An exploration of academic and professional staff perceptions of their positioning within one UK university and its impact on their workplace identities and relationships

Annabel Brown

Institute of Education, University College London

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Abstract

This study explores the perceptions of academic and professional services staff within a single university regarding their self-positioning within the institution. It examines the constructs of their professional identities and explores how they impact on their workplace identities and working relationships. It considers how individual perceptions of status and place are shaped and constructed in relation to concepts of social identity. Research is conducted via triangulation between three types of data generation comprising semi-structured interviews, the creation of mind-maps depicting participants' perception of their place within the institution, and the observation of staff meetings. Designed as a multiple case study, the data is qualitatively examined via the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis in the social constructionist paradigm.

The university habitus is explored through the lenses offered by the Bourdieusian concepts of habitus, capital, and field. The findings surface some common themes; discussion initially centres on the twinned concepts of space and place, as the primary means by which staff view their self-positioning and orientate within the institution. It moves on to discuss three dominant and interlinking themes emerging from the data; hierarchy, visibility and legitimacy. The individual and combined impact of them is considered with regard to their effects on individual perceptions of self. A conceptual model is offered to explain how university staff perceive their self-positioning. The study concludes that there is no systemic binary staff divide within the university habitus, albeit the expectation of one persists as an enduring fiction. This is caused by a duality of discourse within the institution and multiple spheres of difference between the situated life-worlds of academic and professional services staff.

Word Count

(*excluding Impact Statement, Reflective Statement, Bibliography & Appendices*)

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Impact Statement

This research has been conducted during a time of significant change and disruption to the higher education sector, with universities in the UK operating in a globalised and highly competitive marketplace. Institutions are under increased pressure to be more efficient while reducing workload pressure on staff, which makes it imperative they find ways in which staff can work together more effectively if they are to be able to meet current and future demand. Through a review of the perception of a historic binary staff divide, this research has the potential to create significant impact on the working dynamics of institutions, and on the scholarly research of institutions.

Despite its small-scale limitations, the study has produced tentative but compelling insights. This research offers a viable framework for the consideration of factors and variables that govern staff perception of workplace relationships. It offers an insight into how academics and professional services staff view their place within the institution and the impact this then has on their working identity. It therefore provides an original contribution to a field which has been the subject of limited inquiry to date, and extends existing research in focusing on the perceptions of university staff with regard to their institutional self-positioning. By demonstrating the importance of effective university workplace dynamics it contributes to the debate. This contribution could be used by universities to improve mutual understanding of workplace relationships and staff wellbeing.

The findings will be shared with a number of audiences. In the institution in which it was conducted, it will be shared with senior management, who engaged with its construction. This will enhance the understanding of current practice at institutional level. It will be presented in staff seminars, conferences and other events, such as those linked to institutional communities of practice. It will also be distributed on online platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Moodle. Through being shared with university staff in a multiplicity of formats, it could have a direct impact throughout the institution. Departments could use it to re-evaluate their prevailing structures

and means of local discourse, and individuals might use it to situate their own self-positioning and thereby optimize their professional identities and workplace relationships. The understanding will help to reform the relationship between academic and professional service staff to create a more collaborative and productive university research culture.

Wider dissemination (through for example publication in an academic journal and presentations in national conferences such as the annual Association of University Administrators (AUA)) could increase the capacity of other institutions to review how their groups of staff are positioned. This is because the conceptual framework is generic so has potential to be applicable in a wide range of contexts of practice. The findings of the study may have implications for cultural discourse and structure within a number of organizations within but also without the Higher Education sector. It could therefore be used to further the understanding of staff dynamics working in many domains in the broader public sector sphere, such as healthcare, heritage and local government.

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Declaration

I confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed: [redacted]

Date: 19 February 2021

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Reflective Statement

This statement provides a context for the evaluation of my doctoral thesis. It provides a reflection on my experience of the EdD programme as a whole, identifying what I have learned and demonstrating its contribution to my professional development and practice. Its structure maps to the framework of the programme, so starts with my experience of the three taught modules in the first year, the Institution Focused Study (IFS) in years 2-3, the doctoral thesis in years 4-5, and concludes with my thoughts on my future direction. Before I discuss this however I will outline my motivation in pursuing doctoral study, and why in particular the professional EdD route over a more traditional PhD.

Professional and personal motivations

My motivation for pursuing a doctorate was primarily driven by an interest in the subject matter. I had no object beyond being able to study in greater depth areas linked to my professional practice that interested me, within the supportive framework of a formal qualification. I also believed that the research I could undertake as a result of pursuing the EdD, being based in various aspects of my work, could be integrated into my practice and thereby enhance my professional development. This was why I decided when selecting my research subjects in the taught modules to approach each one as a 'sandpit', as doing so would enable me to explore disparate areas that I found interesting. I wanted to exploit the rare opportunity it afforded to explore new ways of approaching, researching and thinking about very different topics. The subjects were completely unrelated in subject matter, with no central theme or recurring motif: the only thing that linked them was my curiosity and their connection to my professional practice. This capacity to explore various spheres, using different research tools and methodological approaches, was one of the factors that attracted me to the EdD as opposed to a PhD.

The second reason was the social nature of the professional doctorate - whereas a PhD is potentially isolating, one of the strengths of the EdD is the opportunity it

affords for informal peer-to-peer learning, in addition to a ready-made support network. That had been my experience of studying for my Executive MBA, as the programme was exclusively comprised of mature students studying part-time while working full-time. Despite the disparate nature of our professional occupations, we formed a close bond and I have no doubt our collective approach to our studies was integral to our individual success. I was therefore attracted to the prospect of completing the EdD as part of a similarly supportive cohort, which indeed proved to be the case. The opportunity to share ideas and to receive and offer feedback was illuminating; more than once an observation from a fellow student during a workshop enabled me to think about something in a new light. In turn I believe that my contribution was of reciprocal value, in that I was able to provide insights and an alternative lens through which my peers could view their own research, despite (or perhaps due to) being unfamiliar with their spheres of interest. In this way my fellow students have been a great source of inspiration, as having a group of peers who share the same experiences and can act as 'critical friends', has supported me in achieving something I might not have alone.

Reflection on the three taught modules (year one) and short courses

Prior to commencing the EdD I had little experience of research other than undertaking a Dissertation as part of my MBA fifteen years earlier. I experienced manifestations of Imposter Syndrome in the first term and lacked confidence, particularly as I was new to studying the social sciences so was deficient in its very foundations. (I can still vividly recall for example the stunned bemusement with which a classmate learned I had never heard of Jean Piaget.) I was therefore something of a novice researcher in a new discipline, and found the taught modules challenging and rewarding in equal measure. This was because they enabled me to gradually establish not only a working knowledge of underpinning social science theories and precepts, but a thorough grounding in the mechanics of conducting empirical research.

The short courses I attended further augmented my development. They were a mixture of the practical (e.g. an introduction to EndNote, and the practical use of statistics) and the theoretical (e.g. workshops on the role of theory in research, on the writing process and in critical thinking). Run by the Doctoral School, they exposed me to other doctoral students studying across all disciplines which further broadened my thinking and approach. On reflection, the learning opportunities they provided facilitated my development as a research student. This was because I improved in confidence in terms of articulating my ideas, both in writing and in discussion with peers.

Foundations of Professionalism (FoP)

The first taught module, Foundations of Professionalism (FoP), introduced me to literature debating what it means to be a practising professional. It enabled me to think about my motivation for wanting to pursue the EdD, as well as how I would like to continue developing as a professional working within the higher education sector. As such it delivered a constructive starting point, in that it provided the opportunity to begin building a critical overview of the sector and my place in it. The subject matter I explored concerned whether university administration is a profession, something I had been musing since taking on the role of Advocate for UCL's branch of the Association of University Administrators (AUA) a few months earlier (as the AUA's remit is to promote university administration as a profession in its own right). I critically evaluated the question from different angles and my conclusion that it is not (yet) a profession helped clarify my thinking with regard to my own professional standing. I was apprehensive about receiving the feedback but it reassured me I was on the right track and helped to assuage the worst of my Imposter Syndrome.

(i) Methods of Enquiry 1 (MoE1)

The next module introduced me to the use of theory in research. My experience was less positive, in that I struggled with the concepts under discussion and found their ephemeral nature highly frustrating and confusing. This was due to my lack of

familiarity with the social sciences, and I was required to read around the subject in considerable depth simply to comprehend the basic precepts. The literature was written in a language and style that was unfamiliar and the concepts and methods they referenced were wholly alien. I persevered however and as a result was able to conclude that I most closely identify as a social constructionist. I chose to base my assignment on staff (dis)engagement with email as an effective tool for internal communication, as it directly impacted on my professional practice. As such it engaged me with issues regarding theoretical approaches and research methodologies, which enabled me to formulate my ideas. Its completion taught me how to write a research proposal, whilst also providing an understanding of ways to justify and rationalise my role as a researcher. It helped me to select appropriate methodologies dependent upon the aims of my research questions and epistemological position.

(ii) Methods of Enquiry 2 (MoE2)

I approached this module with some trepidation after my experiences of MoE1 and found it equally challenging but in different ways and for different reasons. I chose to explore the various causes underlying MSc students' differential academic achievement over the course of a decade. This was because it had long intrigued me and would also involve a mixed method approach, which was something I wanted to try. I developed and carried out a small study which (as a novice) enabled me to overcome my initial trepidation in conducting empirical research. It enabled me to gain an understanding of the practicalities of carrying out interviews for example, and the difficulties that can ensue for the insider researcher. As such it informed and developed my understanding of types of ethical issues I would encounter. The feedback from my tutor also enabled my thinking to develop and become more focused as I progressed. Through exploring different theoretical and practical approaches, I became more confident about the type of future research that I wanted to undertake.

(iii) The institution focused study (IFS) (years 2-3)

This year was different, as I had less contact with my cohort and there was more expectation with regard to self-directed study. It helped to consolidate the work carried out in earlier modules by enhancing my study skills, as by this time I was beginning to understand how to frame my research questions and how to use the literature in a more focused way. I had acquired new ways of looking at things through different lenses and grew in confidence as a result. I studied the effectiveness of email as a tool for internal communication, the proposal for which had formed the basis of my MoE1 assignment. I decided to try something new and take a risk in my data collection techniques (primarily to satisfy my curiosity), so asked my interview participants to draw a mind-map of their communication network. The results were very surprising and not something I could have gleaned from their words alone, or from the staff survey that formed the third pillar of my research design. It sparked my interest in the subject of my thesis, that of staff identity and self-positioning, and further illustrates my development as a researcher and my growing confidence.

The thesis (years 4-5)

I found the research process rewarding and challenging in equal measure. I conducted my fieldwork (twelve interviews and six meeting observations) in the spring term of the 2019-20 session, and count myself very fortunate that my plans were not impacted by the advent of the Covid-19 global pandemic. I applied the lessons I had learned from completion of the taught modules and the IFS, alongside the feedback from my supervisors in the drafting of my thesis. They had highlighted for example my tendency to analyse and present qualitative data via quantitative means, and although I still find doing that helpful, I was able to progress beyond that to conceptualize and consolidate my thinking. I was also empowered to find my own voice as a researcher in constructing original concepts and ideas, something I was not sure I would be able to achieve at the start of the programme.

The future

As a result of pursuing the EdD programme, I have emerged as a more analytical thinker and a more confident and effective practitioner. There is no doubt in my mind that the EdD has formed a major contribution to my personal and professional development. This is because the experience of acquiring new skills and novel ways of seeing not only my work but my workplace, has enabled me to approach them from a new and more considered perspective. In this I am reminded of a few lines from a TS Eliot poem; *"We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."*[1] As this suggests, I believe that pursuing the doctorate empowered me to research an institution I thought I knew well. Doing so ultimately enabled me to reach a much richer understanding of both it and the people who make up its staff. I am confident my professional practice and my personal development have been similarly transformed.

[1] *'Little Gidding' (1942)*

1.1 Introduction

This chapter sets the scene for this research by providing its aims and rationale alongside an orientation to the empirical field in which it was conducted. By highlighting some key perspectives and the setting in which it is situated, it outlines the context in which it arose and introduces the major issues and influences that shaped its nature. It also provides an introduction to the theoretical framework used to form the research questions, and concludes with a structural overview of the study by briefly summarising the contents of each chapter.

1.2 Aims of the research

The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of a set of staff within a single university regarding their self-positioning within the institution. Its primary object is to examine the constructs of their identities and to find out how they then impact on their professional identities and working relationships. This includes a consideration of how this is influenced by institutional structure and culture. A multiple case study approach is used to explore the workplace dynamic through the lens of staff positionality within the institution, achieved by comparing and contrasting the experience of academic and professional services staff in various settings. It explores how they view their and others' positioning, and how perceptions of both individual and collective positioning impact on workplace identities and relationships. In clarifying these constructs, my ambition is to contribute to the field of research into university staff identity, which has been prompted by the considerable changes in higher education in recent decades. Although inquiry has been conducted on the changing identity of professional services staff, there has been less focus on those staff who specifically support academic administration.

This leads on to my secondary aim, which relates to my professional practice in supporting the academic mission of the university. Research suggests that academic and professional services staff broadly share the same professional values (Coate *et al* 2018), but diverge in how they deal with issues such as decision-making processes, institutional procedures, practices and effectiveness (Kuo 2009). For example my focus as a member of professional services staff may differ from that of my academic colleagues in various ways we are unaware of, which then impacts on our interactions. Newton (2009) neatly illustrates this scenario in the example of a committee meeting and the different ways in which academics and professional services staff view the questioning of decisions, with each misconstruing the others' intentions and perspectives. Although all staff work towards the shared goal of delivering the institutional teaching and research agenda, they approach it from differing social constructions of both their status and place. This may impact on their professional identity and interactions, which might mean that the perception of any binary divide in staff workplace relationships is caused not so much by innate structural differences as a divergence in focus and perspectives.

1.2.1 Clarifying the scope of the research

As there are multiple different categories of staff who work in higher education, I need to clarify the two subgroups of university staff that formed the focus of this study. This is because "*…academics and administrators are in themselves not to be perceived as unified groups. It would be better to think of them as an interlinked patchwork of coalitions*" (Kallenberg 2015, p1). My research participants were restricted to those academic and professional staff directly involved in the delivery of teaching and learning. I use the term 'academic' to mean staff who teach students, conduct research and govern the university, and 'professional services' to refer to those who support the academics in the delivery of teaching and research and the administrative management of the institution. The academic staff participants were either Senior Lecturers or Professors employed on academic staff contracts, as opposed to Teaching Fellows or other categories of teaching and

learning staff connected to academia. None of them hold management positions such as Dean of Faculty. The professional services staff participants were all exclusively involved in academic administration, i.e. the specific and targeted support of the delivery of teaching and learning. Their principal role is to assist both students and academic staff while implementing university policy, and they typically provide the personal interface between the student (as an individual) and the university (as an institution). I will not be including or referring to other categories of professional services staff involved in operational functions such as for example estates management, finance, communications and marketing, or public engagement.

In addition, I need to clarify my use of the terms ‘governance’, ‘management’ and ‘administration’. All three overlap in that they are needed for the effective operation of the organization and are often conflated, albeit they refer to interrelated but very different activities. Furthermore administration has evolved over time to have a pejorative meaning in that it is currently commonly associated with routine clerical work. Within the scope of this research I use governance to indicate the strategic navigation and stewardship of the institution as to the direction and decisions it takes. I use management to describe how those decisions are best operationalized and implemented to maximum effect. I use administration to refer to the process involved in how policies and objectives are arranged and operate. In essence, I view governance as the body that plans and determines institutional strategy which is executed by management and applied by the administration.

1.3 Rationale for the research

This study explores prevalent perceptions of university staff identity and the tensions created by competing or contested identities. This requires consideration of the dominant discourses relating to the university workplace and whether they confer privilege on one group of staff, and the impact that would then have on working relationships and institutional cohesion. A deeper grasp of staff identity and positioning and their impact on staff working relationships may provide empirical

evidence which could be used for developing approaches to help professional services and academic staff work together more effectively. As Bossu *et al* (2018) argue,

> *"Examining the similarities, differences, and sources of tension between the experiences, expectations, needs, and priorities of academic and professional and support staff is important as they help reveal real and imagined binaries within higher education workforces and provide greater insight for all parties to work together to achieve scholarly and institutional ends."* (p460)

In regard to these 'real and imagined binaries' it has been widely accepted that some form of dualistic divide exists in the university workplace between academics and other categories of staff (Newton 2009; Kuo 2009; Pick *et al* 2012; Garcia & Hardy 2017; Coate 2018). The resultant schism impacts negatively on the efficient operation of institutions and workplace relationships. By gaining a deeper grasp of staff identity and self-positioning, empirical evidence could be gathered for developing approaches to optimize effective working. This could also be used to establish whether a binary staff divide is fact or fiction, and explore any dissonance caused by the expectation of a presumed division that may not exist in reality. This is because the idea of a binary divide within the university model has been questioned in recent years following the emergence of the 'third space' professional. This concept refers to the zone between the emerging professional and the more traditionally academic spheres, in which lateral interactions occur within formal institutional structures and practices that result in new forms of university management. As such it is advanced as a way of exploring the relationships that characterise those staff who typically work in these roles, and the implications in accommodating any ensuing tensions in both institutional structure and individual life-worlds as each evolve. This concept has been explored in the existing literature (Whitchurch 2007; 2008; 2013, Neles & Carter 2016; Stoltenkamp et al 2017; Botterill *et al* 2018) but the object of my research is to develop a better

understanding with regard to the differing but complementary aims, focus and remits of different groups of staff which would benefit the university by helping to foster better workplace relationships. As previously discussed, subtle but vital differences in approach, focuses and perspective unknowingly employed by different categories of university staff and how that then translates into action can impact on how effectively a workplace operates. The idea of the traditional binary divide could in some ways perhaps be seen as a somewhat old-fashioned or outdated concept, persisting only as an historical construct in a small number of traditionally structured higher education institutions. Nonetheless examining the (dis)similarities, and tensions between academic and professional services staff with regard to their priorities and needs will help to reveal any factual and fictional binaries within the university workplace. This will provide various insights to enable staff to work together more effectively to support the academic mission of the university. As this research is based in my own place of work I also anticipate that my research outcomes will be of use to the institution. It will also be of benefit to my own professional practice and should exert a positive impact on my workplace interactions, in that it will reveal certain blind spots in my thinking about the dynamic between different groups of university staff. This will enable me to be less naïve in my assumptions and presumptions about them and how they operate.

