculum, or from basic research to also analysing and interpreting data, managing projects and preparing research proposals.
- 3.14 In some institutions, the research proposal process has been professionalised to the extent that there are separate institution-, faculty- or school-wide units dedicated to gathering intelligence about sources of funding and ways of maximising success rates. With the growing use of educational technologies and managed learning environments, the processes of 'facilitating learning' are being disaggregated and increasingly undertaken by multi-skilled teams in which each member specialises in one aspect.
- 3.15 Indeed, there has been a growth in 'para-academics' and other professionals not on academic contracts but, nevertheless, undertaking functions close to the core activities of teaching and research. This has blurred the boundaries between academic and other roles within institutions and created new 'spaces' for different professional identities to develop³⁴. These individuals may bring different values, perspectives and orientations with them. Together with younger academics and those who have worked in other occupations before moving into academia, these individuals may recognise

and, perhaps, more readily accept they are employees of an organisation, as much as members of an institution and a community.

- 3.16 The segmentation of academic staff and the blurring and fragmenting of the academic role raise the issue of whether we can any longer speak of a single academic profession³⁵. Indeed, the differentiation of higher education institutions – including through devolution and increasingly distinctive national and regional environments – calls into question the existence of a unitary higher education system in the UK.
- 3.17 National data collection on higher education staff has developed relatively recently and is continually improving and deepening. But the very diverse nature of higher education, even within a single nation makes this a problematic task. We need to be sure we are comparing ‘like with like’. Unless we know more about the existing characteristics of higher education and the people who work in it, it will be difficult to develop frameworks to meet future needs and plan strategically to bring about desirable change.
- 3.18 Given the diversity of the academic profession, the challenges for leaders and managers of higher education institutions and policymakers include:
- appreciating the different working conditions, roles and experiences of various academic groupings, within the same institution and even department
 - providing each with appropriate opportunities for career and personal development, progression and promotion
 - reducing and abolishing inequalities in the pay and conditions of those who undertake work – and make a contribution – of equal value
 - supporting different activities (teaching, research, knowledge exchange, outreach etc) in equitable ways, in accordance with the institution’s mission and values.

International mobility and domestic stability

- 3.19 Given that the academic profession itself is very diverse, it is not surprising to find that the patterns of movement of academics also appear to be quite complex and differentiated. In 2007/08, 38,240 academic staff were non-UK nationals, representing 22 per cent of the total UK academic population²² and this proportion has increased significantly in recent years³⁶. 27 per cent of full-time academic staff appointed in 2007/08 came from outside the UK²². A recent survey of higher education institutions found that the most common region for the recruitment of all levels of academic staff was the European Union. For professors and lecturers, the next most common region was North America, and for researchers it was East Asia³⁷.
- 3.20 The main countries of origin of foreign academics working in the UK are Germany, the Republic of Ireland, the United States, China, Italy, France and Greece. However, among professors, the largest non-UK national groups are from the United States, the Republic of Ireland, Germany and Australia. China provides the largest single group of

non-UK nationals among researchers and this group constitutes approximately two-thirds of all Chinese staff in UK higher education institutions.

- 3.21 Overall, there are more academics coming into the UK than going out. This is particularly the case at the more junior grades, although there is some outflow at the more senior levels, including professors. Junior researchers account for about two thirds of migration in both directions and around half of these are non-UK nationals, including post-doctoral researchers who may spend fairly short periods in the UK. The survey found that a higher proportion of senior than junior academics had obtained their doctorate in the UK, a pattern which was not repeated in most of the other national surveys in the study³⁸.
- 3.22 In fact, in the UK there is a higher turnover of non-UK academics than UK nationals. In 2002/03, 48 per cent of academic emigrants were non-UK nationals, compared with 53 per cent of immigrants³⁹. In particular, non-UK European researchers now appear to be viewing the UK as the place to establish their academic reputations and then return to their own countries (or move on elsewhere) – much as UK academics have viewed the US.
- 3.23 However, the general turnover rate among all academic staff in the UK remains very low at 6 per cent for 2006/07, compared with an overall UK employment turnover rate of 20.4 per cent and a public sector average of 13.5 per cent. Indeed, in a recent survey, more higher education institutions regarded low turnover rates as a problem than they did high turnover rates³⁷.
- 3.24 For a number of years, there has been a consistent recruitment shortage of academic staff in business and management, accounting and finance, and law, according to surveys by the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA). Recent difficulties have occurred in biological sciences, but earlier problems have eased in IT and computing. Overall, there appear to more recruitment difficulties for lecturing staff than for professors and researchers⁴⁰. Yet, it appears that *some* academics do move jobs for more pay or to higher education institutions with better reputations for research⁴¹.
- 3.25 The survey respondents were asked: 'Within the last five years, have you considered a major change in your job? If so, did you take concrete actions to make such a change?'. Just over a quarter had not considered making any major changes. Of the remainder, the fewest (20 per cent) had considered changing to a management position in their institution, and even fewer (12 per cent) had taken concrete action to achieve this. Thirty-five percent had considered an academic position in another UK institution and most of these (26 per cent) had taken action. Almost as many (31 per cent) had considered an academic position in another country, but far fewer (12 per cent) had actually done anything about this. A greater proportion (43 per cent) had considered working outside higher education but, again, far fewer (10 per cent) had taken action.

