CGHE Working Paper

The future higher education workforce in locally and globally engaged higher education institutions: a concept paper for CGHE Project 3.2

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Abstract

The purpose of this four-year research project is to investigate the implications of the diversification of the academic workforce in the UK and to indicate how higher education institutions might plan strategically for their future staffing needs, and how sector bodies could support this. Through the study, we aim to develop a deeper understanding of the roles and career trajectories of staff in UK higher education who are involved in academic work. This focuses on those with conventional (i.e. teaching and research) roles and more recent forms of academic contract (e.g. teaching and scholarship). However, it also includes those performing academic roles (for example, in learning support, online learning, widening participation and recruitment) who do not have academic contracts. This concept paper aims to situate this research in the relevant literature, outlines some of the conceptual frameworks we are employing, describes the research design that flows from these and indicates some of the project outputs and planned outcomes. A companion review of recent literature (2013-16) is included as an appendix.

Introduction and aims of the research

The purpose of this four-year research project is to investigate the implications of the diversification of the academic workforce in the UK and to indicate how higher education institutions might plan strategically for their future staffing needs, and how sector bodies could support this. The study is building on findings from recent projects funded by the UK Higher Education Academy (HEA) (Locke, Whitchurch, Smith and Mazenod, 2016) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (Locke, Freeman and Rose, 2016, 2018), and on other recent published work by the

researchers (Locke, 2014; Marini and Reale, 2015; Whitchurch and Gordon, 2013, 2017).

The aim of the research is to develop a deeper understanding of the roles and career trajectories of staff in UK higher education who are involved in academic work. This focuses on those with conventional (i.e. teaching and research) roles and more recent forms of academic contract (e.g. teaching and scholarship). However, it also includes those performing academic roles (for example, in learning support, online learning, widening participation and recruitment) who do not have academic contracts. The project is investigating both the characteristics and impact of a diversifying academic workforce, including:

- those with varying entry points to higher education employment, such as those entering mid-career from other professions, as well as via the traditional path of doctorate-to-fixed-term post-doctoral role-to-permanent lecturer position;
- the changing balance between full-time and part-time, and permanent and fixed-term positions; and
- individuals who focus primarily on teaching and/or research and/or knowledge exchange, as well as on other institutional commitments such as public engagement, employability and regional development.

This growing diversification requires a shift from understanding academics as a largely homogeneous and singular profession to a series of heterogeneous groupings, strata and clusters of professionals, which has implications for individual career trajectories, motivations and incentives and for the way that academic staff are managed within their institutions. The research also seeks to locate these issues in their institutional, local, national and global contexts. Inevitably, the repercussions of Brexit, although not central to the study, is likely to become a factor in the regional context, given the high proportions of EU staff at some UK universities.

This concept – or foundation – paper aims to situate this research in the relevant literature, outlines some of the conceptual frameworks we are employing, describes the research design that flows from these and indicates some of the project outputs and planned outcomes. An earlier publication (Locke, 2014) reviewed the literature and policy developments up to 2013. A companion review of recent literature (2013-16) brings this up to the start of the project, and is included as an appendix.

Situating the research in the relevant literature

The academic profession, academic work and careers have been the subject of a number of major studies over the last forty years or so, focusing on such aspects as the economic and social characteristics of the academic labour market (Williams *et al*, 1974), the attitudes and opinions of members of the profession (Halsey & Trow, 1971; Carnegie Foundation, 1989; Halsey, 1992) and the nature of academic life (Clark, 1987a; see also Locke, 2010, for a summary and critique of this book). A significant part of this literature has been devoted to exploring academic identities, firmly situated in disciplinary communities (Clark, 1987b; Becher, 1989; Becher and Trowler, 2001), steeped in core values such as collegiality, professional autonomy and academic freedom (Shils, 1991), and the influence of policy developments at national and institutional levels on these identities (Henkel, 2000).