1.4 Research questions

My research questions examine these concepts from three different angles. They focus on perceptions of place within the institution and the impact of this on individual perceptions of self-identity and working relationships with others, as follows;

- *How do university staff perceive their status and place within the institution?*
- *How do perceptions of individual self-positioning impact on professional identities?*
- *How do perceptions of status and place impact on working relationships?*

1.4.1 Framing the study

It is important to note that the concept of identity, its formation and the impacts of socialisation are interleaved and have emerged from the anthropological, psychological and sociological disciplines, resulting in a broad field of literature exploring self and identity. Definitions of both concepts vary depending on the academic tradition of the author. This study intersects a number of areas which overlap or relate to one another, meaning that several theoretical concepts are of value in relation to both the research questions and the analysis of the findings. While there is an extensive body of literature relating to the psychological aspects of identity, the nature of my research questions led me to focus on the sociological aspects of identity. It would seem that whereas psychologists traditionally use individual notions of self, sociologists adopt a more social constructionist understanding. As such the psychological aspects of identity fall beyond the remit of the study, although are acknowledged as being worthy of exploration.

1.5 Context of the study

I will now move on to outline the context in which this research is conducted, as the higher education sector in the UK has experienced significant change in recent decades. The latter part of the twentieth century witnessed powerful changes in management driven by efficiency targets and increases in external accountability and monitoring. This blurred the boundary between state and sector and introduced performance measurement and the adoption of standard market mechanisms of consumerism and competition (Henkel 2007). As a result higher education has come to be viewed as a service provider (Martimianakis & Muzzin 2015), with performance indicators normalized and discourse focused on the impact of research outputs and ‘customer’ satisfaction. The global massification of the student body and attendant commodification of education (Ball 2012; Shattock 2013) has seen students become the consumers of a service and the qualification they obtain as its product. This is a direct consequence of successive government strategy in the early decades of the twenty-first century, that sought to reduce both

the size and power of the public sector via more state intervention and top-down control.

These changes have also resulted in a focus on university structures and organizational models, which have led to a questioning of both the public role and the civic mission of universities. The increase in their accountability for example, evidenced by the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the creation of the Office for Students (OfS), has resulted in the sector being subject to more public scrutiny than at any other time in its history, something which has been termed an *"…explosion in audit culture"* (Erickson *et al* 2020, p3). This has resulted in a focus on university staff roles and an exploration of staff identities, thereby highlighting the different cultures that prevail within institutions, and the power conflicts that can arise when traditional social norms and practices are challenged. This and the sheer scale of change has been contentious and inevitably impacted on the university workforce, which has been described as a *"... collection of differing staff groupings, rather than a unified homogenous collective with shared values and objectives"* (Billot 2010, p718). The boundaries between staff categories have also become blurred with more staff transferring between historically more disparate groupings; those traditionally employed in technical roles for example (in workshops/studios and IT specialists) being redeployed to the professional services category, or Teaching Fellows who directly deliver teaching and learning to students being categorized as professional services staff as opposed to academics. Given these pressures I believe it is imperative that universities find ways in which to work more effectively to enable them to meet current and future demand. However this is a complex undertaking, as the organizational culture within a university workplace is arguably more byzantine than that of other organizations, owing to their intellectual function and distinctively departmental and/or discipline-centred structures (Kuo 2009). Universities could usefully be viewed as *"…very peculiar places. They are professionally argumentative communities, with very flat structures*" (Watson 2007, pp187-8) and therefore represent socially constructed realities comprised of a

number of different groups of staff, each with their own professional identities, remits and focus.

1.5.1 Institutional context

This research is based in University College London (UCL). Founded in 1826, it currently has 43,000+ students registered on over a thousand undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered within its eleven Faculties. It can boast a pioneering past in that it was the first in England to admit students of any religion or social background to a university education, as well as being the first in England to welcome women. UCL currently employs 13,000+ staff working in a broad variety of academic, administrative and technical support roles. The institution has expanded very rapidly in the twenty first century, largely owing to various acquisitions and mergers with other institutions (e.g. the School of Pharmacy in 2012 and the Institute of Education in 2014), making it the largest provider of postgraduate education in the UK. Its growth has been exponential at a time of very rapid change in the higher education sector, with its student population doubling in size in just a decade (from 22,000+ in 2009-10 to nearly 44,000+ in 2019-20[2]). This expansion has had ramifications on university staffing, in that the number of professional services roles has seemingly expanded disproportionately, a phenomenon echoed elsewhere. Research in September 2015 discovered that support staff were in the majority in 71% of UK universities (111 of 157), comprising 60% or more of all university staff in 27 institutions.[3] In 1994–95, the higher education system in the UK spent 12% of its total expenditure on Administration and Central Services (as defined by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA]) but by 2008–09 the proportion had increased by nearly 3% to 14.8%. During the same period the spend on academic staff had fallen by almost 3% from 42.5% to 39.9% (Hogan 2011, p7). This would seem to suggest the number of academic staff remained static while the number of professional services staff increased dramatically, something which has given rise to claims of administrative 'bloat' from

[2] *https://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/student-statistics*

[3] *https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/academics-minority-more-two-thirds-uk-universities*

some quarters, due to an explosion of administrative costs (Hogan 2011) caused by an alleged self-perpetuating bureaucracy (Ginsberg, 2011).

At face value this would appear to be true – Bassnet for example evokes the sense there are *"… whole areas of university life that are now run by administrators"* (2005, p100) and Halffman & Radder claim the higher education sector is occupied by a *"…. mercenary army of professional administrators"* (2015, p165). However some of the alleged increase is attributable to staff being redeployed across categories as discussed above, meaning that many who typically conduct academic and technical roles are now viewed as part of a broader, more discursive (and hence larger) professional services collective. This means that far from there being a *"… formidable range of routine regulatory practices introduced and overseen by administrative gurus"* (Hil 2012, p41), when the exponential increase in student numbers is factored in alongside the need to comply with externally-imposed government initiatives such as mandatory student surveys, the monitoring of Tier 4 visa holders and the TEF and the cost of staffing new technological advances such as virtual learning platforms and online admissions systems, the seemingly untenable increase in the number of professional services staff is arguably far less dramatic. What has increased instead is their visibility; Szkeres (2004) commented on this prominence:

> "*And this, I would contend, is the nub of the matter in the construction of administrators taking over. Their numbers haven't changed markedly in relation to academic staff but their roles and place in the university have."* (p19)

This perception may have helped to contribute to a concerning trend in UCL staff surveys in recent years, conducted bi-annually to measure staff engagement and satisfaction. For example in the last survey in 2017 (no survey was conducted in 2019) there was a 14% drop in positive responses to question 51, *"Relations between professional services and academic/research staff are generally good*" with

only 55% of respondents agreeing with this statement[4]. This is compared to the 69% who did in 2015[5] (as question 54) and the 71% in 2013[6] (as question 55), amounting to a 16% decrease in just 4 years. While the reasons behind this trend are multi-faceted and may be attributable to a number of causes, it is clearly indicative of a growing tension between academic and professional services staff within the institution, which may ultimately have a negative impact on organizational success. As the aim of my study is to increase the understanding of staff identity and its impact on staff working relationships, its outcome could potentially be used to understand this trend better and develop approaches to reverse it.

1.5.2 Professional context

This research draws on my experience of having worked as a member of professional services staff in two UK universities since 1999. I joined UCL in 2003 as an administrator in one of its academic Departments. I then moved to another Faculty in 2006 to lead the academic administration team based in its Faculty Office. Its role is to act as the interface between the central administrative functions of the institution and the Faculty's eleven academic Departments, providing high-level support for its effective operation and strategic development in the delivery of its teaching and learning. The Faculty offers 80+ programmes to its 3,500+ undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research students across all modes of study. Its academic profile is very broad and encompasses an eclectic range of disciplines; it likes to style itself as a microcosm or a 'university within a university' by both embracing and emphasising the breadth of its academic diversity.

I became interested in the notion of identity and its impact on workplace relationships as a result of my situated place within the institution and its effect on my professional practice. In some respects my role is liminal in that it belongs on the boundary or periphery of more familiar known spaces and realms. My Faculty

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[4] https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/sites/human-resources/files/ucl0000_-_ucl_overall_final1-20.pdf

[5] https://www.ucl.ac.uk/staff_survey/2015-results-report.pdf

[6] https://www.ucl.ac.uk/staff_survey/2013-results.pdf

is unusual in having a large Faculty Office in comparison to most others, as many of its functions have been centralized at a Faculty level whereas elsewhere they are typically conducted within academic Departments. This has had an impact on my role, which although no longer unique remains unusual. My original job title was 'Graduate Faculty Clerk' which was exclusive to the Faculty. It then changed to 'Academic Administration Manager' alongside changes to my remit and seniority which morphed alongside further adjustment to 'Director of Education & Student Experience'. The changes in nomenclature alone over this time are noteworthy (from Clerk to Manager to Director) and indicative of the changing trends in the higher education sector, but lie beyond the scope of this study. What has remained constant however is the metaphorical space my role occupies, in that it sits between various interstices and is neither one thing nor the other to various stakeholders - those who are more traditionally based within academic Departments for example, or those located in UCL's central functions. This means I can represent different things to different people at different times, depending on context; I can be regarded as friend or foe dependent on circumstance, and people's perception of my identity as supporter or adversary can flip in the course of a day. An aspect of my role involves interpreting and applying UCL's regulations, meaning that I sometimes have to 'police' Departmental decisions and refuse requests or reverse decisions in the pursuit of upholding them. Dependent on context this is sometimes viewed as advantageous, in that I can be blamed for unfavourable decision-making (thus not harming workplace dynamics within the Department), or my advice can be sought to bolster a decision that has already been made, which staff fear may harm working relationships without Faculty sanction. In this way the mutable nature of my role is valuable in that I can be viewed as having multiple and concomitant workplace identities. I am not alone in this of course, as professional identities in the university typically fluctuate according to task (Allen Collinson 2006; Winter 2009; Watson 2012), but I contend that the relatively unusual situatedness of my role can be exploited to good effect.

In addition, colleagues' perceptions of my workplace identity has evolved over time based on my physical location on campus, or more specifically with my co-location with various academic Departments. Due to logistical reasons (predominantly space constraints and building refurbishments), the Faculty Office has been hosted as it were by different constituent elements and led a rather nomadic existence. As a result, since 2006 I have been based in seven different offices in five separate buildings and am due to move to a sixth building in summer 2021. The layout and population of the office spaces themselves have also varied in that some have been just for my team, others were shared with 1-2 other teams and a couple were vast open areas shared with other Faculties and UCL-wide operational teams. I contend my role has been perceived in different ways and at different times based on my physical surroundings and this co-locatedness, in that I am assumed to be more closely affiliated to the academic Department(s) with which I have shared space. This has made me cognisant of the impact that space and place can have on identity, and how it can alter perceptions of staff positionality within the institution.

1.6 Theoretical perspective

The issue of both personal and professional identity in the workplace has been researched and discussed in a broad range of disciplines including sociology, psychology and anthropology. Definitions of 'self' and 'identity' vary depending on the academic tradition and the literature is problematic, as many studies in the domain do not clarify the specific perspective taken on them. My theoretical perspective on workplace identity is that it is a socially constructed phenomenon that develops within and through social practice (Rubin 2007). I conceptualize identity in this study as not solely located in the individual precisely because *"… although personal identity consists of unique identifiers and an individual narrative, it is social and institutional in origin"* (Owens *et al* 2010, p479). This view is echoed in that the construction of an identity requires an understanding of and negotiation with its various meanings within social settings (Wenger 1998).

The methodology I will use is designed to explore how people define their identity within the framework of their professional practice. Individuals do not merely adopt a set of preordained values and attitudes but are instrumental in their construction (Trowler 1998). Therefore my epistemology is broadly Foucauldian, as it explores how actors make sense of their own and others' identity through a process of (de)construction. In the Foucauldian tradition I acknowledge that individuals are engaged in a process of (re)constitution in relation to their environment, via continuously engaging in practices of self while exercising agency (Foucault 1982). I view professional identity as both a product and an agent of the institutional and social structures within which an individual's working life is based, and regard workplace identity as a process that is continuously (re)defined in conjunction with interactions with social others, as opposed to a set of essential and immutable personal characteristics.

1.7 Structural overview of the thesis

I will now provide a brief outline of the contents of each chapter for ease of navigation.

1.7.1 Chapter One… sets the scene for this research by providing its aims, rationale and research questions alongside an orientation to the empirical field in which it was conducted. By highlighting some key perspectives and the setting in which it is situated, it outlines the context in which this research inquiry arose, introducing the major issues and influences that have shaped its nature. It also provides an introduction to the theoretical framework used to form the research questions.

1.7.2 Chapter Two… explores key concepts relevant to the study by placing it within the relevant empirical and theoretical literature. It argues that identity is both situated and socio-cultural as an iterative process that is both dynamic and dialogic. It defines the concept of identity and explores social constructionist perceptions of identity construction. It studies the concept of identity in and identification with the professional workplace, including the university as a specific type. Discussion then

moves on to the concepts of discourse and power and the structures and impact of the latter as experienced in a university setting. Various conceptual lenses are delineated to help to focus the study, notably Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field and Holland *et al's* notion of figured worlds. Their impact on the perception of positionality as a theoretical construct to explain how people engage in discourse concludes the chapter.

1.7.3 Chapter Three… outlines my methodological approach, highlighting its consistency with my theoretical perspective. This includes my motives for the use of my three qualitative data generation techniques: interviews, mind-maps and meeting observations. It then moves on to a description of my research design; the selection, recruitment and ethical treatment of participants, the methods used to generate data and how these data were generated, managed and stored. It outlines how my chosen modes of analysis permeated the data generation process, with interpretation taking place in an iterative way as data were generated and my experience of them in practice.

1.7.4 Chapter Four… presents and discusses some of my findings, by bringing the results of my three data generation exercises together and using them to interrogate my research questions. They cluster around the influence of both space and place on staff perceptions of their identity. I start by outlining some of the images and 'buzz' words associated with UCL by the research participants, and what they might suggest. I then move on to discuss the impact of space and place in terms of the effect of the built environment on staff perceptions of self-positioning. This includes the effects of both physical situatedness and the co-location of staff with regard to their habitus and social capital. I then examine to what extent people primarily identify with their discipline or their Department, and how this can be demonstrated in their discourse via their use of language. I conclude by exploring how positionality is expressed through staff interconnectivity both within and beyond UCL's boundaries.

1.7.5 Chapter Five… explores hierarchy, visibility and legitimacy as a trio of themed concepts, with regard their effects on staff perceptions of their institutional status. How all three themed concepts are collectively enacted in practice in staff meetings is explored and each is then examined in turn, with hierarchy being considered first in terms of its effects on individuals' figured worlds and their social capital within the university habitus. This is succeeded by the concept of visibility and its impact on perceptions of self. Staff visibility in meetings is considered with an emphasis on how spatial configuration translates into social capital. I then explore legitimacy in terms of staff perception of their value to the institution, alongside the causal relationship between feelings of legitimacy as related to individuals' role, their functional sphere within the institution and how that translates into their perception of legitimacy.

1.7.6 Chapter Six… presents my conclusions, the limitations of the study, its contribution to knowledge and my plans for its dissemination. My primary conclusion is that the presumed binary staff divide in the university workplace is not the result of systemic factors within its habitus, but the result of individuals choosing to act in a certain way at a certain time. I also present my conceptual model which explains how staff typically perceive their identity within the institution. The limitations of the study are outlined which include the weaknesses of a case study approach, problems associated with sampling and the highly subjective nature of phenomenological interpretation of qualitative data. I discuss issues associated with reliability, validity and generalisability, alongside those including the problem of (insider) researcher bias and the asymmetrical power dynamic between researcher and participant. I conclude by reflecting on the implications of this study on my professional practice and its contribution to knowledge, in conjunction with my plans for its dissemination and some areas for potential future research.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter set the scene for this research by providing its aims and rationale alongside its context. By highlighting some key perspectives and the setting in

which it is situated, it outlined the milieu in which it arose and introduced the major issues and influences that shaped its nature. It also provided an introduction to the theoretical framework used to form the research questions, and concluded with a structural overview of the study by briefly summarising the contents of each chapter. I will move on in the next chapter to explore the key concepts discussed in the current literature on the subject, highlighting relevant gaps in research and knowledge.