3.26 It is not yet clear how the recession and cuts in public expenditure on higher education will modify this picture of international (non-UK) academic mobility and relative domestic (UK citizen) stability, but it is likely that greater competition for academics will become an increasingly important consideration for higher education leaders and managers.

3.27 The challenges for leaders and managers of higher education institutions and policymakers include:

- Addressing the dangers of over-reliance on international academic staff in particular subjects⁴²
- Encouraging more UK-domiciled students to successfully qualify for PhDs and enter the academic profession
- Encouraging international students gaining their doctorates in the UK to remain and enter the profession
- Attracting highly qualified and experienced candidates from other professional sectors
- Ensuring that low turnover and the abolition of the fixed retirement age do not limit recruitment prospects and career progression for younger academics.

The uneven development of academic labour markets

3.28 Some of the conditions for a market in academic labour are already present in the UK⁴¹:

- Higher education institutions are free to set their own terms and conditions of employment
- There is some differentiation in the terms and conditions of academics' employment
- A significant improvement in academic pay since 2001 and particularly since 2006, and its competitiveness vis-à-vis other professional occupations in the UK and academic pay in other countries, together with advantageous conditions of employment
- The role of the RAE in driving competition between institutions, departments, research teams and individual academics for higher quality research outputs, research income, leading researchers, contract researchers and postgraduate research students
- The increasing recruitment of both academics and postgraduate research students from outside the UK
- Growing pressure on the permanency of employment, through voluntary redundancy, early retirement and redeployment within institutions and – with impending cuts in public expenditure on higher education – compulsory redundancy.

- 3.29 However, the extent to which institutions and individual academics engage in market-like behaviour appears to be limited, and largely restricted to certain key categories of staff and particular subject disciplines. These reflect the areas of most intensive competition between higher education institutions for resources and reputation: researchers, academics in professional disciplines, academic entrepreneurs, academic managers and institutional leaders. Academic-related functions for which competitive labour markets are emerging, include fund raisers and those with responsibility for international student recruitment.
- 3.30 The overall low turnover of academic staff within the higher education sector, the low levels of recruitment and retention problems and the minimal outflow of indigenous UK academics militates against the full scale development of an academic labour market. Likewise, the concentration of research funding and activity in relatively few institutions and the lack of equivalent incentives for teaching have implications for the majority of academics who mainly teach.
- 3.31 The national framework agreement for the modernisation of pay structures, introduced in 2004, sought to recognise the diversity among higher education institutions – and the four nations of the UK – while attempting to retain the features they held in common. Despite the deep reputational hierarchy among institutions in the UK, there seems to be a cultural adherence within British academia to the notion of playing by the same rules and on a level field and an unwillingness to acknowledge the structural differentiation and lack of parity of esteem between types of institution. In particular, there appears to be a resistance to introducing market supplements for certain categories of staff and to implementing performance management across the board⁴³.