Much of the literature on the academic profession in the UK since the 1980s has been framed by a sense of loss, alienation and retreat from a 'golden age' (for example, Halsey, 1992; Tapper and Salter, 1992; Bryson, 2000; Harley, *et al*, 2004; Macfarlane, 2006). It has documented the impact of expansion in the numbers and types of institutions, massification through increasing student enrolments, the growth of knowledge-based economies, the effects of neo-liberalism, globalisation and technological change on higher education institutions (Scott, 1995; Slaughter and Lesley, 1997; Ferlie *et al*, 2008), and the influence of New Public Management (NPM), quality assurance, performance management and performance indicators on those who work in them (Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007; Henkel, 2010). More recently, a shift in power from faculty to 'non-academic' administrators has become a critical refrain (Ginsberg, 2011). In this discourse, it is variously argued that academics have been proletarianised, their work industrialised, their autonomy eroded and they, themselves have been de-skilled (Gupta *et al* (eds), 2016). The result, according to this narrative, is that the academic profession is demoralised and disaffected, and some individuals are actually disengaged from the academic life of their institutions. For some, this has 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 (Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007). This 'hollowing out' of collegiality, it is argued, presents a challenge to academic and professional identity and the moral authority of higher education itself (Macfarlane, 2006).

However, various recent empirical studies, including the *Changing Academic Profession* (CAP) study (Teichler *et al* (eds), 2013; Locke, 2011) suggested that this prevailing thesis of loss, alienation and retreat is insufficient for explaining what has actually been happening within the UK academic profession, as the trends have not been uniform. The existing literature tends to be dominated by the accumulated perceptions of academics rather than the empirical study of their actual behaviour and actions and, indeed, the conduct and views of increasingly significant professional services staff. Despite the significant degree of change in higher education during the last four decades, academics have shown little effective opposition or even widespread dissent as evidenced by survey responses or movement out of the profession (Shattock, 2001; Taylor, 2006; Kolsaker, 2014). Although there has been some opposition from academic unions, there has been a range of responses to the new forms of higher education, including 'passive acceptance', 'tacit approval' and even 'positive support' for many of the changes (Leišytė, 2016). Academics have always been 'active agents' in the internal changes in education, scholarship and science (Scott, 2014). Some have positively welcomed the professionalising of management, the speeding up of decision-making and the streamlining of committee structures. In some institutions, this has allowed them to concentrate on research and/or teaching, and take advantage of new opportunities for engaging with external partners and accessing additional resources (Kolsaker, 2008). Indeed, an increasing number of academics are making the conscious decision to move into university management as a career path (Deem, *et al*, 2006; Shepherd, 2017). Among other things, our previous research has been an attempt to investigate empirically the range of responses to the changes in higher education in the last 25 years.