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the rationale for the study and an orientation to the context in which it was carried out. It also signposted the key theoretical perspectives that influenced the framing of my research questions and approach. This chapter examines the literature in the field of study and commences with framing its scope. It then defines the concept of identity and explores social constructionist perceptions of identity construction. This moves on to delineating two theories of identity; self-identification theory and self-categorization theory, and proceeds to explore the twin concepts of identity in and identification with the professional workplace, which includes the university as a specific site. Discussion then progresses to the concepts of discourse and power, and the structure and impact of the latter as experienced in a university setting. The concepts of space and place are also examined in relation to the university workplace as a specific locus, and the ways in which people react to and help shape them. Various conceptual lenses are also explored which helped to focus the study, notably Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field and Holland *et al's* notion of figured worlds. Their impact on the perception of positionality as a theoretical construct to explain how people engage in discourse is then discussed to conclude the chapter.

Reference to relevant research into the experience of university employees is made throughout, as are any gaps within the current literature. This, I contend, is because it is limited in its exploration of how academic staff and the professional services staff as the focus of this study co-exist, as two distinct but interdependent cultural groups within the complexities of the modern university workplace. It is important to note however that the review of the literature this chapter contains is far from exhaustive, as reference to past research and writing on the subject is woven throughout.

2.2 Defining the concept of identity

It is important to understand what is meant by the concept of identity, something Kuhn (2006) defines as "…*the conception of the self reflexively and discursively understood*" (p1340). The notion of identity derives from how and where individuals situate themselves within a society or a community (LaFontaine 1985), as well as from the Greek notion of 'mask' that allows people to play particular parts, whether or not they are fictional (Hollis 1985). Recent conceptualisations owe much to the postmodern view (Akkerman & Meijer 2011) wherein identity is viewed as being multiple, discontinuous and social (Arvaja 2018). Postmodernism regards identity as a changing and dynamic concept which is continuously being negotiated and reshaped in interactions with others (Lee & Schallert 2016). People are subconsciously motivated by the need to gain recognition from others in order to maintain their sense of stability in the unstable process of ongoing subjectification (Butler 2005). This recognition is (re)negotiated through continual iterations of self-performance in interaction with others, and the attachment to or need for social recognition lends itself to reiterations of (often socially normative) presentations of self (Hey & Leathwood 2009). In this way identity negotiation is manifested in active reflection and interpretation between the individual and their social context, with Brown (2017) classing it not a "…*passive condition but an activity*" (p300). Holland *et al* (1998) view identity as a concept that *"…. figuratively combines the intimate of personal world with the collective space of cultural forms and social relations"* (p5).

From a sociological perspective identity is thus perceived as being complex, contested and dependent on social relationships (Hall 1997; Woodward 1997) and as being in a state of continuous flux. The formation of identity is not simply a matter of individual apprehension of a person's characteristics or values, but something shaped by the social world they inhabit; as Lawler (2008) states, *"… identity is profoundly social and is continually interpreted and reinterpreted"* (p17). It can be argued therefore that identity is both intangible and mutable depending on context.

2.2.1 Social constructionist views of identity

As stated in the previous chapter, this study is based within the social constructionist theoretical perspective. Social constructionist notions of identity cast both self and other as concepts created through dialogue and relationships (Berger & Luckmann 1991). Identity is viewed as a "… *mutually constitutive*" process (Watson 2008, p129) which is (re)constructed and maintained by the stories people tell about themselves and others, thereby linking identities to the contexts and practices in which they are (re)created. Giddens (1991) deemed self-identity as "… *continuity (across time and space) as interpreted reflexively by the agent"* (p53). This makes it an active process undertaken in relation to other people (Benwell & Stokoe 2006), as acts that are performed through both verbal and non-verbal means (De Fina *et al* 2006). This suggests that within a group of people, individual perceptions of identity will be impacted by the communities to which the person belongs, as well as by the other communities with which they interact. Other people are in effect audiences to which individuals display tailored versions of themselves to for self-validation or social verification (Brown & Phua 2011; Angouri & Marra 2011), as *"… our very process of thinking and decision-making involves us in a dialogue in our minds with the arguments of human others"* (Watson 2008, p127). A social constructionist approach to the concept of identity can thus help provide an understanding of the complex and dynamic relationship between the self, work and organization (Alvesson *et al* 2008), so is ideally suited to this study.

2.2.2 Social identity theories

Various theoretical traditions over the years have examined the complex ways that individuals seek to construct subjective meaning for their actions, relationships and identities. Social constructionism contends that personal identities are negotiated via ongoing and embodied interactions, drawing from available social discourses about who individuals can be and how they should act. The theories I will focus on connect the personal and the social, by recognizing the importance of discourse as the central mechanism of identity production. They are twofold; the first is social identity theory as developed by the psychologist, Tajfel and his colleagues (notably

Turner) in the 1980s. It posits that social identity (as opposed to personal identity) is defined by individual identification within a group; a process constituted by a reflexive knowledge of membership and also by an emotional attachment to belonging. The emphasis lies in the social-cognitive processes of membership and the way that this belonging is both initiated and sustained. From this perspective, identity is something that lies dormant, ready to be activated when with other people, so has something of a causal relationship to action and behaviour.

Later in the decade Turner and his colleagues developed self-categorization theory which sees people as having multiple identities that are activated by different social contexts. One of Turner's central claims is that *"… social identity is the cognitive mechanism that makes group behaviour possible"* (1982, p21). This means that when a category membership becomes salient, self-perception and conduct become 'in'-group normative and perceptions of other groups become 'out'-group stereotypical. Depending on the nature of the relationship between the groups, e.g., whether they are competitive or status-dependent, self and other perceptions can shift toward different types of perceptual discrimination. This is because the in-group is seen by those in it as superior to out-groups; research has shown that when an ingroup member is seen to fail at a task, it is viewed by members as the result of bad luck, whereas the same performance shown by the member of an out-group is perceived as indicating a lack of competence characteristic of that group (Pettigrew 1979; Hewstone 1990, cited in Ellemers & Rink 2005). For example Beech *et al* conducted research into dialogic exchanges between a group of academics and practitioners in 2010 and found that each group operated this mindset, placing the other in a lower status. They found the participants struggled to co-produce knowledge and shared meanings due to "*… a hierarchical separation embedded in the thinking of both academics and practitioners"* (p1363). These biased attributions and the communication patterns they perpetuate help individuals maintain a positive view of people they identify with, even when confronted with seemingly negative behaviour (Ellemers & Rink 2005, p15).

It can thus be argued that self-categorisation theory expanded the idea of social identity theory by explaining how people come to understand themselves as sharing a social category membership, e.g., as members of an organization rather than as members of a particular profession, and by clarifying how this process shapes their behaviour and thinking (Millward & Haslam 2013). Whereas social identity theory examines how people understand and position themselves and others in terms of social category, i.e. an in-group or an out-group, social categorisation theory explores what factors lead them to see themselves as unique individuals in some circumstances, and to define themselves through group membership in others, thereby depersonalising aspects of their identity (Alvesson *et al* 2008). These theories suggest that collective identity is something that is internalized within the individual and shared (to varying degrees) by members of a group. In this way it is not created afresh during every interaction, but is an enduring feature of the way in which people tend to think about themselves and others in certain social contexts. This means that although self-categorization is understood to be a subjective process, social identities can come to assume the status of objective categories that are adopted by a group's members which then impact on their future interaction (Haslam *et al* 2017). I consider this viewpoint provides a useful perspective on the perceptions of identity between the two staff groups which are the focus of this research.

2.3 Workplace identity and identification

I will now move on to discuss identity in the workplace. Workplaces are sites of social and cultural construction, as meaning cannot exist independently but is created through interaction (Kuo 2009). The concept of identity is therefore central to the study of organizations (Ybema *et al* 2009), since it frames our understanding of a wide range of issues such as culture, power, status, time and place (Humphreys & Brown 2002). As such I would argue the workplace is a valuable setting for the construction of identity, in that it requires a delicate balance between the personal and more social roles as well as individual and collective imagery (De Fina *et al* 2006). An organization can usefully be considered as a site in which people

(re)assemble their identities via "*…organizationally based discursive regimes"* (Clarke *et al* 2009, p325) as *"… work identities are contingent and perpetual works-in-progress, the fragile outcomes of a continuing dialectic between structure and agency"* (ibid. p347). Research into collective identities in organizations shows how people engage as social actors in a discourse of difference, via understanding their collective selves in terms of cohesion and distinctiveness (Clegg, Rhodes, & Kornberger 2007). People have multiple identities which are based on collectives and categories unique to the individual, and are based on personal attributes that typify them as individuals (Ashforth & Schinoff 2016). In this way it can be argued that professional identities are *"… constituted within organizationally based discursive regimes which offer positions, or epistemological spaces, for individuals and groups to occupy"* (Clarke *et al* 2009, p325). This is because as Brown (2014) argues, identities are discursively constructed in a dialectic between agency and structure.

As well as identifying with other organizational members, people also identify with the organization itself by forming a cognitive or emotional attachment to it (Miscenko & Day 2016). Ashforth (2016) defines this concept as;

> *"… the means through which the individual becomes a microcosm of the organization (or whatever the entity). The organisation takes root in the hearts and minds of those who identify with it, enabling them to enact its purpose, values, beliefs, and so on."* (p362)

One widely accepted view of how this occurs, is that an alignment between an individual and a collective identity results in a sense of unity between person and organization, as the description of the self and the collective in similar terms (Gutierrez *et al* 2010). This can be ambiguous in that people can simultaneously (dis)identify with certain aspects of an organization, so be pulled in opposing directions regarding the same aspect, which can result in cognitive dissonance. One explanation for this may be that organizational phenomena tend to be

multifaceted and complex, meaning people can have mixed feelings about a single aspect which leads to ambivalence or conflict in their identification with it (Brown 2017). In the workplace, Giddens (1991) argues that people's enactment of self-identity is a central aspect of their development of agency, construing it as an interactive process in which people engage with others to construct social systems and structures (1984). The creation of an identity is complex and comprised of both individual and social elements and in the context of institutionalized work, of elements that are related to a person's work-related life and others that are not, with the latter not always visible to colleagues (Busher 2005). In this way people develop their workplace self-identities through their interactions with other people in a variety of settings over time, which are grounded in individual histories, personalities and workplace experiences (Goodson 1992; Nias 1999).

Reflexivity is therefore pivotal in understanding professional identity, because people engage in a non-stop iterative process of (de)construction within the context of various shifting and often plural identities (Henkel 2007). The construction of identity in the workplace is;

> *"… a discursive process which suggests that as employees narrate the organization to others in their formal capacity as identity custodians, they simultaneously construct a sense of organizational and individual self through interactive and reflexive positioning."* (Johansen 2017, p185)

In the Foucauldian tradition, individuals are continuously engaged in a process of reconstitution in relation to their environment; such practices influence and shape further practices (Kolsaker 2014). Brown (2017) argues that different versions of self have different relationships with the organization, which are *"…malleable and fuzzy"* (p309) and result in multiphrenia, defined as the splitting of the individual into a multiplicity of self-investments. Professional identity therefore lies at the intersection of agency and structure, as a person's workplace identity is based on

their personal perceptions of self-image in relation to their working context (Busher 2005). It is central to the individual's sense of agency (Giddens 1991), and developed through interactions with others in their professional context in constructing social systems and structures (Giddens, 1984). As Bardon *et al* (2012) claim "*Individuals' identity is not only determined by their structural position in the labour process or organizational roles but depends on all their professional and personal experiences*" (p352). Professional identity is thus both product and agent of systems and structures within the individual's work context (Briggs 2007).

2.3.1 The university workplace

I will now explore the concept of the university as a type of institutional workplace, which along with other types, initially directs and then constructs the ways in which its members are represented in practice (Churchman 2006). On this point Watson (2000) argues that;

> *"An organisation exists to get something done and requires management while an institution is less concrete and is largely held together by people in the mind as part of their frame of reference. An institution is composed of the diverse fantasies and projections of those associated with it."* (p97)

I contend that the organizational culture in higher education is more complex than other types of workplace, due to the intellectual purpose and discipline-based structures distinctive to universities; as social constructions they create their identities through their role and function via a diversity of perspectives and dynamic interactions (Kuo 2009). As Delanty (2007) argues there is "*... no single legitimizing idea of the university, no grand narrative, but a plurality of ideas and a growing diversity of universities...*" (p126). Higher education can thus be said to have a hybrid or pluralistic identity, in that the university as an institution is required to sustain a traditional academic culture in conjunction with an increasingly modern corporate ideology and structure (Winter 2009). Cox *et al* (2012) argue this is because;

> *"… universities are tenuous institutions, composed of multiple practices. They have multiple missions and decentralised governance. No simple identification can be on offer. Attempts to construct an identity position are inevitably incomplete…"* (p705)

Both literal and figurative workplace location within the university would also appear to be significant; research shows that staff have enhanced understandings and respect for the significance of each other's roles with those they work with most closely (Wohlmuther 2008). In contrast, professional services staff working in corporate functions (often in different physical locations) do not have the same opportunity to establish the same working relationships with academic staff, so can be viewed as overly bureaucratic, irrespective of how much their world-view may be aligned with that of academics (Conway 2012). Forms of centralized control are often described in a derogatory way within academic Departments, which distances those based in the 'centre', who are seen as being physically remote and thereby impersonal, often imposing work on others without any understanding of local context. This form of othering can be problematic; if devolved groups feel as though they are losing internal local control, then they can construct external aggressors to form alliances against (Lewis 2014). Handal (2007) illustrates the importance of the location of work units in his work on academic developers, which he argues impacts on how they and their work are perceived and how they then perceive their own workplace identities.

2.3.2 The role of space and place within the university

With regard to physical workplace location, a useful definition of the relationship between space and place is given by Temple (2018), in that "... *place is created by people using space for particular purposes: place, then, is space which has meaning for its users; it is special space*" (p136). He argues that the 'alchemy' of turning space into place should be a priority for universities, as this is where their best work is done (ibid., p136). I interpret this alchemical process as the transformation of a

physical (or literal) space into a metaphysical (or figurative) place. In terms of the built environment, I therefore define 'space' as being a quantitative and physically delineated concept, and 'place' as a qualitative concept in both form and meaning. In this way I use the term 'metaphysical' to denote an allegorical concept that includes both the real and the imagined as a metaphorical abstraction.

The university as a physical entity traditionally occupied space in the form of a campus, from which it conducted its research and delivered its teaching. As the shift in higher education has become more globalized however, it has been argued that the university as a concept is increasingly hard to view as a geographically defined institution (Cox *et al* 2012), a process they refer to as 'virtualisation' (ibid., p698). Both the physical space and metaphysical place of the university is evolving, as academic capital is internationalized via the use of modern communication technologies. Kuntz *et al* (2012) claim however that despite this move away from the physical and/or local, the built environment is never meaningless but plays a pivotal role in the construction of personal and social identity and the way in which people interpret their world. This is because as they argue, "*Our interpretations of the social world, as well as our subjectivities are implicated by the material conditions in which we are immersed*" (p436). This view is echoed by Hillier & Hanson (1984) who argue that "*… the ordering of space in buildings is really about the ordering of relations between people*" (p2, cited in Jessop *et al* 2012, p190). A university campus is therefore more than simply a means by which to protect staff and students from the elements but "*… a site engraved with certain ethical and ideological implications*" according to Norgard & Bengsten (2016, p7). They view it as part of the staff's (and presumably students') "… *broader lifeworld*" (ibid. p9), a view echoed by Jessop *et al* (2012) who claim the impact of space on academia often goes unnoticed, although it significantly influences academic work. Temple (2009) argues that the physical configuration or structure of the university may be linked to institutional effectiveness, in that it plays a part in the shaping of communities. He also points out the importance of all university staff (as opposed to a focus only on academics) being viewed through its collective lens, saying:

> *"The majority of people working regularly in a university, though, are support staff of various kinds, not directly engaged in any of these tasks, though their contributions are essential to them happening at all. They may have different viewpoints from those usually reported as coming from academics or students, but may be just as — or more — important in creating a sense of place."* (p211)

A new dimension to this, the impact of which will unfold over the coming months and years, is the move to remote working caused by the global pandemic of Covid-19. UCL closed its campus on 13 March 2020 for example, and moved to the remote delivery of teaching, with most staff working online from home. The majority have yet to return to the campus and at the time of writing it is not clear when they will do so and what form this will take. The long-term effects of a virtual workplace have yet to emerge, but what is clear is that it has already impacted the working dynamic of staff in various ways that will continue to be felt for some time to come; the gradual move to more flexible working patterns and home-working has been accelerated for example, and the significance and need for permanently occupied physical space on campus has been questioned. The literal virtualization of university work referred to earlier has been made manifest, but its full impact on the workplace dynamic has yet to be seen. It could be argued therefore that the impact of space and place on university staff's perceptions of their positionality within the institution should not be underestimated, but viewed as a key contributing factor in the construction of their identity. As Bourdieu (1984) claims *"… agents have points of view on this objective space which depend on their position within it and which their will to transform or conserve is often expressed"* (cited in Cox *et al* 2012, p699). I will expand on this later in the chapter.