Attracting and developing talent

- 3.32 There are dangers that these developments will further fracture the academic profession between those fields and activities where there is scope for entrepreneurialism and commercialisation and those where there is not, introducing further inequity and risking injustice. The framework agreement – which includes the majority of academics but not professors – was mainly a response to higher education institutions' increased liability to expensive legal battles over equal pay for work of equal value as a result of European Union directives on discrimination which were issued in 2000. While this introduced a common pay scale and greater transparency through local job evaluation and role analysis, it also gave impetus to the use of premiums for recruitment and retention where labour market conditions warranted these, and pay increases related to individual contributions as part of performance management.
- 3.33 Individual institutions can adapt the framework to their local conditions and priorities, and there is significant room for variation in institutional grading systems and pay scales for academics. Two years after implementation of the framework agreement, the starting point for lecturers ranged across institutions from point 30 to point 33 on the

pay scale, and the top pay point for lecturers varied between 34 and 41. Research assistants started between points 22 and 24³⁹. Growing competition for academic and related staff in particular areas, increasing fragmentation of the profession and restrictions on public expenditure on higher education will put this framework under considerable pressure.

- 3.34 The variations in responses to the survey between categories of academics in the UK may arise from differences of expectation, focus and aspiration, and in levels of understanding of the demands of an academic career⁴⁴. Younger academics, recent mature recruits from other occupations and established scholars may be (and have been) attracted by different aspects of the profession, and they certainly experience different levels of job security. Although young academics in the UK generally appear to be the most satisfied group, how is this going to be maintained so that higher education institutions can sustain the academic profession as an attractive career choice for postgraduates? In particular, how can young academics be encouraged to consider academic management and leadership as a desirable career option, as distinct from building a reputation for high quality research (or teaching)?
- 3.35 It has long been recognised that UK higher education is experiencing the 'reluctant manager' syndrome⁴⁵ and the findings from the UK survey support this⁴⁶. Academics are at best ambivalent about adopting management roles or declaring themselves to be potential leaders. Universities increasingly report a shortage of 'volunteers' for department head, programme leader, associate dean and even professorial appointments. New reasons for this reluctance keep emerging, yet the dynamic and increasingly competitive environment for higher education institutions makes effective management and leadership ever more vital at all levels. Academic managers and leaders also need to be able to communicate with diverse audiences and manage partnerships for a variety of purposes.
- 3.36 Many higher education institutions are restructuring their faculties, schools and departments to create large and complex divisions whose managers are called upon to 'lead' communities with which they may have little affinity. As the changing academic profession study has already highlighted¹⁹, discipline allegiances remain paramount, leading to potential tensions within and between departments and institutions. While nearly three-quarters of the UK respondents recently considering making a major job change, fewer than one in eight had actively sought a management role. Clearly higher education institutions need to engage and enthuse more academics to embrace management and leadership roles. However, compared with commercial organisations, they are constrained in the incentives they can offer; and professionals are motivated by a complex blend of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.
- 3.37 Several recent reports on the higher education workforce have called for greater flexibility in employment conditions in addressing an increasingly challenging operating environment. However, flexibility will need to be combined with fairness, for example, by:
- offering reward and recognition for a range of contributions, and not just for

recruitment purposes and/or exclusively in the most competitive academic labour markets

- encouraging and supporting transfer from other professional and knowledge-based occupations to academic roles from within as well as outside the institution
- ensuring that flexibility benefits both the individual and the institution and, where possible, both simultaneously
- enabling individual faculty to move between different modes and conditions of employment during their periods of service
- providing the encouragement, support and professional development required by academics who wish to take up a role in management or leadership.

General conclusion on policy implications

3.38 The findings presented in this report underline the need to consider academics as a heterogeneous collection of groupings structured by a series of interrelated characteristics. They begin to illuminate our understanding of:

- the variegated attractiveness of the profession to a range of groups;
- different individuals' motivations, expectations and ambitions;
- the implications for institutional management; and
- the prospects of recruiting and promoting the next generation of academics and academic managers and leaders.

3.39 Much of the existing literature predominantly ignores this differentiation between academics and this detracts from our understanding of the ways in which changes are taking place throughout the profession. Analyses by career stage and trajectory need to be complemented by an understanding of the differences between institution size, type and mission, terms and conditions of employment, discipline or field of study, grade, gender and ethnicity. Together these perspectives offer a more complete picture of the complex changes and different academics' responses to these.