The thesis about loss and alienation tends to regard the academic profession as a homogenous entity and individual academics as rational actors, performing a largely similar role and operating on the basis of a core of common – if increasingly undermined – academic and collegial values (Halsey, 1992; Tapper and Salter, 1992). However, even before the CAP and other studies, some commentators in the United Kingdom had already contended that there are significant variations between different groups of academic staff: between research-only and teaching staff (Bryson 2004); between staff in pre-1992 universities and post-1992 universities (Casey, 1997); and between junior and senior staff (Martin, 1999).
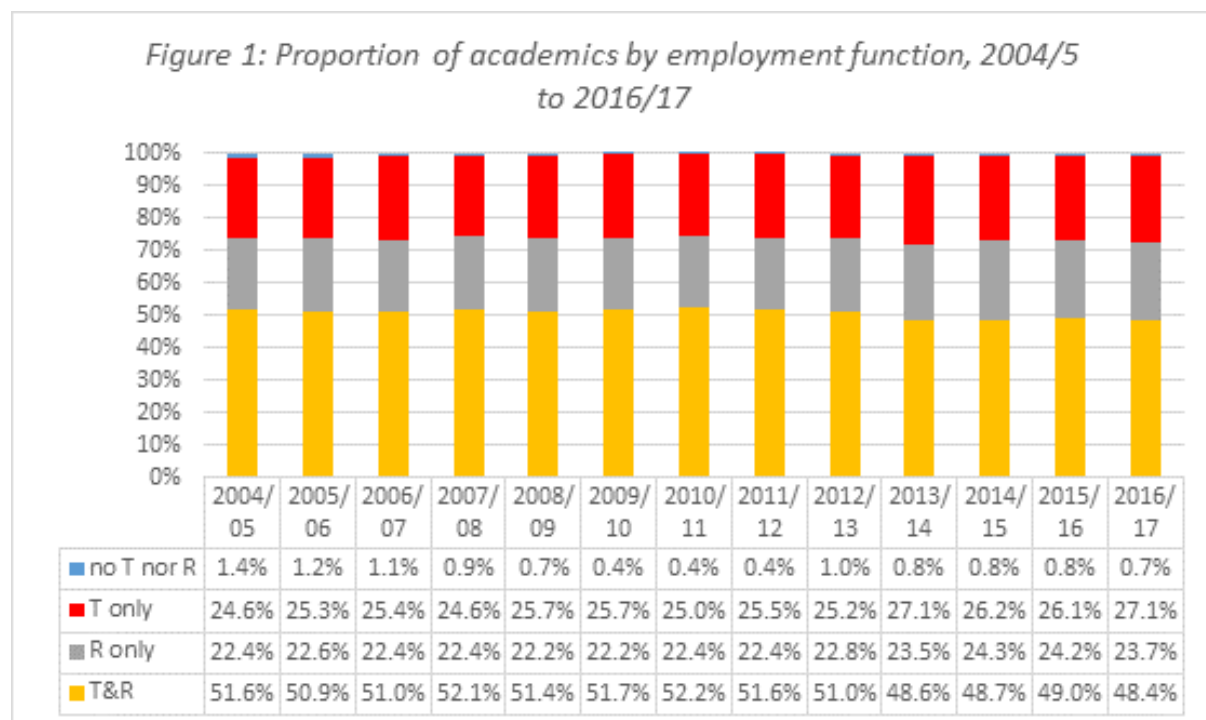
The 2007 CAP study provided evidence to help investigate whether there are significant differences of perception emerging from this increasingly diverse and segmented population of those employed in academic institutions, depending on a wide range of factors, including the type of institution in which an individual was employed; their grade or seniority; the nature of the contract they held; the time they had spent in the profession; and their disciplinary subject. It also aimed to understand the extent to which these dimensions were overlaid by demographic factors, in particular, gender, age and ethnicity. So, the CAP findings helped to disaggregate the perceptions of academics and locate more accurately where there was a sense of alienation and unfairness and, indeed, where there was greater satisfaction and career progression.

Increasingly, universities and the academic role itself are being fragmented – or, in US terms, 'unbundled' (ACE, 2014). In the UK, the core functions of 'teaching' and 'research' have been disaggregated into their constituent activities and some of these have been allocated to specialist roles, such as learning support, course evaluation, research bid preparation and knowledge transfer (Strike, 2010). The importance of teaching has often been usurped by a focus on learning, and the student has become the centre of attention in policy discourse, albeit largely as a consumer of education (BIS, 2011). This has shifted the locus of authority from teachers and their disciplinary expertise to learners and the increasingly heterogeneous contexts in which they learn (Scott, 2014). More learner-centred (than teacher-led) approaches to educational and curricular design seek to cultivate the social relationships and interactions between learners and support students as co-producers and co-designers of learning (Jahnke et al, 2016). Our previous research has provided further confirmation and elaboration of these developments (Locke, 2012; Locke, 2014).

Research is also disaggregated into different modes of knowledge production. One perspective on this disaggregation suggests a distinction between mode 1 disciplinary-based fundamental research driven by investigators' curiosity and mode 2 multidisciplinary research which seeks to solve real world problems (Gibbons et al, 1994). The increasing concern of research funders with the impact of research on society and the economy (for example, in the UK Research Excellence Framework or REF), has created new roles for those who specialise in writing retrospective impact case studies and those assigned to encourage researchers to plan, prospectively, from the start of projects, how they will engage the public and the media with their findings. These developments have consolidated the steady growth of professional services staff in UK HEIs (Ginsberg, 2011; Jump, 2015) and, in

particular, those 'third space' professionals operating between academic and administrative roles (Whitchurch, 2012). They have also contributed to a blurring of the academic role (Malcolm and Zukas, 2009), a loss of clarity about purpose and a growing sense of insecurity, especially among early career academics (UCU, 2013).