2.3.3 Research on staff identity construction in higher education

Meanwhile I will move on to explore research into the construction of staff identity within the university setting. There has been much interest in this in recent years (Harris 2005; Barnett & Di Napoli 2007; Alvesson *et al* 2008; Archer 2008; Billott 2010; Calvert *et al* 2011; Knights & Clarke 2014; Coate & Howson 2016; Arvaja 2018). Churchman and King (2009) for example posit that academics have multiple professional identities in that they are viewed as teachers by students, as employees by management, as researchers by peers and as a critical voice by the broader community. Some act as academic managers and thereby oversee 'managed academics' (Winter 2009). Macfarlane (2011) argues that a new form of 'para-academic' has emerged, which has to some extent deskilled the academic workforce while enabling them to specialise in other areas of their traditionally tripartite role. Delanty (2007) argues that individual academic staff lack certainty in their identity, as the foundations they are built on are diffuse and subject to *"…a vast range of technologies of governance*" (p131). Barnett (2000) claims that *"… what it is to be an 'academic' is by no means given but is a matter of dynamic relationships between social and epistemological interests and structures*" (p256), meaning that the nature of the academic workforce is heterogenous albeit this is often masked by a *"… veneer of homogeneity"* which conceals its multifaceted nature (Churchman 2009, p7). In this way academic staff are *"...constantly engaged in an ongoing constitution and reconstitution of the self*" (Kolsaker 2008, p523), as the introduction of relatively recent new roles crucially conducted by non-academic staff such as academic developers or industrial partners have effectively restructured the academic workplace (Dent *et al* 2016).

The same can be said of professional services staff, in that the construction of their identity has also been the subject of much research in recent years (Whitchurch 2013; Lewis 2014; Kallenberg 2015; Addison 2016; Botterill 2018; Carvalho & Videira 2019). However as Bossu *et al* (2018) point out, unlike the literature examining professional services staff experiences, academic staff are not typically depicted as debating the validity of their roles and identities with regard to their

interaction with non-academic staff, but only with their profession and/or subject. They claim the subsequent 'unease' caused to workplace relations within universities is pending resolution because of this oversight, which they argue deserves more attention. This sentiment is echoed by Botterill (2018, p105) who claims that the failure to acknowledge the positive contributions that professional staff make to institutions, the student experience as a whole and overall educational outcomes, impedes effective collaboration between staff, especially if different types of knowledge and discourses are privileged above others. It is this gap in the literature that my research will explore.

2.4 Discourse and power

In exploring the concept of identity it is also necessary to take into account the discourses and power structures which underpin them. With regard to the former, Botterill (2018) argues that "*In organizations, discourses underpin group memberships and who has access to power, privilege, visibility, and rewards. Discourses are the manifestation of group membership….*" (p94). Berger and Luckmann (1991) see social reality and knowledge as both informing and evolving from the other. They argue that people's roles within an organization are socially defined, so induction will therefore include an initiation into the norms, values and emotions of the social context. Workplace roles exist in relationship to others and can be enforced; this implies the existence of shared goals which leads to the development of the 'social self' of the role-holder. It has been argued that a social constructionist approach is attentive to these issues in identity construction, and is in general sensitive to potential differences between official portrayals of an organization's identity and the way in which that is (re)constructed and (re)negotiated by its individual members (Haslam *et al* 2017). As Javitz (2009) argues, identity construction is shaped by the way in which individuals exercise their agency in the workplace (cited in Smith *et al* 2016, p47). Power relations are subjectively constructed and negotiated by people in nuanced ways; the traditional power structures in the university workplace for example (between staff, staff and students and the institution) are increasingly being contested in ways that challenge

the assumption that academic staff are a privileged, secure and elite group (Bourdieu 1991). Ylijoki (2005) argues that academia is experiencing an identity crisis whereas Yudkevich (2017) refers to the "*desacralization"* (p56) of the increasingly non-homogenous academic profession. For this reason the discourses I will focus on will be those dominant ones which operate as regulatory norms. They may be seen as power mechanisms that typically legitimize or regularize what is seen as being the norm, as well as those aspects judged to be different (Davies *et al* 2006). This includes the dominant discourses concerning the perception of the 'ideal' academic in addition to those concerning what counts as the 'typical' professional (Morley 2013; Coate & Howson 2016).

2.4.1 Power structures in the university

These discourses are examined in the context of the university for the purposes of this study, as some writers have highlighted the failure of the academic community to resist oppression and changes to their freedoms (Halffman and Radder 2015). Others have argued that their collective voice has been systemically deconstructed through the imposition of targets, precarity of employment and the homogenization of systems for the assessment of both research and teaching performance (Edmond 2017). Kolsaker (2008) for example argues that academic staff have not mounted an effective resistance to the radical changes that have swept the higher education sector in recent years, such as institutional restructurings, departmental closures and the proliferation of short-term staff contracts. She contends that Foucault would argue that this lack of resistance implies tacit approval. In his view power can only be exercised if the recipient acknowledges the legitimacy of the source, so the (in)action of those recipients may be interpreted as tacit support of the social, political and regulatory structures supporting the source's position. Kolsaker (2008) claims that Foucault would argue that academics should acknowledge that as their relative autonomy is politically and socially constructed, they are tacitly accepting of the sector's managerialist approach, stating *"Academics are, after all, free-willed beings; neither they nor manager-academics are completely at the disposition of the other, and both are able to exercise practices*

of self" (p517). I am ambivalent as to the extent to which I agree with this view, as there has been industrial action in the form of strikes in recent months (for example in 2018 and both the autumn and spring terms of the 2019-20 academic session), comprised of staff opposed to these changes and more. It could be argued however that this was principally dominated by opposition to proposed changes to staff pension arrangements managed via the Universities Superannuation Scheme, rather than a more holistic opposition to broader changes impacting the sector.

In the case of academic staff, it has been argued that the power imbalance generated by their generally greater cultural and social capital and credibility has enabled them to define as 'other' various groups of staff (Allen Collinson 2006). This is due to the hierarchical nature of academia, which situates academic staff at the top of the university structure, as Dearlove (2002) wryly observes;

> *"Academics recognise no boss, choosing to see themselves as individual entrepreneurs, albeit on a steady salary. Like rich peasants, they till their own patch but display little desire for collective action and little interest in the larger university, to which they are limply attached, as they grumble about the demands it makes on 'their' time and the problem of parking."* (p267)

This is a rather extreme view of academia and one I would argue contains elements of truth, albeit not the fully story. Brown (2006) argues that within the organization those who are 'symbolically privileged' (such as academics), use their advantages to promulgate identities that promote certain understandings at the expense of others. This form of 'social closure' has been defined as;

> *"… the capacity for, and strategies of, social groups to exclude, or usurp, other groups in a struggle for control of scarce resources, valued social locations, and their associated privileges and status."*
> (Flynn 1999 p22, cited in Shepherd 2017, p132)

As such it is an exercise in power in which one group prevents another it deems inferior the opportunities or advantages it enjoys, and thus secures control. Closure can be seen as a means of domination which is often achieved in organizations through the monopolisation of senior positions. Shepherd (2017) cites the exclusion by academic staff of other occupational groups (e.g. professional services) from senior positions, such as Pro-Vice-Chancellors or Provosts, as prime examples of social closure. In this way Becher (1989) claims academics *"… defend their own patches of intellectual ground by employing a variety of devices geared to the exclusion of illegal immigrants*" (p24). It could be argued however that at a fundamental level the university is in the business of generating and selling knowledge, which simply make academic staff more valuable assets than other types of staff. They tend to specialise in specific knowledges that help them carve out relatively unique positionings in their workplace. This means the more established they become the more valuable they become, so having successfully personalized their cultural capital it can become more powerful (Addison 2016).

The power dynamic between academics and professional services staff is interesting in that in a mature 'field' like a university workplace there are typically well-established structures of domination, which means that the actors in the field are well aware of what role they have with regard to others (Grafstrom & Windell 2012). Structures of domination clarify actors' positionality in the field and the extent to which they possess the power to influence their framework. This means any changes in these structures of domination have the potential to change practices within the field. In this field metaphor, academic staff could be perceived as the dominant and more mature party to the professional services staff's relatively newcomer status, the latter being positioned as 'novel' actors. Research by Sauder (2008) demonstrates that novel actors moving in to mature fields have the potential to alter the relationships, power dynamics and positions among the incumbent actors. Even though these newcomers might not lead to immediate and radical change, their emergence could lead to other substantial changes within the field.

The research (conducted in the field of journalism) found however that even when novel actors are given access to and become members of the field, the structures of domination are not altered, but that conversely the dominant position of the mature actors is reinforced. As Reay and Hinings (2005) claim, power is a necessity for being able to initiate and drive change, so even though newcomers can gain positions in the field they lack the power to change incumbent practice. Although journalism is not academia, this research could explain why an imbalance of power may persist in the university setting, owing to the long-established positioning of the academic role over the professional services role, combined with the social closure effect discussed above, all of which may impact on perceptions of university staff identity.

2.5 Conceptual framework

I will now move on to discuss the conceptual framework I used to focus my study. Starting with Bourdieu I apply his notions of habitus, capital and field to understand the social interactions and conditions that influence both practice and identity, and apply them to the concepts of both space and place. This understanding is further developed to include aspects of Holland *et al's* theory of self and identity with regard to their concept of 'figured worlds' and positionality. This enables me to conceptualize the multiple aspects and influences on identity, and the agency and position that emerge through engagement. In the following section I show how these conceptualisations have influenced my understanding of the domain that constitutes the focus of this study.

2.5.1 Habitus, capital and fields

While Foucault regards power as being omnipresent so beyond agency or structure, Bourdieu views it as both culturally and symbolically created and (re)legitimized through the interaction between agency and structure. This is via something he termed habitus, which he defined as *"… a system of shared dispositions and cognitive structures which generates perceptions, appreciations and actions"* (1984, p279), so can be viewed as a set of socialized norms that guide human behaviour

and thinking. He claims "*Habitus are structured structures, generative principles of distinct and distinctive practices*" (1995, p17). They are created through social processes and lead to enduring patterns that are transferrable between context, although they are *"… not fixed or permanent, and can be changed under unexpected situations or over a long historical period"* (Navarro 2006, p16). Habitus is not the result of individuals' free will or determined by social structures but derives from an interplay between the two over time, so are shaped by past events and structures, and in this way created and reproduced by people subconsciously. Bourdieu (1995) defined habitus as;

> *"… generative and unifying principles which retranslate the intrinsic and relational characteristics of a position into a unitary life-style, that is, a unitary set of persons, goods, practices. Like the positions of which they are the product, habitus are differentiated, but they are also differentiating.* (p15)

An important feature of the habitus is that it naturalizes itself in that its rules, norms and practices are perceived as 'common sense' by its members, although they are in fact arbitrary (Webb *et al* 2002). Bourdieu suggests this is because they are so profoundly internalized that they become part of who we are, so are (re)produced subconsciously and that by our perceiving these rules and practices as natural we thus limit the possibility for alternatives. He does however suggest it is modifiable because habitus is established at the point of practice, so modification tends to occur when habitus becomes conscious. It then stops making sense as a way of addressing a situation, or when an individual perceives modification as a way of gaining improved position or capital. Within a profession, an individual is socialized as a member into a group; over time they will develop a socially constituted capacity to act and thus acquire a professional habitus as a set of dispositions that influences how he or she perceives, thinks and acts (Noordegraaf & Schinkel 2011).

Another concept introduced by Bourdieu was that of capital which may be social, cultural or symbolic. These forms of capital may be equally important and can be transferred from one arena to another. Cultural capital in particular and the way in which it is created or transferred from other forms plays a principal role in societal power relations, in that it *"… provides the means for a non-economic form of domination and hierarchy, as classes distinguish themselves through taste"* (Gaventa 2003, p6). Although Bourdieu argues the reproduction of capital is never guaranteed, investment is symbolically legitimated and when this occurs social groups (such as for example professions) secure symbolic capital, *"…which is the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived as legitimate"* (1989, p17). In terms of its value, he goes on to argue;

> *"Capital - in its various fundamental forms: economic, cultural, social, symbolic and statist... allows one to keep at a distance undesirable persons and things as well as to bring in closer desirable ones, thereby minimizing the expense (especially in time) necessary to appropriate them. Conversely, those who are deprived of capital are pushed away and held at a remove, either physically (relegated to distant locales or to places difficult to reach) or symbolically, from the socially most valued goods and condemned to come into daily contact with the most undesirable and the most common persons and goods."* (1991, p110)

Bourdieu also conceived of a field as a social and institutional arena in which people express and replicate their dispositions, as well as a site in which they compete for the distribution of different kinds of capital. He defined it as;

> *"… a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this*

> *universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field, and, as a result, their strategies."* (1998, pp40-41)

As such a field can be a network, a structure or set of relationships, which may be intellectual or religious, educational, or cultural in origin (Navarro 2006). Bourdieu argues that people experience power differentially, depending which field they occupy (Gaventa 2003), meaning that context and environment are also key influences. According to Bourdieu (1986), how a field is structured and how services are provided are matters of "… *accumulated history*" (p241), as agents within professional fields act and produce interpretations on the basis of durable embodied dispositions (1977, p72). He suggests a cultural field is dynamic, in that it is created by the interactions between institutions and the rules and practices that individuals and groups within the field use to determine what counts as capital, and how it should be distributed. He argues that power within a field is determined by both the position and possession of the appropriate capital, and in this way cultural fields are sites of cultural (re)production - they are;

> *"… constructed with specific structures and rules, and the relative smoothness of the game/field often depends upon the players unquestioningly accepting and following these rules, regardless of how arbitrary they might seem."*
> (Nolan & Walshaw 2012, p358 cited in Addison 2016, p101)

This notion of the field casts an individual's sense of professional identity as intimately linked to their workplace and the people and the practices within that workplace, and as such has implications for workplaces such as universities.

2.5.2 Habitus and university space and place

These Bourdieusian concepts are useful when applied to university staff perceptions of institutional space and place, as discussed earlier. As Kuntz *et al*

argue (2012), our interpretations and subjective understanding of our life-world are heavily influenced by both the physical and material conditions of our environment. Cox *et al's* research in 2012 for example examined how three staff in three different universities identified with their institutions as determined by the physical space they occupied. They found that they frequently felt marginal, as their habitus often conflicted with the public identities their institutions projected. They recognized however that at times they knowingly resisted the urge to participate or identify with it, as that would restrict their personal freedom to create change, saying "*Our individual habitus does not find an easy place in these complex fields, but is active in its constant remaking*" (p704). They go on to argue that "*At times our habitus does fit the field in which we find ourselves; the malleability of space gives us room to shape it to our needs*" (p705). This malleability of space is referenced by Temple (2018), who argues that its value can evolve over time which can transform mere spaces into *"…. valued places [that] are not created instantly – time needs to pass to allow their users to appreciate what is available and to craft it to better meet their needs*" (p444). In this way once value has been assigned to space and it becomes a place, it can be further transformed into social capital via the mediation of an institutional culture (Temple 2009, p218). Viewed through a Bourdieusian lens, the concepts of space and place are perhaps better understood as forms of habitus and social capital.

2.5.3 Figured worlds

Holland *et al* (1998) offer a theory of identity which builds on Bourdieu's notions of cultural field and habitus. Their theory extends his work, both in understanding identity as a more reflective 'storying' of the self, and in progressing the deterministic notion of habitus via recognising a potential to create opportunities to change the narrative of identity as an individual moves between contexts. Like Giddens (1991) they emphasize the role that language plays in the construction of an on-going story of self. The central tenet of their theory rests on the concept of figured worlds, an *"… as-if realm"* (Holland *et al* 1998, p49), defined as;

> *"…. a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and in particular outcomes are valued over others. Each is a simplified world populated by a set of agents… who engage in a limited range of meaningful acts or changes of state…. as moved by a specific set of forces."* (ibid. p52)

These figured worlds are conceived as cultural phenomena that develop through the activities of their participants, and which function as contexts of meaning, as people literally 'figure' out how to relate to each other over differential contexts of space, time and place (Urrieta 2007). This is because figured worlds;

> *"… provide the contexts of meaning and action in which social positions and social relationships are named and conducted. They also provide the loci in which people fashions senses of self – that is, develop identities."* (Holland *et al* 1998, p60)

Figured worlds therefore provide a useful framework to interpret meanings of actions, performances and disputes, and the understandings people come to make of these and themselves. Like Bourdieu's concept of habitus, they represent *"…possibilities for mediating agency"* (Holland *et al* 1998, p4). Urrieta (2007) claims that figured worlds are of particular relevance in studying the concept of identity and agency in education, because they focus on activity and emphasize the role of power. Their use is therefore ideal for the phenomena examined in this study.

2.6 Positionality

I will now explore the concept of positionality in more detail. As a theoretical construct it refers to how people are located in discourse, while engaged in meaning making with other people. This may be because *"… actors - whether individuals, dyads, groups, or organizations - cannot act meaningfully without a situated sense of who they are and who their fellow actors are"* (Ashforth 2016, p361). Positioning

is a dynamic process in which identification as the attainment of an idea of the self is achieved within the broader discursive production of social structures and relationships that constitute the constructed social world (Hall 1997). It refers to the process through which people adopt, resist and offer each other 'subject positions' via discourse. Theorists such as Bamberg (2004) and Davies & Harre (1990) conceive of positionality as the co-construction of identity between storyteller and audience, whereas Fairclough (1992) conceives of it as a construct which accounts for the social effects of what people say to each other. One of its goals is to identify the mechanisms by which both linguistic and social processes become reified as observable products that may be viewed as identities (De Fina *et al* 2006), as Fairclough (1992) observes, *"Positioning provides a central theoretical construct and valuable tool for analysing identity*" (p8).