3.40 This differentiated approach can inform both policy and practice, in addressing the key management challenges facing higher education in the coming years. It is to these longer term trends and future issues that we now turn.

4. Longer term trends and future issues

- 4.1 This final section outlines the basic drivers of current and future developments and explores, in particular, the likely further differentiation and restructuring of the academic profession, work and careers. In many ways these developments challenge traditional notions, unwritten agreements and customs and practices. But, in conclusion, we argue they also create new opportunities for academics, as well as other professionals supporting core academic activities in higher education institutions.
- 4.2 The basic drivers of current and future developments in the academic professions include:
- growing demand for higher education combined with declining government funding
 - increasing supply of higher education services, especially from private (and other 'non-traditional') providers who are acutely aware of the need to contain costs
 - new (including ICT-based) forms of education, research collaboration and knowledge exchange
 - developments in knowledge, including interdisciplinary and applied forms
 - internationalisation (the growing international movement of students, staff, educational provision, knowledge etc) and globalisation (the increasing interdependence of national and regional higher education systems).
- 4.3 Researchers, commentators and policymakers have suggested that these and other drivers are bringing about the differentiation and restructuring of academic work and careers. Moreover, this is understood to be part of the current broader socioeconomic restructuring of work in a developing 'knowledge society'. The findings of this study appear to support these analyses of changes in the academic professions, especially when compared with the results of the equivalent 1992 survey. In the UK, there is evidence of shifts in the balance between teaching and research and of changing conceptions of scholarship and professional responsibilities. These developments are difficult to interpret at a general level, because academics, themselves, have become more differentiated and the settings they work in are more diverse. The core tasks are being separated, divided and reallocated among different segments of the academic workforce, including those on teaching-only and research-only contracts, part-time and temporary terms, and even between academic and professional support roles.
- 4.4 In the United States, it has been argued⁴⁷ that this differentiation and restructuring has three fundamental and interrelated elements:
- *Academic staffing*: the emergence of a largely 'contingent' (part-time and fixed-term) workforce
 - *Academic work roles*: the unbundling and segmentation of academic work, so that only a shrinking proportion of academics will carry out the traditional full range of activities, mainly in research universities which will retain traditional staffing patterns. Research will be concentrated among fewer academics and matters of administration and governance will be removed from academics altogether.

Information technology will help to create a diversification of teaching roles, including those of 'non-academic' instructional designers and course facilitators

- *Academic careers* will be transformed: for new entrants who begin their careers later than before, for 'contingent' employees, for mature entrants to academia with other primary professions and for the increasing proportion of women academics.

4.5 These developments, together with the increasing influence of ICT and commercial providers, are thought to be changing the institutional basis of higher education in the United States and the nature of the academic-institution relationship. However, their impact will be mediated by institutional type (especially whether research-intensive or not), discipline (particularly whether a high or low demand subject) and other factors, such as gender and ethnicity. In particular, it is argued, these developments are prompting the renegotiation of the relationship between academics and their institutions and, specifically, three aspects of this relationship:

- the mutual loyalty between academics and their institutions
- the extent of academic oversight over academic policy
- the ownership of intellectual property.

4.6 These developments bring into question notions of the particular 'psychological contract' that is said to exist between academics and their employers: the informal understanding and expectations of academic freedoms and responsibilities embodied in time honoured customs and practices, such as collegiality and peer review. Under the current circumstances of financial constraint and 'workforce planning', it is worth asking whether this informal 'contract' can be (and is being) renegotiated? Should it be made explicit and formalised? Can it be distilled in a series of professional ethical standards?⁴⁸ If it is (being) reformulated, will it be flexible enough to withstand future shifts and transformations in academic work, roles and careers? Will it be sufficiently attractive to future postgraduate students and potential recruits from other professional fields?

4.7 Scott⁴⁹ has argued that the development of the 'knowledge society', in which academics are a key component of a new class of 'knowledge workers', presents two key challenges for the profession: quantitative renewal and qualitative transformation. The challenge of quantitative renewal arises from the expansion of higher education and the need to attract young researchers and scholars to replace the baby boomers now approaching retirement. However, the culture and ethos of mass higher education may be less conducive for pursuing scientific and scholarly careers, now and in the future, because of a reduction in overall research intensity and the shrinking opportunities for permanent academic careers. Working in higher education has become a mass occupation, yet fewer graduates aspire to be academics and most prefer to follow careers outside higher education.