Recent studies of the academic profession, roles and identities in expanded higher education systems have identified a continuing diversification (Gordon and Whitchurch, 2010; Locke, Cummings and Fisher, 2011; Whitchurch and Gordon, 2013, 2017; Whitchurch, 2013). Numbers of teaching-focused staff are growing, alongside a stable or shrinking core of academics with a broad portfolio of teaching and research (Coates and Goedegebuure, 2012; Cummings and Finkelstein, 2012; Fumasoli, Goastellec and Kehm, 2015; Locke, Whitchurch, Smith and Mazenod, 2016). Our earlier analysis of data from the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) showed that, for the first time, in 2013/14– the year of submissions to the UK Research Excellence Framework – the proportion of those on teaching and research contracts represented a minority (48.6%) of the UK academic population. Figure 1 shows the change over time. Moreover, most of the increase in that year of those on teaching-only contracts were full-time academics no longer deemed to be 'research-active'.

Figure 1: Proportion of academics by employment function, 2004/5 to 2016/17

	2004/ 05	2005/ 06	2006/ 07	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12	2012/ 13	2013/ 14	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17
no T nor R	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%	0.7%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%
T only	24.6%	25.3%	25.4%	24.6%	25.7%	25.7%	25.0%	25.5%	25.2%	27.1%	26.2%	26.1%	27.1%
R only	22.4%	22.6%	22.4%	22.4%	22.2%	22.2%	22.4%	22.4%	22.8%	23.5%	24.3%	24.2%	23.7%
T&R	51.6%	50.9%	51.0%	52.1%	51.4%	51.7%	52.2%	51.6%	51.0%	48.6%	48.7%	49.0%	48.4%

HESA, full person equivalent, 2011-2018

Whether this represents a 'tipping point' in the restructuring of the academic workforce is a question we will be exploring in our research. The situation may, actually, be more pronounced than the national data suggest, given there are likely to be many academics with conventional contracts who are in 'teaching and scholarship' *roles*, with no expectation, time, funding or support to undertake research, regardless of the wording of their terms and conditions of employment. Other academics may be spending a significant proportion of their time on activities *related to but peripheral to* teaching and/or research, for example, in knowledge

exchange projects and consultancy, public engagement, and support and development roles within their institution. Some professional staff, who undertake core academic activities, but who are not on academic contracts, add to this diversification of employment conditions, roles and identities.

The national data categories determined by the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) are inadequate for investigating some aspects of these changes, in particular the 'catch-all' category of *atypical* academic staff, which is not disaggregated sufficiently to reveal the extent of hourly-paid teachers or the emergence of the use of 'zero' or 'variable' hours contracts (White, 2016). We will explore whether and, if so, how this growing specialisation within academic work is creating new divisions of labour which are not captured by the national data categories. Given the diversity and differentiation between HEIs (and between academic roles), we will ask whether it is possible to create definitional categories that better represent the population and enable meaningful comparisons to be made. This is a significant issue for the future of the academic workforce, for example, because the highly specialised and diverse nature of academic roles and career trajectories along with limitations in the current data make projecting supply and demand in this area highly problematic (Edwards *et al*, 2011).

These trends may or may not be reflected in formal contracts of employment, and could lead to a division between globally-engaged, potentially mobile academics who undertake research, and those occupying teaching roles who are possibly more locally orientated. Our research suggests there are particular groups of academics who are losing out from this. We select two groups here, largely because of their significance in the new landscape of higher education. The first is 'early career academics' who include teachers as well as researchers. There is clear evidence from a number of national studies of a deterioration in their circumstances and in their experiences (Teichler, U. & Cummings, W.K, 2015; Galaz-Fontes, J.F. & Scott Metcalfe, A., 2015; Locke, Freeman and Rose, 2016). This evidence includes:
- An increasing average age of first employment in a permanent academic post;
- The greater likelihood of experiencing a series of fixed term and part-time post-doctoral contracts;
- A lack of clarity about how to make career progress in higher education, and the danger of taking a path that is detrimental to a long term career in academia.