How people talk of self is affected by how they see themselves positioned in relation to others. This means by my using the concept of positionality as a lens, what participants say to me within the context of the research interviews could afford me insights into how they perceive both themselves and others to be positioned. As Holland *et al* (1998) suggest, identity formation should be viewed not only as situated within the institutions and communities in which those identities play out, but also should be understood from the perspective of positionality. Identity is relational so is shaped by one's position relative to others, as *"Positionality has to do with more than division, the "hereness" and thereness" of people: it is inextricably linked to power, status, and rank"* (Holland *et al* 1998, p271). Building on an anthropological understanding of positional identities, it suggests the way in which an individual is positioned influences the way in which they view and express themselves, *as "… a person's apprehension of her social position in a lived world is influenced by everyday relations of power, deference, and affiliation"* (ibid, p127-128). Identity construction is not a neutral or benign process, but one coloured by emotions, moral judgement and political interests. Positionality thereby involves social manoeuvring and power games, in that it shows how selves and sociality are mutually co-constructed (Ybema *et al* 2009).

2.7 Revisiting the research questions

This leads on to a reiteration of my research questions (initially outlined in the previous chapter), which focus on perceptions of place within the institution and the impact of this on individual perceptions of self-identity and workplace relationships. In exploring them I aim to offer a new and original perspective on staff relationships within UCL, via investigating individuals' self-positioning within the institution, as follows:

- *How do university staff perceive their status and place within the institution?*
- *How do perceptions of individual self-positioning impact on professional identities?*
- *How do perceptions of status and place impact on working relationships?*

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter examined the literature available in the field of study by initially framing its scope. It defined the concept of identity and explored social constructionist perceptions of identity construction. Two theories of identity were then explored, self-identification theory and self-categorization theory. The twin concepts of identity in and identification with the professional workplace were then discussed, which included the university as a specific site. The concepts of space and place were also examined in relation to the university setting in particular, which was followed by the way in which people react to and help shape them to explain how people engage in discourse. The concepts of discourse and power were also delineated, as was the structure and impact of the latter as experienced within the university environment. Several conceptual and theoretical lenses were explored to help focus the research, notably Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field and Holland *et al's* notion of figured worlds. The concept of positionality was also examined in order to explain how people engage in discourse, and a reiteration of my research questions conclude the chapter. In this way I have prepared the groundwork for the next chapter in which I outline my research design and methods.

3.1 Introduction

In this Chapter I outline my research design and methods. I begin with an overview of my methodological approach, highlighting its consistency with my theoretical perspectives. This includes my motives for the use of my data generation techniques. I move on to a description of my research design; the selection, recruitment and ethical treatment of participants, the methods used to generate data and how these data were generated, managed and stored. I then outline how my chosen modes of analysis permeated the data generation process, with interpretation taking place in an iterative way as data were generated following my experience of them in practice.

3.2 Research design

As this study aims to provide insight into a phenomenon as understood by those who have personal experience of it, a qualitative methodology has been used. Qualitative researchers are committed to a naturalistic viewpoint and an interpretive understanding of human experience, in that a holistic approach allows for the examination of how meaning is constructed in relation to social practices (Scott & Usher, 1996). My understanding of qualitative research chimes with this, in that its key aim is to understand rather than to measure social or cultural phenomena. It thereby acknowledges the value of the generation of subjective data as opposed to the collection of objective data. I appreciate however that there is an essential paradox in my analysis of subjective data via methodology more commonly associated with objective data in positivist paradigms. As a result it may seem at times that there is a degree of discord between my (qualitative) epistemological stance and the (quantitative) language I then use to discuss my analytical techniques, with regard to its reliability, validity and generalisability and so on. I employed this positivistic terminology to be better able to demonstrate the scientific rigour and systemic robustness I subjected my qualitative data to. It was the means by which I uncovered its meaning and was able to conceptualise its significance. In

addition, I regard qualitative data such as that generated in this research as providing the contextual 'back story' to broader trends demonstrated by statistical data such as that generated for example by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). As such it is often neglected in policy texts and data sets are of necessity very broad. The systemic analysis of qualitative data allows for a more nuanced account to be achieved and enables data with a rich level of detail to be identified that can be useful and highly relevant in local situations. With that in mind, alongside my aim that this research be of use to the institution it was conducted in as well as myself and my colleagues, I contend that my qualitative, interpretative approach (albeit at times expressed in quantitative, positivist language) can be fully justified.

3.2.1 Social constructionism

The study is specifically situated within social constructionism, in that it is concerned with how identity is constructed and gives prominence to the everyday interactions taking place between people. In this way it regards the social practices in which they engage as being the focus of enquiry, so centres on behaviour; people perform and construct their own and others' identities through the choices they make, and the meanings they construe as a result of these interactions. Social constructionism contends that people construct reality through the absorption of social influences in the form of discourses and relationships, as a jointly constructed frame of reference within an organization. This operates as an *"… interpretative schema",* or a platform for identification (Haslam *et al* 2017, p321). In particular it emphasizes individual agency in the way that people negotiate shared interpretations of identity, so is alive to issues of power and collective sense-making. As Holland *et al* (1998) argue, "*When we speak we afford subject positions to one another"* (p26). Social constructionism therefore views identity as a social, discursive concept and suggests that people actively engage in the creation of their own reality. I take this to mean that people are not passive recipients of the identities which arise from the prevailing discourses within an organization, but that they actively contribute to and develop them. A social constructionist lens enables me to explore staff relationships within the dominant discourses in the social context in

which they work, as Alvesson *et al* (2008) argue, "*For interpretively inclined organizational researchers, identity holds a vital key to understanding the complex, unfolding and dynamic relationship between self, work and organization"* (p8).

3.2.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is an approach within social constructionism that focuses on individuals' lived experiences and the meanings they ascribe to them. It enables knowledge as an empathic understanding of others' behaviour ('verstehen'), as opposed to an empirical understanding ('erklaren'), concepts conceived and developed by Max Weber and George Simmel. Interpretivism treats people as purposive beings in a social context, who actively transform information into meaning (Ngwenyama & Lee 1997). A focus on people's attitudes and beliefs in an organization can reveal sub-cultural patterns, and highlight how members make sense of messages and their meanings (Daymon 2000). Interpretivism can thereby infiltrate the complex kaleidoscope of *"…heavily constructed social meanings*" (Oakley 2000, p25), so is the optimal approach to use in conducting this research. Brown (2017) posits that an ideographic approach is best suited to exploring organizational identity because it is more adaptable to the highly contextualized setting of the workplace. It could thus be argued that a narrative approach to identity construction and positioning is particularly pertinent, as professional identities are formed by staff participation in work activities (Dutton, Morgan Roberts & Bednar 2010). The adoption of an interpretivist approach therefore acknowledges a co-construction of meaning, by recognising the influence of the researcher at the point of both data generation and interpretation. This means that my individual perspective is both acknowledged and accepted as being intrinsic to the findings. Whilst within the interpretivist paradigm, the study aims to illuminate the issues and also in the Bourdieusian tradition, to politicise them by critiquing discourses and practices (Webb *et al* 2002).

3.2.3 Phenomenology

I have employed a phenomenological approach in the analysis of my data generation. Phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal subjectivity, so emphasize individual perspective and interpretation. As such they provide robust methods for understanding subjective experience, and gaining insights into individual 'life-worlds' and people's lived experiences. The word 'phenomenology' comes from the Greek 'phainómenon' (meaning 'that which appears') and 'lógos' (meaning 'study'), so can be viewed as a philosophical study of the structures of human experience and consciousness (VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015). The concept of phenomenology was created by Edmund Husserl in the 1930s, on the premise that the interpretation of a phenomenon is what constitutes reality. This may be because "*…the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation*" according to his pupil, Heidegger (1962, p37). Thus hermeneutical phenomenology attempts to provide specific meanings and references for the ways in which human beings act and think, and offers a way to reflect critically on conscious lived experience rather than trying to "… *untangle the complications inherent in subconscious motivation*" (Jopling 1996, p155). Conjecture is suspended in favour of descriptions given by the individual, as reality is only perceived within the meaning of an experience of the individual. According to Habermas (1976) people live their lives in their own heads and also as part of a social, cultural and linguistic collective, meaning that consciousness is a mix of individual experiences and those based on societal interactions. A phenomenological approach thereby ideally lends itself to the study of identity construction within the workplace. I acknowledge that this aim is somewhat paradoxical however, in that I am also an observer both socially and culturally situated within the world that is being observed, resulting in a double hermeneutic; I will explore this further later in this chapter.

3.3 Methods

Following Dingwall's assertion that there are three ways of qualitatively studying social phenomena, which are *"… asking questions, hanging out and reading texts*"

(1997, p53), I employed three means of data collection. The first involved semi-structured interviews, the second the creation of mind-maps and the third observing staff participation in meetings. The use of three methods is often portrayed in the methodological literature as a means of triangulation, and a way of corroborating evidence or fortifying claims. My conceptual framework encouraged me to use the meeting observations as a tool to provide further insights on the interview data, and the mind-maps afforded non-verbal, multi-dimensional views of the same phenomenon.

3.3.1 Case study approach

The reality of the higher education workplace is highly complex. Given that my aim was to understand how people construct identities in a specific context, a multiple case study approach was appropriate; by focusing on staff based in three different areas in a single institution I was able to conduct a more detailed analysis of the macro and micro-dynamics of identity construction. My research site is a complex organization rich in cultural diversity and discourse (Kuo 2009), and case studies are particularly useful for studying complexity (Bassey, 1999). Case study research has also been used extensively in education, as its advantages allow for exploration and understanding of complex areas. Stake (1995) comments that a case study approach best serves the aims of qualitative research in that it facilitates *"… understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists"* (p64), whereas Thomas (2011) comments on their value where the researcher is seeking to ask 'how and why' questions. Its other benefits include the collection of a wide range of qualitative data, and the possibility of exploring theoretical propositions within a limited context. As a member of professional services at UCL, I was interested in focusing my research on the context of my own work and that of my colleagues, and for this reason decided that multiple case studies based on the institution would best serve this aim. It would enable me to obtain data from a number of sources while focusing on a particular context. My approach was also influenced by the nature of my research topic which deals with complex and contested concepts.

One potential weakness of this approach however, is a reduction in the generalisability of the findings. That said my purpose was to show how staff construct their identity through individual and collective positioning, which allows for a more in-depth conceptualization. Stake (1995) argues that generalizations may be made within the case study itself, a perspective that maintains the focus on the particular while enabling more comparative perspectives to emerge. My aim was to identify and understand behaviours exhibited by staff, so by being both descriptive and intrinsic I decided a multiple case study approach - albeit limited in its ability to generalize - may yet provide some insight into similar situations in comparable institutions.

3.3.2 Study population and sampling

I selected my twelve research participants through purposive sampling, defined by Robson (2011) as a "… *sample built up which enables the researcher to satisfy their specific needs in a project*" (p275); they were selected on the basis that each had something to contribute. The potential lack of objectivity in this methodological approach has been criticized, alongside its potential for bias. It is based on the researcher's judgment so might exclude certain groups or individuals, albeit can be advantageous in terms of available resources. I would argue however that my participant pool provided sufficient perspective in that rather than it being representative of the population (thereby including all possible perspectives) I explored those of a homogenous group displaying similar characteristics within comparable contexts. In this way I believe a relatively small sample size can provide sufficient perspective, given appropriate contextualization.

I devised three groupings of four staff, based in different parts of UCL. Group One was based in my 'home' (science-based) Faculty, Group Two in an arts-based Faculty (as being diametrically opposed in various ways to my own) and Group Three from the centralized functions of the institution. By this I mean those who are collectively responsible for policy and administrative operations relating to institutional governance, quality management and enhancement, doctoral study,

student records and student lifecycle support. Each group contained two members of staff employed as academics and two as professional services, and was comprised of two men and two women. This was due to the fact that although I was not focusing on gender as a variable, I wanted to be able to identify any (in)consistencies or anomalies that might emerge on comparison. The duration of service spanned from nine years to over thirty; this longevity was another conscious decision on my part, in that with my moderate sample size, I wanted to focus on people who had worked for UCL for a long time, so had been enabled to shape their own identity in addition to forming perceptions of other people's. The sum total of my participants' employment duration at UCL was 268 years (academic staff 149 years, and professional services staff 119 years).

I approached fifteen people of whom twelve agreed to be interviewed. Their demographic composition is supplied in Figure 3a. The eight people in Groups One and Three I identified myself, and I approached a colleague based in the arts-based Faculty to help me identify the four in Group Two. This was because I was not familiar with how long they had worked for UCL for example, so we discussed the requisite demographic characteristics of my sample pool and he provided me with a pool of eight potential candidates. I standardized some job titles to protect anonymity, and assigned pseudonyms by initial according to the group they belonged to (A for Group One, B for Group Two, and C for Group Three). This meant I could see at a glance which part of UCL the participants worked in. They ranged from very senior in grade to middle-management level, as I sought to ensure a representative spread across the different types of staff roles. In addition, the sample covered academic staff who are dedicated to research, and others who concentrate more on the delivery of teaching. Those in professional services were involved only in academic administration, e.g. governance, committee-servicing and administrative support for teaching and learning. However my participant pool was skewed, in that overall it was heavily biased towards senior staff. I did not interview anyone on grades 5-6 for example, although there are many (professional services) staff on those grades in the UCL population. Similarly the academic staff

display greater longevity at UCL, all having been employed for at least 20 years. This longevity, combined with the opportunities for career progression afforded by the academic promotion framework (something not available to professional services staff), meant that the academic staff were collectively more senior than the professional services (all being grades 9-10, as opposed to 7-8), which skewed the sample in another direction. These disparities were partly as a result of my wanting to include only staff who had worked at UCL for a long time, in that it is difficult to find any staff on the lower grades with the requisite length of employment. I also wanted to be able to compare like with like across the three case studies, which meant I had to choose which demographics to prioritise.

Figure 3a

Group	*Participant coding*	*Location*	*Gender*	*Staff Category*	*Staff Grade*	*Participant Pseudonym*	*Service Duration*
One	*1(i)*	Science Faculty	Male	Academic	9	Arthur	20 years
One	*1(ii)*	Science Faculty	Female	Academic	10	Anna	27 years
One	*1(iii)*	Science Faculty	Male	Professional Services	8	Anthony	14 years
One	*1(iv)*	Science Faculty	Female	Professional Services	8	Akemi	18 years
Two	*2(i)*	Arts Faculty	Male	Academic	9	Balvinder	25 years
Two	*2(ii)*	Arts Faculty	Female	Academic	9	Becky	22 years
Two	*2(iii)*	Arts Faculty	Male	Professional Services	8	Ben	9 years
Two	*2(iv)*	Arts Faculty	Female	Professional Services	7	Barbara	27 years
Three	*3(i)*	Central Services	Male	Academic	10	Cliff	30 years
Three	*3(ii)*	Central Services	Female	Academic	10	Claire	25 years
Three	*3(iii)*	Central Services	Male	Professional Services	7	Colin	17 years
Three	*3(iv)*	Central Services	Female	Professional Services	8	Cuifen	34 years

3.4 Ethical issues and potential risks to participants

I conducted this research in compliance with ethical guidelines as provided by the British Ethical Research Association (2018: https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018-online) and obtained ethical approval from the Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee in December 2019 (see

Appendix 1). My research upheld the principle of voluntary informed consent throughout and its voluntary nature was duly emphasized. Participants were invited to interview via personalized email (see *Appendix 2),* via an opt-in approach. Each had the option to withdraw at any stage without giving a reason, and I respected the anonymity and confidentiality of personal information throughout. They were asked to provide signed written consent before the interview began (see *Appendix 3)*. The membership of each meeting I observed was similarly given the option to opt out (see *Appendix 4)*, although no-one expressed any concern; had they done so I would not have observed that particular meeting. A summary of my research findings will be offered to all participants, by way of thanking them for their involvement.

3.5 Data management

I stored all raw data and tracked the various iterations of my data analysis as it progressed. All data was securely deposited in my password-protected area of UCL's N drive, which is accessible both at work and home via UCL's Virtual Private Network. The interviews were audio-recorded and saved on two personal password-protected devices. Following transcription and completion of the data validation exercise, I deleted all recordings. It was made clear to participants that they could request to have their personal data removed at any point. All personal data was stored and processed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), and will be deleted after I have completed my studies.

3.6 Data generation

3.6.1 Interviews

Interviews are a valuable qualitative research method because they provide an opportunity to focus on interpretations derived from respondents' talk, rather than on facts (Warren 2002). Kvale (1996) describes their purpose as being *"… to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena*" (p6), and advocates the use of the semi-structured interview in which the role of the interviewer is to clarify and interpret

meaning. These viewpoints complement a case study approach, where the aim is to explore complex social concepts. Interviews can be seen as empowering (Clough 2002), in that they allow for *"… the recognition of the views of the powerless and the excluded"* (Bogdan & Biklen 1982, p20), whose views are not normally sought or represented. Holstein and Gubrium (2004) claim participants are normally comfortable with interviews, which would suggest they are a useful method for participants unused to being asked to reflect on various issues. I noticed this was particularly true for some of the professional services staff participants, in that three independently volunteered that they had never been involved in any form of research despite their having worked in a research-intensive institution for many years.

Interviewing is not without disadvantage however. For example Silverman (2001) warns of the danger of their being too anecdotal, and highlights the importance of the interviewer's role in allowing space for participants to explore a theme while keeping focus. Scott and Usher (1996) claim that interviews can lack neutrality, in that there is an imbalance of power between interviewer and participants, as research *"… is always and inevitably involved with and implicated in the operation of power"* (p76). This underlines the importance of reflexivity on the part of the researcher, and as the data in this study was partially derived by interview, it is important to clarify how they took place. They were conducted in a relatively informal way and explored areas that are rarely articulated. My understanding of what each represented became more nuanced as I became immersed in their empirical setting, and my questioning and reflexivity became more focused with later participants. An interview guide (*Appendix 5*) was devised beforehand in order to identify primary topics to be covered with participants, which enabled flexibility in *"… the phrasing of questions and the order in which they are asked, and allows the participant to lead the interaction in unanticipated directions*" (King & Horrocks 2010, p35). As I would be exploring participants' thoughts and feelings, I also thought an interview setting would provide them time to reflect on what was being asked and to seek clarification when needed. In this way semi-structured interviews

(as opposed to focus groups or a survey), would enable meaning to be explored by both researcher and participant through providing a degree of flexibility. Their informality would also help in exploring areas that participants may not frequently reflect on or have been asked about before. Foucault's view that the exercise of power may often not be consciously known by those experiencing its effects, suggests that this form of research could uncover concealed truths, something some of the participants also commented on, in that they had not reflected on or realized some aspects of their roles and identities before.