4.8 The second challenge – of qualitative transformation – arises from the internal dynamic changes within science, knowledge production and scholarship as well as external pressures from government and other stakeholders and 'marketisation'. This is the challenge of adapting to the knowledge society, and may be similar to the reconfiguring

of other professions. It requires multi-tasking in more complex organisations and networks, adopting new roles and developing new kinds of expertise, including communication and entrepreneurial skills. The rise of consumerism, especially among students, is part of this trend and is reinforced by the tendency to redefine higher education as a private good from which individual graduates profit, rather than as providing social benefit for all.

- 4.9 These two challenges have made it difficult for the academic profession to sustain its traditional values and working practices at the same time as higher education has been drawn into the crucible of the knowledge society⁵⁰. Broader challenges, to professional authority and academic autonomy, have also contributed to a reconfiguration of academic identities.
- 4.10 In Australia, as in some other mature higher education systems, the changing academic profession research has called into question the sustainability and future development of the academic workforce⁵¹. Here, the project researchers found long working hours, low job satisfaction, criticism of institutional management and support, and a high propensity for career change or international mobility. They argue that these conditions will not be conducive for encouraging new entrants to the profession or for maintaining the enthusiasm of existing academics and retaining them. Yet system expansion and looming retirements are fuelling a growing demand for academically qualified teachers and researchers. The authors called for a better understanding of the academic profession, and in particular the 'casual' workforce, and a coherent, planned strategy for replenishing academic talent.
- 4.11 Some of these findings were echoed in a global report for the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in 2009⁵². The authors found a discouraging environment for the academic profession worldwide, albeit with different sets of difficulties facing developing and developed nations. The profession is differentiated and segmented, with significant variations in working conditions, career structures and resources even within the same nation. The 'core' of full-time academics with clear career pathways is shrinking and this, the authors claim, is undermining high quality higher education. The expansion of postgraduate programmes is a priority worldwide, but insufficient numbers of qualified academics are coming through to meet the demands of growth. This drives a flow of doctoral and postdoctoral students and academic talent from developing to developed nations to the detriment of the former.
- 4.12 Nevertheless, the international study has found surprisingly high levels of satisfaction among the academic profession in the wide range of countries participating.

Academics feel a commitment to teaching and research, enjoy the autonomy they have to determine their own work, and like interacting with students and colleagues. Despite their problems, academic life has significant attractions. The challenge is to ensure that the academic profession is again seen by policymakers and the public as central to the success of higher education. (Altbach et al, 2009: 95)

- 4.13 At institutional level, it is difficult to implement strategic decisions without the co-operation of a significant proportion of academic staff. In the UK, low turnover rates and healthy levels of academic immigration do not suggest a profession in crisis as yet. Indeed, the changes highlighted in this report are creating new opportunities for the profession⁵³, especially in:
- the more intense interaction between higher education and science and innovation policies
 - the increasing international mobility of people and knowledge
 - interdisciplinary connections within and between cognate fields of knowledge
 - different combinations of teaching, scholarship, research, knowledge exchange and community engagement
 - new and more professional forms of support for the core activities of teaching and research
 - developing careers in academic management and leadership.
- 4.14 Yet, the question remains whether existing training, career pathways and reward systems will be adequate for future institutional environments and for taking advantage of these opportunities.

Notes

¹ The UK *Changing Academic Profession* study has been supported, financially and in other ways, by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, Universities UK, GuildHE, the Higher Education Academy and the University and College Union

² Fulton, O. (1996) 'Mass access and the end of diversity? The academic profession in England on the eve of structural reform' in Altbach, P. (ed.) *The international academic profession: portraits from fourteen countries*. Princeton: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

³ Price Waterhouse Coopers (2008) *Building the case for wellness*, London

⁴ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2007) *Recruitment, Retention and Turnover: Annual Survey Report*, London

⁵ Oswald, A. and Gardner, J. (2001) *What has been happening to the quality of workers' lives in Britain?*, The Warwick Economics Research Paper Series (TWERPS)

⁶ Watson, D. (2009) *The question of morale: managing happiness and unhappiness in university life*, Maidenhead: Open University Press

⁷ 'Satisfaction' scores reflect responses to the following items on a five-point Likert scale: 'This is a poor time for any young person to begin an academic career in my field.' (reverse coded), 'If I had it to do over again I would not become an academic (reverse coded). 'My job is a source of considerable personal strain' (reverse coded) and 'How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your current job?'