Unfortunately, and too often, one of these dead-end paths is a teaching-only contract or role. It may seem like the first step on the ladder for an aspiring young academic. But, unless it offers opportunities to write and publish, to bid for funding and buy oneself time to do more research, it is unlikely to lead to tenure, a research reputation and a professorship. Some universities are trying to do something about this, but the policies are often resisted or not fully implemented, and the numbers of those achieving the most senior positions solely due to their teaching, and their leading of teaching, are relatively small (Cashmore *et al*, 2013).

The diversification and segmentation of academic staff raises the issue of whether we can any longer speak of a single profession in the UK (Fulton, 1996b; Williams, 2008; Shattock, 2014), as well as the increasing differentiation of UK higher education institutions calling into question the existence of a homogeneous higher

education system. These characteristics make the generalised analysis of 'academia' in such institutions problematic, and more nuanced, differentiated approaches essential.

However, policy and management consultancy reports on the future higher education workforce tend to present a series of cataclysmic scenarios, in which various factors – such as the transformation (and increased automation) of graduate employment, increased student expectations, a technology revolution including the widespread use of data analysis, policy turbulence and growing global competition including from private universities and colleges – combine to disrupt traditional business and workforce models (PA Consulting/HEFCE, 2010; PWC/AHEIA, 2016; Lee Hecht Harrison, 2016). PA Consulting provided a fairly typical example of this perspective:

> There is no steady-state future scenario in this world, and the business models that succeed today may be inappropriate in 10 or 15 years' time. This means that institutional strategies and business models, and the workforce capabilities needed to sustain them, will be subject to continuous challenge and review, and must embody agility and flexibility to adapt to new conditions and demands. The inherent conservatism and slow pace of workforce change in many HEIs will have to be overcome to meet this challenge. (PA Consulting, 2010: 2)

The research study will seek to investigate the effect of this increasingly dominant policy and management discourse of extrinsic disruption and the need for institutional responsiveness as it influences working relationships and staffing policies within higher education institutions. In particular, the assertion that HE workforces of the future will need increased 'agility and flexibility', greater 'professionalisation' and 'specialisation' (PWC/AHEIA, 2016) will be examined.

Our research draws on aspects of this spectrum of literature but also provides a critique of much of it. We seek to investigate the different circumstances and perspectives of those undertaking academic work in the UK in the latter half of the second decade of the twenty-first century, the nature of their roles and work, and their prospects for career progression. The study is utilising existing quantitative data and analyses (e.g. HESA, 2017; Probert, 2013), employee/er surveys (e.g. American Federation of Teachers (AFT), 2010; CAW, 2011; Copeland, 2014; UCEA, 2017). It is taking a forward-looking approach, co-ordinating with an international study of academic labour markets (Finkelstein and Jones, 2013), the follow-up to the CAP study *The Academic Profession in the Knowledge Society (APIKS)*, and our recent projects (Locke, Whitchurch, Smith and Mazenod, 2016; Locke, Freeman and Rose, 2016, 2018; Whitchurch and Gordon, 2017). It is also comparing UK, Australian and North American developments to consider ways in which academic work and the structure of the labour market are changing under different national conditions (May et al, 2011).

Conceptual frameworks

The findings from our previous studies demonstrate that there are both *temporal*,

spatial and *organisational* implications of this diversification that are not always recognised by institutions, which means they may not fully optimise the possibilities for their staff or for themselves.

There is a literature on time in academic work and careers, although it is not extensive and has tended to emphasise the negative effects of the acceleration of time and the intensification of activity, and thus align itself with the 'loss, retreat and alienation' school of thought on the state of the academic profession and university life (Ylijoki and Mäntylä, 2003; Menzies and Newson, 2007; Gill, 2009; Chow *et al*, 2010; Clegg, 2010; Peters, 2015; Brew, 2015). Some recent contributions have begun to acknowledge the positive advantages of dynamism in academia, the excitement of a fast pace, the stimulation of variety and the pleasures of high productivity (Gornall and Salisbury, 2012). However, there are differential effects and a diversity of experiences of acceleration and intensification, and a wider or narrower range of strategies available for dealing with them, depending on the positions and circumstances of individuals and the institutions in which they work. Some, more senior and established academics, may achieve a certain amount of temporal autonomy whilst also enjoying the speed and intensity of a full and rewarding academic life (Vostal, 2016). Others, for example, in the early phases of their careers, in part-time and teaching- or research-only positions, may have little or no control over their time (McAlpine, 2010; 2012). For those experiencing a series of fixed-term, post-doctoral contracts, time may seem to be elongated and careers 'stretched' as it takes longer to establish themselves in an academic career, and find a permanent position that enables them to pursue their research as well as continue to teach (and vice versa). Yet others, who enter academia mid-career from another profession, may be seeking more time to reflect on their professional experiences and to provide time and space for their students to consider fundamental questions and values within their programmes of initial and continuing professional development.