All participants were given the opportunity to review the Information Sheet and Consent Form prior to interview and ask any questions. They were also given the opportunity to opt out at any time without stating why and the logistics were then agreed. Although I did not conduct a pilot interview, the first proved instrumental in refining my technique. All twelve interviews were conducted in the two months between 14 January and 11 March 2020 in staff offices, private meeting rooms or in several cases, a quiet corner of the Academic Staff Common Room. The briefest lasted 48 minutes and the longest 96 minutes. Each was audio-recorded using software available on an iPhone and an iPad. The structure consisted of an opening section in which I provided information about the approximate duration of the interview, the purpose of my recording and note-taking during proceedings, and the extent to which confidentiality could be guaranteed. The second section consisted of my questions and participant responses which naturally guided the direction of proceedings, although I was careful to ask all participants the same questions for ease of comparison. The third section involved the creation of their mind-maps, by their visualising and drawing their perception of place in UCL and talking me through it, and the final section consisted of space for any last thoughts or questions. The participants were given the opportunity to suggest additional areas for discussion or seek clarification throughout.

I transcribed each interview verbatim, including all verbal ticks and filler words and as a result became very familiar with the data, which helped me to identify emerging

themes from an early stage. I formatted the text in a table and numbered each row with a column on the right, to enable space to write my notes and commentary during analysis. I then created 'sanitized' versions through a process of data-cleansing, which perhaps changed some of the meaning but I would argue not in any significant way, and also redacted any identifying features by greying out the text to denote that it would not feature in my analysis. A validation approach was then taken by allowing the participants to have a say in how the data they provided were interpreted, in that they were offered the opportunity to review their transcript, to correct any inaccuracies or delete anything they believed might risk disclosure of their identity. This process helped to ensure that the research findings fairly and accurately conveyed their views, and fully protected their anonymity. Opinion on whether this is good practice is divided; doing so can empower participants and denotes respect in addition to allowing for self-reflection, so can result in a richer data-set and foster increased research credibility (Lincoln & Guba 1985). However there are some disadvantages, such as a shift in power from the interviewer to participant, and the potential for data to be changed or redacted. One participant waived her right to be sent a transcript and of the remaining eleven, three requested small changes be made, all related to further minor redactions of the text to fully remove any potential for identification.

3.6.2 Mind-Maps

During the interviews I asked the participants to produce a mind-map of their perception of their place in UCL. My motive stems back to the results of a concept-mapping exercise I conducted with six interview participants comprised of three academics and three professionals in my Institution Focused Study (see *Appendix 19*). As I was studying the effectiveness of email as a tool for internal communication, I had asked them to draw their communication networks and locate themselves within them. The results highlighted stark disparities in the self-positioning of the two staff groupings, in that they conceived of the same workplace very differently. It was obvious for example that the academics viewed their networks as non-hierarchically idiocentric, by placing themselves at the heart of

their maps with spokes radiating in and out. In contrast the professional services' maps displayed hierarchical and allocentric affiliations, with two omitting to locate themselves altogether, and instead simply depicting the bureaucratic functionality of the institution. I wondered whether the same patterns would be revealed in asking participants to draw their perception of their place within UCL.

I suggest that data gathering that does not consider the assumptions and inherent constraints present in language alone may be limited by the presumption that researchers and participants share similar understandings of the terms, concepts, or constructs under investigation. In this way the act of participants drawing their ideas afforded me a means of breaking with conventional representations of experience expressed by language. If as Habermas (1976) argues people live their lives both in their own heads and as part of a social, cultural and linguistic collective, and if as Husserl (1970) maintains, human consciousness is a combination of individualized experiences and those based on interactions, then mind-mapping may provide a strategy for escaping *"… canned responses"* (Hathaway & Atkinson 2003, p167). In this way they can promote transparency in the research process and assist the qualitative researcher to identify themes, connections and findings, and so provide a unique way to *"… search for codes, concepts and categories within the data ... based on how the participant(s) frame(d) their experience*" (Wheeldon & Faubert 2009, p72–73). The maps thereby offer a means to engage the imagination of participants, so can be seen as unique artefacts of individual understanding (Wheeldon 2010), and in this way complement my phenomenological and interpretive approaches to data collection. Commonly identified drawbacks to this approach however include the extra time needed for data analysis, participant resistance, potential variances in interpretation due to researcher subjectivity, and a risk of decontextualization without sufficient verbal explanation from the creators (Copeland & Agosto 2012). To guard against the latter, I asked the participants to talk me through their maps during the interview to reduce my potential for misinterpretation.

Eleven of the twelve participants agreed to produce mind-maps (one academic participant declined). I have reproduced them small-scale by research group (see *Appendix 25*), with full-sized versions available in *Appendices 8-18*. I obscured identifying features such as names and roles so as to preserve anonymity. This necessarily removed some of the detail but was restricted only to text as opposed to structure, which largely remains untouched. I placed the results side by side and studied them closely in an attempt to uncover salient points of divergence. I compared them in five main ways; the first involved whether they were 'idiocentric' in that the participant placed themselves as a central pivot. The second considered whether they displayed elements of hierarchy in their structure. The third comparator involved whether they exhibited connectivity between satellite elements, or whether all the constituent parts only directly linked to the participant. The fourth area of comparison involved whether the maps only focused on UCL or whether they exceeded its boundaries, and the fifth involved the nature of what was included, i.e. the people (the 'who') or the function (the 'where'). The disparities were not as stark as in my IFS, but nonetheless revealed some systemic differences in the way in which they were presented.

It is important however to acknowledge the high level of subjectivity inherent in my interpretations. I am aware that artefacts such as mind-maps can be interpreted in different ways by different people at different times, meaning that my interpretative lens may focus on aspects I wished or expected to see, and be blind to others that did not fit my conceptual framework. However this is accounted for in the interpretative phenomenological tradition, in that I am acting as a revelatory tool; Larkin *et al* (2006) claim that *"… in 'giving voice', IPA researchers are necessarily balancing representation against interpretation and contextualisation*" (p113). I therefore assert that although there may be other interpretations of the meaning of the participants' mind-maps, my findings nonetheless constitute a valid understanding of their contents. I tabulated my impressions of the results by staff category which are contained in *Appendix 26*.

3.6.3 Observation

The third means of data collection I employed involved the observation of staff meetings. This was because I wondered whether research interviews, in some senses artificial situations divorced from the everyday, would be sufficient to understand identity construction processes in organizations. I decided the subtleties of life in an institution would be best captured by following Dingwall's recommendation to 'hang out' by venturing into the organizational field, where I could directly observe how people enacted their identity in practice. It would also afford me the opportunity to assess whether I could discern any differences caused perhaps by departmental and/or disciplinary contexts. Meetings are interactional spaces in which communication is often performed by those present; people judge others as a result of their conversational exchanges (Baxter 1988). In this way meeting memberships are constantly engaged in the negotiation and co-construction of norms and practices, to demonstrate their group belonging for example, or their role(s), expertise or status. Holland *et al* (1998) claim that;

> *"Entitled people speak, stand, dress, emote, hold the floor – they carry out privileged activities – in ways appropriate to both the situation of the activity and their position within it. Those who speak, stand, dress, hold the floor, emote and carry out activities in these proper ways are seen to be making claims to being entitled. Speaking certain dialects, giving particular opinions, and holding the floor are indices of claims to privilege."* (p133)

Meetings thereby provide opportunities for people to perform and construct their professional identities within a social context, so constitute a significant arena for organizational communication. Angouri & Marra (2011) claim;

> *"Whether it is evidence of power asymmetries or complex socio-professional relationships, meeting participants are constantly engaged in the ongoing negotiation and co-construction of relevant norms and*

> *practices. In this context participants demonstrate their group membership, their role within the team and beyond, their expertise and status in the company; in short, meetings provide an opportunity for participants to perform and construct any one of their roles and their professional identities*." (p85)

Meetings thus represent one of the main arenas where organizational knowledge and culture are created, negotiated and disseminated (Boden 1994; Nielsen 2009). They are prime sites where organizational roles and relations are made manifest (Putnam & Fairhurst 2001; Taylor 2006), as "*… workplace talk provides an essential means of constructing and negotiating diverse social identities in the workplace"* (Holmes 2006, cited in De Fina *et al* p167).

The strengths of observation are that it gives direct access to social interactions and can provide the researcher with permanent and systematic records. In this way observation can enrich and supplement data gathered by other techniques. Although its weaknesses include a demand on time and resources, and a susceptibility to observer bias. It is also the most intrusive of data gathering techniques; people can become defensive when watched (even if they've granted permission), so it may alter their behaviour. I had to remain mindful of this and impose a structure on my record-keeping as I was the instrument of observation, making decisions to record things or not in real time.

I observed six meetings between 18 February and 11 March 2020; three informal working groups in different Faculties and three formal UCL-level committees. The table in Figure 3b outlines their characteristics. None of my twelve interview participants featured in any of the meetings I observed. It is important to note that the timeframe in which the meetings took place was also a period affected by both industrial action and preparations for the nationwide 'lockdown' imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Three of the meetings occurred on days that industrial action took place, but this did not seem to affect the attendance rate of the membership

in any significant way. UCL took the decision to close the campus on Friday 13 March 2020, which was the same week that two of the committee meetings took place. The only impact of this however was that the format and purpose of the last meeting (a formal UCL committee) was changed from a highly formalized forum, in which strategy would have been discussed to an informal working group, whose sole remit was to discuss the proposed approach to coping with the effect of the impending lockdown. This changed the nature of the meeting to some degree, so was arguably not a true representation of normal proceedings, in that there was greater input from some quarters than would have usually taken place. This could not be helped however and in some ways it was useful to be able to observe a formal committee operating in a more informal setting.

The observation was overt in nature, in that the memberships knew that they were being observed, and knew of my role as a researcher. This was because I sought permission from each Chair and then either I or the Secretary contacted the membership beforehand to seek permission (see *Appendices 4* and *6* for examples). I undertook a pilot study by observing a meeting in my home Faculty in January 2020, in order to practise my technique prior to conducting my formal observations. It proved instrumental in helping me to refine my method, in that I realized I had to make split-second decisions on what and what not to record (as dialogue can move very fast), and also had to train myself not to get distracted by the content of discussion or other diversions.

Figure 3b (***emboldened*** *text: meetings that took place during industrial action*)

Forums	Date	Members present
Working Group One	**9 March 2020**	**28**
Working Group Two	18 February 2020	24
Working Group Three	19 February 2020	20
UCL Committee One	**25 February 2020**	**22**
UCL Committee Two	27 February 2020	33
UCL Committee Three	**11 March 2020**	**15**

As what I was observing was simply who participated and how often (not what they said or who their comments were addressed to), I deliberately selected those forums whose remits equally applied to both academic and professional services staff. This meant some were inappropriate, as some meetings function to focus on pedagogy and the delivery of teaching etc., meaning that proceedings would naturally be dominated by academic staff. Likewise committees whose remits focus on UCL finances or the estate would similarly be dominated by professional services staff. I therefore selected informal working groups made up of the senior executive in three Faculties, whose remits cover areas applicable to all staff such as strategy, income, research output, teaching and so on. I hoped by doing this neither academic staff nor professional services staff would dominate, as each would be equally invested in the topics under discussion. This approach could not be undertaken so successfully with the UCL-level committees however as their remits and memberships are more fixed, so I selected those that best suited my research design, and whose memberships were the most proportionally representative of both staff groupings.

Although included in my research design, I was unable to observe a meeting in the arts-based Faculty I had selected to mirror my home Faculty. It transpired there are no forums in which academic and professional services staff meet together outside of the UCL-mandated committee structure. Their working groups at Faculty level are comprised only of academic staff, or of professional services staff. I consider this split between the two staff groupings curious and silently indicative of the tacit divide between academic and professional services staff.

My means of data collection involved recording those present in the room by staff category and gender, and assigning each person a number. Every time they spoke I wrote down their unique number as their having taken a ‘turn’ in the conversation (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974). I ended up with a very long string of numbers which I then tabulated in Excel to show who had participated and to what extent. (See *Appendix 7* for a sample of the data tabulated in an Excel spreadsheet.) I

excluded any back channel forms of communication and limited my data capture to sentences, as opposed to throwaway words or sounds. I analysed the data in two ways, both including and excluding the Chair. This is because the Chair provides a pivotal function in a meeting, directing proceedings and inviting members to speak, which means their participation rate is normally significant. Inclusion of their data in my analysis could skew the results, particularly as I was examining discrepancies in participation between staff category (and to a lesser extent gender), and all six Chairs were academic staff (five of them male). Detailed charts of the results are available in *Appendix 20,* and *Appendices 27-28* display both the staff attendance and participation percentage rates in each meeting by staff category and gender.

In many ways this is a rather crude and simplistic form of observing proceedings, in that I did not capture the amount of time someone spoke for example, but simply the number of times they said something which was not always representative of how long they held the floor. As such it was mechanistic and did not allow for researcher inference. If I had audio-visually recorded proceedings I could have fine-tuned this aspect, and also analysed the non-verbal forms of communication in addition to who dominated the conversation, who spoke over who or who interrupted who and so on. This would have provided a more representative record, although this would also have significantly affected participant behaviour, and may have meant permission in some instances may have been denied. In some meetings for example, I was aware of various undercurrents which affected discussion, but my observational tools did not allow me to capture or reflect on these aspects. In one meeting in particular a member arrived late, and his participation palpably changed the atmosphere and tone of proceedings for the worse. Despite this lack of a more holistic contextual ability however, the data I collected from the six meetings provided some valuable insights.

3.7 Data analysis

My approach to data analysis was shaped by my theoretical framework, outlined in Chapter One. I used theory from the outset to shape my research questions and methodology. Employing a phenomenological approach and a clear theoretical framework also shaped it, in that my initial steps towards analysis were undertaken at the time of data generation. Questioning during interview was focused by my orienting concepts, and during them the meaning of what was being said was probed, and my interpretations reflected back to the participant for clarification or (dis)confirmation (Kvale 1996). There is considerable discussion in the research methodological literature on the quality of data obtained through interviewing, either due to issues relating to the (un)conscious selection or omission of what is said by the researcher, or due to questions of reliability and validity of the data obtained (Robson 2011; Creswell 2013). Practical methods of analysis, for example the coding or display of data, highlight the importance of the overall research design and its methodological approach, as well as the relationship between these and the researcher's values. My interpretation and generation of themes and constructs were produced iteratively. Throughout the research process I maintained reflexivity; examining whose interpretation of events I was prioritising, and how the data generated either supported or conflicted with my developing theoretical understandings. The need for iterative consideration of the data and the development of propositions based on findings and conclusions are key, so in my close reading of the interview texts I aimed to identify the cultural or social discourses that were being used by participants, in order to understand their interactions with others and the ways they conceived of themselves in these interactions, through studying some of their terminology and use of language.

3.7.1 Interpretative phenomenological analysis

I used interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) in the analysis of my interview data. IPA is a qualitative approach developed within psychology for the examination of personal lived experience (Smith 1996), and has three primary theoretical underpinnings; phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography. On a

methodological level, an IPA study typically involves an intensive analysis of the accounts produced by a comparatively small number of participants who comprise a homogenous group, such as in my research design. Participant selection tends to be purposive, and focuses on examining divergence and convergence in smaller samples. While phenomenological studies tend to focus on a common experience, IPA focuses on *"…personal meaning and sense-making in a particular context, for people who share a particular experience"* (Smith *et al* 2009, p45), so is ideal for use in an organizational setting. The mode of data analysis takes the form of a multi-stage process of generating theory from the data 'bottom-up', in that that the researcher generates codes from the data, rather than using an already existing theory to identify codes that can be applied. Focusing on one participant's data at a time, analysis moves from the descriptive to the interpretative, by capturing initial thoughts and posing tentative themes. (See *Appendices 21-22* for excerpted examples of my data coding in two of the interviews.) In this way it proceeds from the exploratory, to the emergent, to the generation of overarching themes for each participant, and then on to master themes for the group.

My data analysis involved repeated reading of the interview transcripts in order to attain a deep level of understanding of their contents and nuances. I then created 'pen portraits' in the form of narrative silhouettes, in an attempt to capture and then immerse myself in the life-world of each participant in terms of their responses (see *Appendix 23*). During my repeated reading of the transcripts I wrote notes in the right-hand column I had created for that purpose, as and when thoughts about emerging patterns or relationships occurred. This resulted in literally hundreds of notes. In order to be able to systematically analyse them all to uncover their meaning, I itemized them by participant in an Excel spreadsheet. I added a column on the right in which I pasted any verbatim quotes I thought significant, alongside their coded participant source for ease of navigation. In between my margin notes on the left and the participants' quotes on the right, I inserted three further columns; one for 'micro' themes arising from the data, one for 'meso' themes and one for 'macro' themes. In this way over a period of several months and as described in

the paragraph above, I generated theory from the bottom up, by initially posing exploratory themes in the micro-theory column before suggesting emergent themes in the meso-theory column and ultimately over-arching or master themes in the macro-theory column. (See *Appendix 29* for two excerpted examples.) In this way I rigorously ensured that meaning was generated from what was discussed and originated solely from the participants' data.