⁸ Rose, M. J. (2003) 'Good deal, bad deal? Job satisfaction in occupations', *Work, Employment & Society*, 17(3), 503-530, and Rose, M. J. (2005) 'Job satisfaction in Britain: coping with complexity', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 43(3), 455-467

⁹ Bryson, C. (2004) 'What about the workers? The expansion of higher education and the transformation of academic work', *Industrial Relations Journal*, 35(1), 38-57

¹⁰ Casey, B. (1997) *Academic staff in higher education: their experiences and expectations*, report 3 of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing Report) Higher Education and the Learning Society, London: The Stationery Office

¹¹ Martin, E. (1999) *Changing academic work: developing the learning university*, Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education/Open University Press

¹² Research Councils of the United Kingdom (2008) *Expectations for societal and economic impact*, Swindon: RCUK

¹³ This question did not entirely match the 1992 survey, which asked how centralized ('controlled by top administrators') or decentralized ('controlled by faculty') decision-making was, although the seven original examples of decisions were all included in the 2007 survey along with four new examples

¹⁴ The range of decisions included in the survey were; selecting key administrators; recruiting new academic and research staff, making promotion decisions; making promotion decisions; determining budget priorities; determining the overall teaching load of faculty; setting admission standards for undergraduate students; approving new academic programs; evaluating teaching; setting internal research priorities; evaluating research; establishing international linkages

¹⁵ Altbach, P. and Teichler, U. (2001) 'Internationalization and exchanges in a globalized university', *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 5, 5-25; Knight, J. (2004) 'Internationalization remodelled: definition, approaches, and rationales', *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 8(1), 5-31; OECD (2004) *Internationalisation and Trade in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges*, Paris: OECD

¹⁶ Knight, J. (1999) *A time of turbulence and transformations for internationalization*, Research Monograph, Canadian Bureau for International Education, Ottawa, Canada. No.14

¹⁷ The number of respondents in each category are as follows: All: 1667; British/UK doctorate: 602; British/doctorate abroad: 14; Non-British/UK doctorate: 124; Non-British/doctorate abroad: 100. The number of British respondents with doctorates from abroad in the changing academic profession survey sample is small. This needs to be compared with the proportion in the total academic population, if these data are available

¹⁸ Kim, T. and Locke, W. (2010) 'Transnational academic mobility and the academic profession', in CHERI, *Higher education and society: a research report*, London: Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, 27-34

¹⁹ Locke, W. (2008) 'The academic profession in England: still stratified after all these years?', in Research Institute for Higher Education (ed) *The changing academic profession in international comparative and quantitative perspectives*. RIHE International Seminar Reports (12), Hiroshima, Japan: Research Institute for Higher Education, Hiroshima University, pp. 89-115

²⁰ Anderson, V. (2007) 'Contingent and marginalised? Academic development and part-time teachers', *International Journal for Academic Development*, 12 (2) 111-121

²¹ In 2006/2007, the year of the UK survey, 33.1 per cent of academic staff were working part-time (HESA, 2009 – see note 22)

²² Higher Education Statistics Agency (2009) *Resources of higher education institutions 2007/08*, Cheltenham

²³ Pritchard, R. (2007) 'Gender inequality in British and German universities', *Compare*, 37(5), 651-669

²⁴ Higher Education Funding Council of England (2009) *Selection of staff for inclusion in RAE 2008*, Bristol; Equality Challenge Unit (2009) *The impact of the process to promote equality and diversity in the RAE 2008*, London