However, this research is also exploring *spatial* relationships and movements (Whitchurch and Gordon, 2017), for instance between disciplines; across teaching, research, hybrid and emergent roles; through institutional partnerships and consortia; and between higher education and other sectors. In particular, we are investigating some of the tensions and dissonances arising from a possible mismatch between staff aspirations and institutional structures and processes, as well as gaps in perception, to consider ways in which a diversifying workforce might continue to be incentivised, and to ensure that the academic profession continues to be attractive to talented staff. In doing this, we are building on, and developing, the work of authors such as Delanty (2008) and Taylor (2008), who explored relationships between people and the impact these have on institutional effectiveness, in which social reality is:

> made up of different and competing cognitive frameworks – discourses, normative and symbolic structures, frames and master frames, repertoires, modes of legitimation and cultural models – which create the social world in situations of contestation. (Delanty, 2005: 145)

We hope this approach will reveal the interstitial and often implicit spaces where negotiation and influence take place, the assumptions that inform daily interactions

and the aggregated influence of these on institutional activity. In particular, we aim to highlight the degree of individual agency involved in these relationships and the social capital that may be generated from them. Social capital has been described as:

> the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 192)

Social capital can play a particularly significant role in complex institutions such as universities, where individuals collaborate within and between disciplines and institutions, across functional specialisms and with a range of external partners. We are also employing actor-network theory (Engeström, 2005a and 2005b) to map relationships between individuals, structures, ideas and processes to explore how networks are built or assembled and maintained in order to achieve specific outcomes or objectives. As Whitchurch and Gordon elaborate:

> institutional managers and faculty, individually and collectively, may have a range of perceptions that are influenced by local relationships. In turn, these relationships are dynamic and may shift along a spectrum that includes both co-operative and competitive activity, and are continuously remade. Such relationships may also influence how far the individual identifies with the collective and vice versa. (Whitchurch and Gordon, 2017: 5)

A third dimension to this conceptual framework is *organisational*, and this informs our methodological approach. Organisational case studies are essential for understanding the influence of environmental changes within different HEIs and how these institutions – and their constituent parts – respond in particular ways to these changes. They allow us to investigate the parameters and capabilities of agency, proactivity and strategic initiative within different institutions. Meta-analyses can draw on conceptions of state or government steering, such as New Public Management, in elucidating how a university can be positioned as an active, 'autonomous' agent within a highly regulated system such as a market, but which has constrained room for manoeuvre, given the drivers and risks in operation. It is only by investigating *within* an institution, however, that it is possible to see how these dynamics operate, with external drivers influencing, co-ordinating and competing with internal power relations and organisational cultures.

Such an approach also enables us to observe and analyse the interplay within and between different institutional levels and parts. At one end of the spectrum, some universities may be relatively hierarchical organisations that have macro (the governing body and its sub-committees, the senior management team), meso (the academic schools, faculties and larger departments, the professional divisions) and micro (units, teams and groups of individuals) levels that are (to variable degrees) nested within each other. These elements, even at the same level, can have varying degrees of power and influence, and so change may occur at different rates in different parts of an institution. Some may take the lead while others lag behind. At the other end of the spectrum, there are universities which are more loosely coupled systems (Weick, 1976), where there is a relative lack of co-ordination and regulation,

and a greater degree of autonomy within the elements, and more discretion for heads of departments and other 'middle' managers to interpret institutional policy. A multi-organisational case study approach provides an opportunity to understand the dynamics of change and the intra-organisational reverberations *within* institutions, and to compare them with other cases.

These three elements of our conceptual framework inform our approach to this research project, our research questions and the research design and methodologies we are employing to answer them. The following sections elaborate further on these.