This is because IPA studies involve detailed examination of research participants' life-worlds - their experiences of a particular phenomenon, how they have made sense of them and the meanings they attach to them (Smith 2004). Their aim is to explore in detail how participants make sense of their social world, so is phenomenological in approach, in that they explore personal experience and are concerned with an individual's perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to the production of an objective statement of the object or event itself. IPA holds that research is a dynamic process which contains an active role for the researcher, so recognises that the exploration of the meaning of personal experience is an interpretative act on the part of both participant and researcher. As Fade (2004) claims:

> *"The researcher's beliefs are not seen as biases to be eliminated but rather as being necessary for making sense of the experiences of other individuals. Reflexivity is viewed as an optional tool, enabling the researcher to formally acknowledge his or her interpretative role, rather than as an essential technique for removing bias."* (p648)

Hence IPA operates with a double hermeneutic, as *"…the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world"* (Smith & Osborn 2003, p26). Access to meaning depends on (but is also complicated by) the researcher's own conceptions, which are paradoxically required in order to make sense of that other personal world through a process of interpretative activity. Thus

a two-stage interpretation process in the form of a double hermeneutic is involved. Tappan (1997) claims that hermeneutic approaches such as the one I employed to analyse my data, *"… view the knower and the known as fundamentally interrelated, and thus assume that any interpretation necessarily involves an essential circularity of understanding" (p651).*

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed description of the methodological approach adopted in this study. It highlighted the approach taken to generate the data to address my research questions and how I then attempted to create a meaningful understanding of the data generated. In acknowledging that my methodological decisions created a lens through which to research, I have identified both methodological and ethical issues that arose from my choices, and how these then affected both the nature and quality of the data. In this way I have prepared the groundwork for the next two chapters in which I present and discuss my findings from the data I generated.

4.1 Introduction

In this Chapter and the next I present and discuss my findings, by bringing the results of my three data generation exercises together and using them as a lens through which to interrogate my research questions. The findings revealed some recurring themes that cluster around two main areas of focus; the first is the influence of both **space** and **place** on staff perceptions of their self-positioning, and the second relates to differing perceptions of hierarchy, visibility and legitimacy. This chapter will explore the themes associated with the first area of focus. I start by outlining some of the images and 'buzz' words associated with UCL by the participants and what they might suggest. This is to set the scene as to their feelings about UCL, and their perceptions of it as an institutional entity. I then move on to discuss the impact of space and place in terms of the effect of the built environment on staff perceptions of self-positioning. This includes the effects of both physical situatedness, and the co-location of staff with regard to their habitus and social capital. This is followed by my examining to what extent people primarily identify with their discipline or their Department, and how this can be demonstrated in their discourse via their use of language. I conclude by exploring how positionality is expressed through staff interconnectivity, both within and without UCL's boundaries.

4.1.1 A caveat on data interpretation

The principal aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of a set of staff within a single university regarding their self-positioning within the institution. Its primary object was to examine the constructs of their identities and explore its impact on working relationships. A secondary intention was to explore how university staff relate to their institution and to each other within a socially constructed workplace, in order to increase understanding of this phenomenon, which could in turn help staff work together more effectively. In conducting the research I was aware that I

would be exploring an area that would not be easy to interpret. Social identity is complex and contested, which means that a variety of perceptions about it and interpretations of its meaning proliferate. Identity is also not a concept that was necessarily easy for the research participants to articulate their views clearly, so it involved reflexive interpretation on my part as a researcher to draw meaning from the data they generated. For example, one thing I picked up on during the interviews was the silence between some of the participants' words and their potential meaning; I inferred various impressions from what was merely hinted at or left unsaid. Although this could to some degree be simple bias on my part, I think in an interpretative phenomenological study such as this, in which I acted as an analytical tool, the 'unspoken' is of equal importance. Consistent perceptions of staff identity and positionality emerged, as did a picture of how these perceptions have shaped working relationships. I therefore reflected on and included these impressions in the analysis of my data.

I have also suggested in previous chapters that identity is intangible and non-quantifiable. For this reason the data generated in this study required a level of interpretation to create meaning. As I outlined in the last chapter, my analysis began at the data generating phase, as I became attuned to the emerging data and the themes they contained. Theory was foregrounded during analysis and my theoretical framework impacted on what elements of the data were chosen for more detailed focus. Thus some of the cross-sectional themes that arose from the data were consistent with anticipated themes. The data generated in this study consisted of personal narratives, so in addition to showing commonalities across participants' experiences, the data are also used to illuminate individual stories of how people view their professional identities and their place in UCL. I suggest this personal viewpoint is important in shaping their interpretations of themselves and is thus a vital element in the analysis of the data.

4.1.2 The presentation of my findings

My findings are discussed with evidence from the data contextualized as appropriate throughout, in addition to highlighting how they relate to existing theory and past research. For purposes of validation I have included illustrative representations, so interweave both statistical analysis in the form of charts and graphs and verbatim quotes throughout. This is because I best understand data if it is presented visually and makes use of colour. I selected green to denote academic staff and orange to denote professional services staff. This was so that at a glance I could see to which staff category participants belonged. Similarly I used pink to denote female research participants and blue to denote male. This is an admittedly highly gender-normative system, but one intended simply to provide a familiar 'traffic light' method of classification and has no other meaning. My data have been used to understand this phenomenon in this particular field, so direct quotations are used illustratively. The derivation of each quotation from the transcripts are given in parentheses where appropriate, alongside the participant's coded pseudonym, and either '[*A*]' to denote they are a member of academic staff or '[*PS*]' to indicate professional services.

4.3 Metaphorical imagery and habitus

I asked all twelve interview participants the same questions, as outlined in *Appendix 5.* The questions broadly centred on how for long and in which parts of UCL they had worked, their minds' eye concept of UCL and any 'buzz' words they associated with the institution. I asked how they thought others perceived them and their work, alongside whether they thought UCL valued them, and the impact of their physical location and workspaces on their working relationships. This was because I was interested in uncovering any subconscious thoughts and feelings they associated with UCL, as well as being able to compare and contrast between different categories and groupings. I also asked all participants to say what came to mind when they thought of UCL; a picture, a feeling or a word. I wanted to explore how they perceived UCL as an institution and what it meant to them in purely conceptual terms.

The results were mixed and contained some rich imagery, particularly from the academic staff. For example Cliff [*A*] thought it resembled a super-tanker (slow, ponderous but forging its own path) whereas Becky [*A*] thought it resembled a sprawling maze. Claire [*A*] said it called to mind a solar system containing lots of moving parts spinning around and occasionally bumping into each other, and Anna [*A*] thought it a labyrinthine jumble of boxes, made of up grand but shabby old buildings containing the occasional "*smart bit of kit*" (1(ii)27). The images from the professional services were arguably less rich, albeit it reminded Colin [*PS*] of a clock full of tiny cogs and Anthony [*PS*] deemed it a bowl of spaghetti. Akemi [*PS*] simply saw the corporate logo in her mind's eye when she thought of UCL, and both Ben [*PS*] and Cuifen [*PS*] thought of its iconic building on the front Quad. What nearly all of the more metaphorical imagery have in common however is the perception of UCL's sheer size and its messiness and disorder; the bowl of spaghetti, the jumble of boxes, the sprawling maze, the solar system of randomly spinning objects.

I also asked all participants for up to five 'buzz words' that sprang to mind when they thought of UCL, without their thinking about it too deeply (see *Appendix 24* for the full listing). This was in an attempt to uncover subconscious images, thoughts or feelings that they associated with the institution I could then compare. Linked to the point made above, the largest category by far referred to its structure in that it was described in terms such as 'chaotic', 'muddled', 'lawless', 'messy' and 'bonkers'. Interestingly only two professional services participants mentioned students and three cited UCL as a good employer; no academic staff participants mentioned either facet in any way. This perhaps points to the desire for stable employment referenced by a number of the professional services staff in their interviews, something that was entirely absent in all of the academics'.

From this exercise it would seem that the habitus of the two staff categories differ in that they perceive of the same institution in very disparate ways. To some extent this is predicated on where they position themselves within it; Colin [*PS*] views

himself at its epicentre as a tiny cog for example, whereas the images evoked by some of the academics centre on their perceptions of its randomized chaos and their being located on its periphery. Bourdieu (1995) claims that the;

> *"… space of social positions is retranslated into a space of 'position takings' by the mediation of the space of dispositions (or habitus); or, in other words, the system of differential deviations in agents' properties…"* (p14)

It may be that although all participants work for UCL, they view it very differently in terms of their habitus, based on these 'differential deviations' between their literal relationship to and their figurative positioning within the institution; the academic staff perhaps focus on its scope for individuality (hence their view of its nonconformity), whereas the professional services staff maybe tend to see it more in terms of corporate images (the letterhead logo, the building on the main quad), because they view themselves as its employees. Cliff [*A*] conjured up for example the image of a super-tanker and when asked where he situated himself in it, said "*Hanging on the edge of the bridge. Just getting a chance to go into the bridge and just sort of floating around there and sort of chivvying people along a bit*" (3(i)42-44). This evokes his sense of his facility to help steer the super-tanker. In contrast Colin [*PS*] visualized it in terms of how it all worked together as a clock to be more than the sum of its parts, which I interpreted as indicative of how he sees his identity and that of professional services in general as one of its anonymous cogs, working collectively to keep the clock ticking.

4.4 The impact of space and place

I will now move on to discuss in more detail the impact of space and place on staff perceptions of self-positioning. As discussed in Chapter Two, I use the term metaphysical to refer to place as an allegorical concept within a largely figurative dimension. This is because I contend that the location of the workplace and its metaphysical situatedness within the organization impact on how people orientate

themselves, something that is often overlooked within the broader context of the workplace. Dixon (2005, cited in Benwell & Stokoe 2006) argues that social science research often disregards 'locatedness' as a key contextual dimension of social life, even though as Bourdieu (1991) states, "*Space as we inhabit it and as we know it is socially constructed and marked*" (p108). This 'spatial turn' as coined by Benwell & Stokoe (2006) stems from postmodern theory and draws on Foucault's observation that we live in an epoch of space (1986). This has brought about new understandings of space and place and their relation to the construction of identity, as their inclusion shows that *"… not only do people make spaces but spaces make people, by constraining them but also by offering opportunities for identity construction"* (Benwell & Stokoe 2006, p211). Cox *et al* (2012) claim that space often goes unobserved but shapes our worlds whereas De Fina *et al* (2006) argue material and symbolic resources within the minute details of everyday life support 'who we are', meaning that how we position ourselves in relation to such resources can reveal our identity. Dixon (2005) claims that identity can and should be seen in spatial terms, as our lives;

> *"….unfold within material and symbolic environments ('places') that are both socially constituted and contitutive of the social. Acknowledgement of this so-called 'spatial dimension' opens up new ways of looking at phenomena such as the formation of social identities and relationships."* (cited in Benwell & Stokoe 2006, p211)

With regard to this concept Bourdieu (1995) contends that;

> *"Physical space and social space have a lot of things in common. Just as physical space is defined by the mutual externality of parts, social space is defined by the mutual exclusion (or distinction) of positions which constitute it, that is, as a structure of juxtaposition of social positions."* (p12)

4.4.1 University spaces and places

Universities typically use their physical space as cultural signifiers to indicate their legitimacy as established institutions producing authentic knowledge, such as for example in the architectural style of their buildings. Chapman (2006) remarked on this, in that "*… the institutional story is told through the campus... The campus is an unalloyed account of what the institution is all about*" (cited in Temple 2009, p210). Cox *et al* (2012) reference the use of iconic building styles (neoclassical or baroque for example) in university prospectuses as a way of reinforcing messages about institutional distinction. Similarly, markers of individual prestige and status are employed such as staff offices with individuals' names on the door, which serve to spatially signify the legitimacy of the individual to be associated with the university and thereby link them to the credibility of the institution. In terms of exploring prevailing power discourses, it is interesting to note that UCL custom and practice on door nameplates dictates that only those with professional designations (e.g. Dr, Professor) be used; individuals with non-professional titles (e.g. Mr, Ms) are simply omitted. This removal of personal titles could be seen as tacitly disempowering to those staff without doctorates, in that it implies a sense of their value or worth being less than those who are permitted to openly display their academic credentials in terms of their spatial presence.

The ability of the built environment to evoke powerful and enduring images is evidenced by two of the participants in their envisaging of UCL, via their subconsciously conjuring up its iconic portico in their minds' eye. In this way as Bourdieu (1991) argues, "*Architectural spaces…. are no doubt the most important components of the symbolism of power because of their very invisibility"* (p108). He likens it to *"… symbolic violence*" (ibid., p108), in that space is a site in which power is both asserted and wielded. The impact of this on the habitus can be tacitly disempowering, when disparities occur between people's perceptions and their lived reality. Cox *et al* (2012) cite the unsettling effect this can have within a university setting, in that in their experience;

> "*We have a limited sense of belonging. We are genuinely marginal from the iconic centres of the university. The university's scale and the diversity of the practices that occupy university space are at times in conflict with our habitus…"* (p704)

4.4.2 The impact of metaphysical disconnection on campus

A lack of physical and therefore social integration among staff groupings can result in isolation and a sense of disconnection, meaning that without adequate personal interaction, both groups can become more distant and less understanding of each other's work (Kuo 2009). Wohlmuther's research conducted in 2008 concluded that staff have a deeper understanding and respect for each other's roles if they have a more proximal relationship with them. This finding was echoed in Handal's 2007 research on the impact of location on academic developers' identity, as he found that where they were geographically located (either separately as an independent unit or embedded within academic departments) impacted on their sense of identity and their perception by others. This sense of disconnection can be further underscored by a sense of transience within the physical workspace, combined with stringent security measures on campus. On the first point, Cox *et al* (2012) claim "*We cannot escape a sense that we are in temporary occupation of our very offices, even as we fill them with personal trinkets and mementoes"* (p705). The rapid expansion in UCL student numbers in recent years has led to severe space shortages across the estate and resulted in the re-design and repurposing of much existing space, meaning that the perception of transience is something many staff would recognise even if not directly experienced. Temple (2019) labels increasing amounts of university spaces as 'non-places', because *"… their users feel no connection with them or responsibility for them – ultimately, like all nonplaces, they are unloved, always someone else's responsibility…"* (p228). He goes on to claim that the non-place is also a result of movement on campus being increasingly *"… monitored and controlled by electronic means (security cameras, swipe cards) –*

even student attendance at lectures is now frequently recorded using ID cards" (p227).

This was something that was referenced by the interview participants, with regard to a feeling of being unwelcome across the UCL estate. For example, Cliff [*A*} said *"… the place is just full of closed doors everywhere*" (3(i)105) and Anna [A] commented that there were vast swathes of the campus she had never visited because of logistical difficulties gaining access. This sense of dislocation as a result of spatial configuration was very evident in my findings, in that in an institution as large and geographically diverse as UCL *"… you can not see people for a long time"* (Colin [*PS*] 3(iii)123). Anna [*A*] (who has her own office) claimed "*... space is a major barrier… I sit with my door open, because that's another barrier, so I end up very self-consciously overcoming space*" (1(ii)106-107,114). Cliff [*A*] identified the same problem, saying *"... people say 'oh we never see you over in [redacted]' and I say actually I go over to [redacted] quite often but all the doors are always closed. I never see anybody there"* (3(i)109-111). Cuifen [*PS*] echoed this anonymising effect, saying *"… I stand up in a room full of strangers and say 'I'm Cuifen' and they all go 'Aaah!' because of course I email them every day but I don't know who they are at all, we never meet"* (3(iv)89-94). The effect of space and physical locatedness seemed to have the most significant impact on her sense of wellbeing of all the participants, as she was one of hundreds of staff moved away from the Registry (situated at arguably the historic heart of UCL, in its original building on the main campus) several years ago, to new hot-desking accommodation in an anonymous office building several streets away. This change of location significantly impacted on staff working practices, as she explains;

> *".... working up here, moving away, I hate it really. I feel completely detached from students, I never see one, I feel like I could be in an office anywhere.... it's divorced me from what I love to be working in, you know centrally, in, there... It's awful not to have a space of your*

own, it really is, and it's causing a lot of stress... it's incredibly stressful." (*3(iv)68-70,71-73,75-76*)

4.4.3 Space, place and social capital

It is interesting to consider that the move to more communal working or hot-desking in recent years, to encourage more flexible working patterns and to maximize the chronic shortage of space, have almost exclusively been applied to professional services staff. Plans to apply the same principle to academic staff typically meet with fierce opposition, with the importance of privacy being cited as integral to the academic role in terms of providing tuition, so are typically abandoned. This is despite professional services staff's need to work regulated hours on campus, in contrast to academic staff's need of more flexible working patterns to help foster creativity (Seyd 2000). This often results in the anomalous situation of overcrowding in communal offices designated for professional services staff, alongside multiple individual offices for academic staff in the same building often remaining empty. For example Becky [*A*] (who has her own office) referenced this in saying;

"... on most days I work at home so I hardly engage with UCL at all, as a thing... I'm much more on the edge of it, you know, if I disappeared tomorrow, they probably wouldn't notice I'd gone for several months. You know, 'til I didn't turn up to do my teaching or something."
(2(ii)130-31,134-37)

It could be usefully argued that the university habitus is to some extent based on both its physical and figurative location alongside the configuration of its workspaces, which can directly impact on staff relationships and perceptions of staff self-positioning. Bourdieu (1995) argues that spatial distance often equates to social distance. I contend this is based on the social capital staff can claim, in that it could be argued those staff (like Cuifen [*PS*]) lack capital, which in Bourdieu's view *"… brings the experience of social finitude to a climax: it chains one, ties one down to a despised locale*" (1991, p110). He argues the logic that an agent's

location in physical space is a reliable indication of their position in their social space. This is because "*There is no space, in a hierarchical society, that is not hierarchized and which does not express social hierarchies and distances in a more or less distorted or euphemized fashion….*" (p107). If one contrasts Becky's [*A*] frequently empty private office with the loathed hot-desking arrangements Cuifen [*PS*] works in, it is clear to see who is afforded more capital by the institution and the impact of its loss.