- ²⁵ Middlehurst, R. (2004) 'Changing internal governance: a discussion of leadership roles and management structures in UK universities', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 58(4), 258-280; Shattock, M. (2001) 'The academic profession in Britain: a study in the failure to adapt to change', *Higher Education*, 41(1), 27-47; Shattock, M. L. (2002) 'Rebalancing modern concepts of university governance', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 56(3), 235-244; Shattock, M. (2006) *Managing good governance*, Maidenhead: Society for Research into Higher Education/Open University Press, McGraw-Hill Education
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- ²⁹ Locke, W. and Bennion, A. (2009) 'The academic profession in the UK and other English-speaking countries: Thinking about 'attractiveness' from the perspectives of different career stages and trajectories', paper (written with Alice Bennion) presented to the international conference on *The attractiveness of the academic profession: The Management Challenge*, LH Martin Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Management, University of Melbourne, Australia, 1-2 October 2009
- ³⁰ Marginson, S. (2000) 'Rethinking academic work in the global era', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 22(1), 1-12
- ³¹ Churchman, D. (2006) 'Institutional commitments, individual compromises: Identity-related responses to compromise in an Australian university', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 28(1), 3-15
- ³² Deem, R. and Brehony, K. (2005) 'Management as ideology: The case of "new managerialism" in higher education', *Oxford Review of Education*, 31(2), 213-231
- ³³ Winter, R. (2009) 'Academic manager or managed academic? Academic identity schisms in higher education', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 31(2), 121-131
- ³⁴ Whitchurch, C. (2008) 'Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: the emergence of third space professionals in UK higher education', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 62(4), 377-396
- ³⁵ Fulton, O. (1996) 'Which academic profession are you in?', in R. Cuthbert (ed.), *Working in higher education*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 157-169; Williams, K. (2008) 'Troubling the concept of the 'academic profession' in 21st century higher education', *Higher Education*, 56(5), 533-544
- ³⁶ HEFCE (2010) *Staff employed at HEFCE-funded HEIs*, Circular 2010/06, Bristol: Higher Education Funding Council for England
- ³⁷ Universities and Colleges Employers Association (2008) *Recruitment and retention of staff in higher education 2008*, London
- ³⁸ Bennion, A. and Locke, W. (2010) 'The early career paths and employment conditions of the academic profession in seventeen countries', *European Review*, (supplement on the academic profession), Journal of the Academia Europaea, Vol. 18, Supplement No. 1, S7-S33
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- ⁴⁰ Universities and Colleges Employers Association (2008) A review of the implementation of the framework agreement for the modernization of pay structures in higher education, London: UCEA
- ⁴¹ Locke, W. and Botas, P., 'The academic labour market in the United Kingdom: fully developed or quasi-market?', 22nd Annual Conference of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers, Porto, Portugal, 10-12 September 2009
- ⁴² Higher Education Funding Council for England (2010) *The higher education workforce framework 2010*, Circular 2010/05, Bristol
- ⁴³ Guest, D. E. and Clinton, M. (2007) *Human resource management and university performance*, London: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education; also note 42
- ⁴⁴ Henkel, M. (2000a) *Academic identities and policy change in higher education*. London: Jessica Kingsley
- ⁴⁵ Knight, P. and Trowler, P.R. (2001) *Departmental leadership in higher education*, Buckingham: Open University Press; Parker, M. (2004) 'Becoming manager or, the werewolf looks anxiously in the mirror, checking for unusual facial hair'. *Management Learning*, 35: 45-59
- ⁴⁶ The following discussion has been informed by a contribution from Dr Jacky Holloway of the Open University Business School, UK
- ⁴⁷ Schuster, J. H. and Finkelstein, M. J. (2006) *The American faculty: The restructuring of academic work and careers*, The Johns Hopkins University Press
- ⁴⁸ See Watson, D. (2009) *The question of morale: managing happiness and unhappiness in university life, op.cit.*, pp. 123-126.
- ⁴⁹ Scott, P. (2006) 'The academic profession in a knowledge society', in Teichler, U. (ed) *The formative years of scholars*, Wenner-Gren International Series, Volume 83, London: Portland Press, pp. 19-30
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- ⁵¹ Coates, H., Dobson, I., Edwards, D., Friedman, T., Goedegebuure, L. and Meek, V.L. (2009) *The attractiveness of the Australian academic profession: a comparative analysis*, Melbourne: Australian Council for Education Research/LH Martin Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Management/Educational Policy Institute

⁵² Altbach, P., Reisberg, L. and Rumbley, L.E. (2009) *Trends in global higher education: tracking an academic revolution*, Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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