Research Questions

The research questions for the research project are as follows:

1. In what ways are academic roles and identities diversifying?
2. What are the implications for individuals and institutions, locally and globally?
3. What tensions and/or synergies arise from this diversification, for instance, between individual aspirations and institutional missions, structures and processes?
4. How are such tensions being managed and resolved in optimal ways for individuals and institutions?

Research design and project management

The research design can be described as multi-organisational longitudinal case studies, and employs both quantitative and qualitative methods, including:

- an analysis of the staff data from HESA already published, and as they become available during the project;
- a small pilot study within UCL with four interviewees, in order to test the interview schedule, information for interviewees, consent forms, etc.;
- a selection of eight higher education institutions as case studies, on the basis of national location (five English and one each from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), institutional type (e.g. Russell Group, other pre-1992 university, post-1992 university), disciplinary coverage and staff profile (e.g. proportion of academic staff who teach who are on teaching-only contracts);
- a first phase (2017) of 64 interviews (8 in each case study HEI) with a range of staff with academic roles (e.g. early, mid- and late career; a range of academic disciplines; full- and part-time; open-ended/permanent and fixed-term; teaching-only, research-only, teaching and research, other; senior and middle managers) in the eight case study institutions selected;
- an online survey of all staff with academic roles in the selected case study institutions (2018), preceded by a pilot addressed to approximately 50 people within UCL, in order to test the questionnaire, method of approach, confidentiality of the respondents, etc.;
- a second phase (2019) of interviews with as many of the original sample as possible (including if they have left the original institution, if possible);

- interviews with ten expert witnesses in the US and Australia to provide international comparisons.

The survey questionnaire for each case study institution will be drafted on the basis of the findings from the analysis of the first phase of interviews. It is likely that this will consist of a core of questions for all case study institutions and a small number of additional, institution-specific, questions. Some of the wording of the core questions may also need to be 'translated' into common terms that are used in particular institutions. In some of the case study institutions, the survey will be incorporated into the staff survey in order to minimise survey fatigue.

Each institutional case study involves:
   a) *Documentary research.* Collection and analysis of information about institutional approaches to, for instance, academic staff contracts; career pathways; reward, progression and promotions policies; and career development initiatives; from printed sources and websites.
   b) *Qualitative interviews.* Drawing on discussion with 'gatekeepers', up to eight staff in each of the eight case study institutions (a maximum of 64) will be invited to take part in semi-structured interviews of up to sixty minutes. The *interview schedule/topic guide for academic staff* will ensure consistency between interviews in each institution while allowing for variation according to the type of staff being interviewed. For each type of staff member, therefore, it will elicit information about:
      - individual career transitions, past or planned, internal or external to higher education;
      - diversification and/or fragmentation of individual roles and responsibilities, as well as current aspirations, in a range of institutions and disciplines;
      - what individuals see as enabling or constraining factors in their careers and in meeting their aspirations;
      - pressures encountered by those on traditional 'teaching and research' contracts who, for instance, may find themselves increasingly confined to teaching and related tasks;
      - the influence of institutions, including the formal contract of employment and the psychological contract; subject and professional communities; and other agencies in the above;
      - ways in which institutions are developing new career paths;
      - how institutional policies and practices relate to the needs of individuals, particularly those early in their careers, on teaching-only contracts or in learning support roles.

   In addition, we are collecting information about:
      - the reward and incentive mechanisms – including progression and promotion criteria – that institutions are adopting for staff in different types of academic roles and contracts;
      - the development initiatives that institutions are adopting for staff with teaching-only, research-only or learning support contacts and roles.

   The interviews with academic or professional managers (such as a pro-vice chancellor with an academic practice or staffing remit, or a director of human resources) are eliciting an overview of the above topics in relation to their

institution. These are based on an *interview schedule/topic guide for senior and middle managers* responsible for staffing policies.

Participants and sampling
As far as possible, the sample of interviewees includes one senior academic and/or professional manager (such as a pro-vice chancellor with an academic practice or staffing remit, and a director of human resources); one early and one mid-career academic member of staff; one individual with a teaching-only contract; one with a research-only contract; one with a learning support remit (some of these individuals may have 'non-academic' or 'professional' contracts); and one with a traditional teaching and research remit. To save time during the interviews, respondents have been asked to complete a pro forma incorporating factual details, such as career background and movements.

Data analysis
As an initial step in the analysis, the research questions are being used to develop *descriptive codes* for factual details, for instance trends in the data sets, documentary evidence from the case institutions, and the biographical details of respondents; *interpretive codes* for possible latent meanings, for instance tension between individual aspirations and organisational reward and staff development processes; and *pattern codes* for links or themes across the data sources, including where these tell different stories (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 57). This enables the interview data to be analysed on a number of levels: at a factual level, for instance, in relation to career patterns and staff transitions; at a conceptual level around key themes that emerge from the data, such as relationships between individuals, line managers and organisational structures; and at a theoretical level, for instance, the relationship between formal and informal arrangements associated with the development of roles, understandings of professionalism, and the variables affecting emergent practices.

The data gathered from the data sets and institutional interviews are being analysed using Creswell's "data analysis spiral" (Creswell, 1998: 143), whereby data is revisited via processes of reading, describing, classifying, interpreting and representing, with continuous loops back between these activities. The data is then be mapped against possible variables, such as different types of institution, academic discipline, and the career stage of the individual. Consideration is also being given to the degree of agency that individuals are able to adopt in relation to their roles and careers, the possibility of multiple roles and identities, and how individuals negotiate and manage these.

Evaluation of cases
The findings from the datasets are being reviewed in the light of the qualitative data from the interviews. For instance, the interviews give a better opportunity to probe the reasons for movement between different types of institution, or in and out of higher education, enabling better understandings to be achieved about individual aspirations, the perceived feasibility of career transitions, and also role changes within institutions, which would not necessarily show up in national data sets. From this, cases and exemplars are being developed of:
• effective practice by institutions in recognising and rewarding a broader range of roles, responsibilities, aspirations and career paths;

- ways in which staff with teaching-only, research-only and learning support roles are planning and developing their careers;
- how early career staff and those who have transitioned from other sectors see their roles developing;
- ways in which some individuals on traditional 'teaching and research' contracts negotiate pressure from their institution to focus on teaching and related tasks;
- development and support mechanisms that have been, or might be, adopted by institutions in relation to the above (the study will review both formal training interventions – such as management or leadership training – and the development that occurs through annual review and discussions with line managers and mentors).

Reporting and dissemination

A Project Committee oversees the research with the following membership:
- Jon Guy, University and College Union (UCU)
- Laurence Hopkins, Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA)
- Professor Francis Green, UCL Institute of Education and CGHE colleague
- Dr Celia Whitchurch (Co-Investigator)
- Dr Giulio Marini (Research Associate)
- Dr William Locke (Project Leader)

The purpose of this Committee is to advise on research design and analysis, discuss emerging findings, share complementary data where feasible, determine the impact indicators for the project, and advise on reporting and dissemination.

Outputs and outcomes

The project will produce peer reviewed academic journal articles, book chapters, reports, a final project report and a monograph.

The final project report will include:
- information about trends and patterns from the data sets in relation to the different types of institution;
- an interrogation of the evidence arising from the qualitative analysis of institutional documentation and interviews with the respondents, and the quantitative analysis of the responses to the survey;
- anonymised outlines of the case institutions, written in such a way that they cannot be identified;
- examples of the range of career routes and transitions; and
- exemplars of good practice in relation to, for instance, career pathways, reward and recognition, and support mechanisms for teaching-only, research-only and learning support staff.

At national level, discussions following up the outcomes of the study will be held with interested organisations including, for instance, the Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA), the University and College Union (UCU), UniversitiesUK (UUK), GuildHE, the Higher Education Academy (HEA), the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE), the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) (and the newly merged organisation, Advance HE), the Association of Heads

of University Administration (AHUA), and the Association of University Administrators (AUA).

A project website has been established which will share developments and working papers during the investigation. Paper proposals have been, or will be, submitted, for example, to the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE), Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER) and European Association for Institutional Research (EAIR) annual conferences. Academic articles will also be submitted to international journals, such as *Studies in Higher Education* and *Higher Education*. As there is worldwide interest in the changing nature of academic work/profession, there may well be invitations for keynote presentations also.

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