4.4.4 Situated place and habitus

My data also showed that an individual's perception of their status and place was dependent to some extent on whether they viewed their situatedness as being internal or external to the institution. Anthony [*PS*] commented on this aspect, *"....one thing I noticed when I came to UCL was, having worked outside and not being a UCL person, I really felt that I was not a UCL person"* (1(iii)156-157. Cliff [*A*] echoed this, saying *"... occasionally you get people coming in from outside whose values don't align but usually they become socialized and they do start to learn about our values. If they don't, they leave"* (3(i)68-70). I would argue that this is related to how the staff view their relationship to UCL as being either intrinsic or extrinsic; I suggest this indicates that academic staff believe they effectively embody the institution, whereas professional services staff perceive themselves as its employees. Balvinder [*A*] said on this point;

> *".. the university is the body of academics. So you can take the buildings away but the university could still exist. If you take the academics away you have the buildings but the university wouldn't exist.*" (2(i)341-344)

I interpret this to mean that individuals' perceptions of their status and place is predicated on whether they identify with the institution as their habitus, i.e. where they then perceive themselves as being situated. Their figured world as Holland *et*

al might argue is developed by their storying of themselves as either intrinsically or extrinsically situated agents.

4.5 Perceptions of 'home'

This leads on to my next point, which is that the literature on academic identity generally concurs that academics hold their primary identification with their subject or discipline as opposed to their Department or institution (Harris 2005; Allen Collinson 2006; Lewis 2014; Coate *et al* 2018), whereas professional services staff identify at the unit or institutional level (Seyd 2000; Kuo 2009; Billot 2010). Geertz (1983) suggests that this primary identification represents *"… a way of being in the world*" as a *"… cultural frame that defines a great part of one's life"* (p155). Henkel (2000) asserts an academic discipline *"… provides the language in which individuals understand themselves and interpret their world"* (p15), as it has been argued that;

> *"Culture of the discipline is the primary source of faculty identity and expertise and typically engenders stronger bonds than those developed within the institution of employment, particularly in large universities."* (Kuhn and Whitt 1988, p77)

However this was not something I found universally reflected in my research findings; I found more of a *"… constellation of communities"* (McNay 2005, p42), in that most of the participants appeared to feel more attached to their Department than their subject. Churchman's research conducted in 2006 identified this, in that she found the boundaries between communities were not as rigid at a group or individual level as expected, and there was evidence of fluidity in the ways in which staff viewed the university. She concluded that given time and within various contexts, academics reconstruct elements of their work identity and shift their interpretations to align themselves with other groups. Similarly McNay (2005) concluded that a communal or collective identity was more prevalent in smaller units. My findings suggest that the majority of the research participants identify more strongly with their Department, viewing it as their 'home'. Claire [*A*]

commented on this phenomenon that every Department is different, because although all share the same processes and platforms by virtue of being part of UCL, culture is driven by *"… who the people are around you"* (3(ii)17-34). This was recognized by other participants and Anna [*A*] summed this viewpoint up neatly by saying;

> *"... there are very specific knowledges and organizational cultures that can be so specific to one Department... if you were just to post people to a different Department without any consideration in to why it takes a while to learn how the Department works, that wouldn't work."* (1(ii)179-180,182-184)

There are exceptions to this however and I identified a few anomalies within the data. For example I studied the mind-maps the interview participants drew, to ascertain whether their perception of their positioning remained within or exceeded UCL's metaphorical borders, as a way of establishing which had the bigger claim on primary identification, the discipline or the Department. The divergence between the two groupings was very stark, in that all six of the professional services staff maps present a UCL-only perspective; none of them cite any area, link or person beyond its borders. Only two academic staff maps echoed this structure (Arthur [*A*] and Balvinder [*A*]), and it is interesting to note that they are both heavily involved in delivering teaching and to a far lesser extent in conducting research. Therefore they arguably have less need of forging and maintaining external connections beyond UCL. The other three academic mind-maps (as only five were produced), cited people and institutions beyond UCL's borders entirely unconnected to UCL but important to the individuals involved. In some ways this is to be expected, as academic staff roles (particularly those focused on research) are highly individual, and based on personal networks with research partners based elsewhere. Academic career mobility is to some degree predicated on these external connections, as Steneck (1994) argues;

> *"Spending time with colleagues does not generate research grants and seldom results in publications. Nor does it advance disciplinary knowledge. The incentives to generate and participate in an intellectual life on a university campus are small in comparison to the incentives to engage in an intellectual life off campus."* (p19)

Anna [*A*] said on this point, "*I have a lot of freedom to pursue my own interests and therefore my network is going to be very specific to me*" (1(ii)160-162). Claire [*A*] echoed this sentiment, saying "*I've got rich relationships and important relationships and I've got hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of relationships, and lots of them are nothing to do with my job*" (3(ii)353-355). In line with this, there is less need for professional services staff to look beyond the confines of the institution to fulfil their role, although of course many do by for example their involvement in professional bodies (and within UCL via various communities of practice), but it was not reflected in their mind-maps. I suggest this is meaningful for their understanding of their habitus, as eight of the research participants (i.e. all six professional services staff and the two academics heavily involved in delivering teaching) firmly positioned themselves within the framework of their local unit. This would seem to emphasize the significant nature of their local working relationships in the construction of their identity.

4.5.1 Proximal and distal identification

Research into the strength of identification within an organization also shows that people tend to identify less strongly at the overall level of the organization than with lower level entities (Ellemers & Rink 2005; Bacon 2009). The workplace is typically experienced at a local level (Ashforth 2016), meaning that employees identify more strongly with proximal targets such as their Department than with more distal targets such as the organization (Bartels *et al* 2006; van Dick *et al* 2008). In this way proximal identities are simply more salient (as explained via self-categorisation theory), because people encounter other members of their 'in' groups more frequently, as well as perceiving that they have more in common with them. Ashforth

(2001) argues that the group identities of small units are richer than those of larger divisions, because smaller ones typically undertake defined activities, thereby providing individuals with more opportunity to see their impact on the group. He goes on to state;

> *"The organization may be the house within which one works, but it's often not the home. Is it any wonder, then, that organizational members tend to look to what they do and who they do it with for the most central pieces of their workplace identity?"* (2016, p365)

This concept struck me as significant during the process of transcribing the twelve research interviews, with regard to the extent to which some of the participants strongly identified with their home unit. Even when asked questions about their thoughts on a subject that referred to themselves as unique individuals, some answered in the collective, on behalf of their workplace affiliations. This struck me as curious, as it suggested a very strong attachment to their local identity. I considered this could be partially understood by the application of social identity theory as discussed in Chapter Two. It claims that social identity (as opposed to personal identity) is defined by individual identification within a group as a process constituted by a reflexive knowledge of membership and an emotional attachment to belonging. Its application could explain why for example when I asked Arthur [*A*] about how he thought his colleagues perceived him and his work, he answered through the lens of his role in his Department and its place within the Faculty as opposed to himself as an individual, because that is how he views his professional identity. I thought he had misunderstood my question so pressed him on it and he maintained his stance; I later realized it was a deliberate act as opposed to owing to any form of misunderstanding on his part, in that his personal identity is intrinsically linked to that of his home unit. Similarly other staff felt a very strong attachment to their Department as opposed to the wider collective of the Faculty or the institution. Akemi [*PS*] said of this phenomenon "*... Yeah, I do feel part of the Faculty. But more a sense of belonging to [redacted] obviously because I've worked*

there, rather than the Faculty as a whole" (1(iv)75-77). I suggest these interpretations emphasize the significance of the local habitus in determining individuals' self-positioning, as Bourdieu (1995) argues;

> *"… proximity in social space predisposes to closer relations: people who are inscribed in a confined sector of the space will be both closer (in their properties and in their dispositions, their tastes) and more disposed to get closer, as well as being easier to bring together, to mobilize."* (p19)

4.6 Identification and discourse

The research participants' use of language also belied their sense of belonging to their local unit as their home, via their use of collective terminology. I noticed this during the transcription process with regard to how some participants used highly pluralistic terminology (e.g. we, our, us) when answering questions, as opposed to the singular (e.g. I, me, my). For example Akemi [*PS*] used the word "we" excessively; in one 171-word section she used it 17 times. Similarly Arthur [*A*] used it to describe whether he felt valued by UCL 9 times within a 72 word section. An example of this usage may be cited in that Colin [*PS*] said of his perception of his place in UCL *"…we are UCL and you know, we're a service...."* (3(iii)153). As Alvesson *et al* (2008) warn however, definitions of self always involve negotiating intersections with other simultaneously held identities which can mean that *"… when people refer to a seemingly shared 'we', they imbue this depersonalized collective with diverse and personalized meanings"* (p10). Therefore although I do not know what was meant by the participants' use of 'we' as a descriptor, I interpreted it as an indicator of their strong sense of belonging within the figured world of their local unit. It also varied between individuals; in some it was particularly stark. I decided to quantify my perceptions as to the use of plural and singular terminology in the participants' discourse, so removed anything I said from each transcript and measured the number of times in which various words were used in each interview. This was because I wondered whether given the significance of the

importance of teamwork and collective success referenced by the professional services participants, their data would reveal more use of pluralistic terminology. The word counts were almost identical in each category (18,235 for professional services staff and 18,576 for academics), but the data shows that the former used more than twice as many pluralistic terms as the latter (see Figures 4a-4b). For example professional services participants used 'we' 137 times in comparison to the 62 times it was used by academics, and this pattern was echoed in its derivatives. This is potentially indicative of a trend to voice a more collective identity within professional services.

Figure 4a

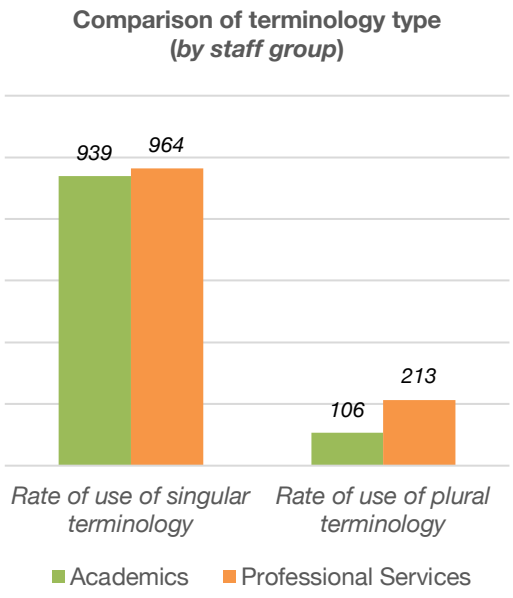
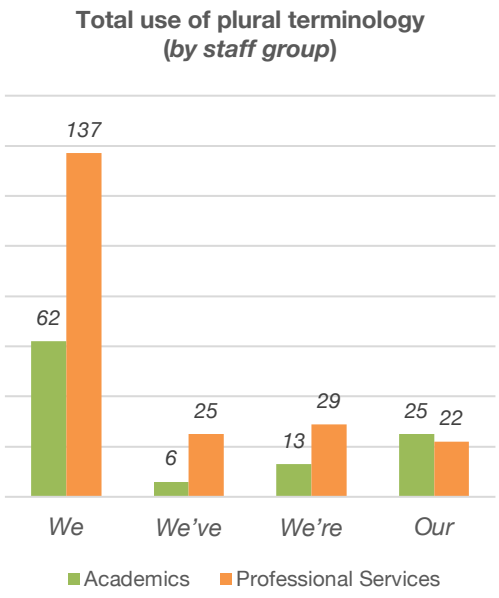


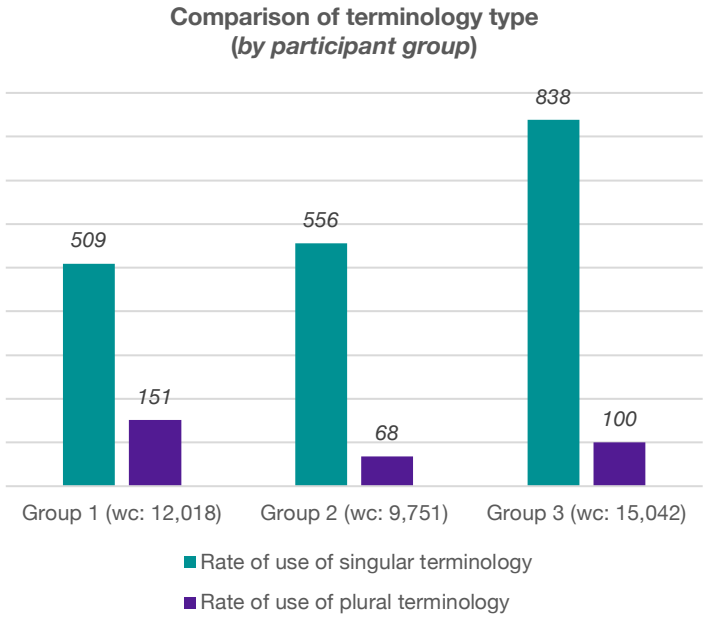
Figure 4b



I also compared the data by case study grouping, as described in Figure 4c, in order to see how they differed by workplace location or discipline. Although the word counts vary, it is interesting to note that the staff based in the central functions of the university (Group Three) see higher usage of singular terminology than the two groupings based in Faculties. Taking into account the disparities in word count, the disparity is arguably less stark albeit still notable. Given that those based in the latter all work in the centralized functions of the university, I would have expected a more collective vocabulary to dominate. This is because their remits span the

entirety of the institution, so I presumed they would identify more strongly at an institutional level. On the other hand it may be that the data reported in the other groups was artificially inflated both by excessive usage of plural terms employed by some participants, and also for example in Group One (my 'home' Faculty), by their viewing me as 'one of them' and thereby including me in their answers, referring to a collective "we" to encompass my presence.

Figure 4c



Related to the use of language in the participants' discourse is the terminology employed to denote their contacts on their mind-maps, as to whether they used named actants (the 'who') or simply the location of the functions they carry out (the 'where'). This measurement was very subjective, as almost all participants used a mixture of both, meaning I had to redact some content to preserve anonymity. On balance however the professional services staff maps demonstrate 'who' their network is comprised by far more than 'where' they take place; in contrast the picture is more mixed in the academic staff pool. On balance I interpreted the data as showing that professional services staff used more personal than functional terminology; Colin [*PS*] for example cited people's names and job roles almost exclusively, as did Cuifen [*PS*]. I think this stems from the team-working

relationships professional services staff build within UCL, and the way they are personalized by knowing their peers very well. For example Colin [*PS*] spoke rather touchingly on this point;

> *"I think that I'm probably going to join the one of the communities of practice soon - I'm thinking about it in terms of a home, that's how I visualize it; I visualize it as you know, [redacted] will be there and [redacted] will be there and [redacted] too, so that will be us, us together..."* (3(iii)411-416)

4.7 Layering of identity

It was also clear to me during the course of my research that just as staff have multiple identities both inside and outside the university workplace (Churchman 2006; Billot 2010; Winter 2009; Macfarlane 2011), the institution contains shifting identities dependent on staff positionality. Anthony [*PS*] highlighted this, in saying *"… the thing about UCL is that is has multiple identities. So you have your identity of UCL, you also have the Faculty and you also have your local Departmental identity"* (1(iii)56-58). Colin [*PS*] echoed this 'layering' effect, stating *"I think there's always been a bit of a problem for UCL, in that big identity versus your local smaller identity"* (3(iii)145-147). This has an effect on staff perceptions of their status and place within UCL - for example Claire [*A*] said of this phenomenon;

> *"I moved Departments after a long time only very recently, so moving into a new Department, and trying to learn 'this is how we do things round here', it's been really interesting. What can I ask for, what can't I ask for, what I can touch, what I can't touch... The way in which I'm involved in conversations and when I'm not, who's deferential towards me and who isn't - all that has to be learned and it's that whole going into a new place and - I don't need to know the work, I can kind of work out what the work was, but it was a bit of learning about how things work round here..."* (3(ii)36-44)

Calhoun (1991) contends that the ways in which people comprehend their social positioning are diverse, which results in *"… an experiential and intellectual split between lifeworld and the system world"* (p99). Watson (2009) writes of academic staff *"… switching roles more than once during the course of the day: as teachers, committee chairs or members, researchers, administrators, ambassadors, sales-persons, stewards, and so on"* (p129). This demonstrates the 'small worlds, different worlds'[7] perception of the university workplace, in that it contains a multiplicity of local identities that compete with each other and with more centralized narratives, meaning that where individuals are uniquely positioned at any one time will colour their perception of their place in the institution. In this way situational context also impacts on individual perceptions of identity, meaning that as contexts change so can personal identities. Research conducted by Ellemers & Rink (2005) concludes that although multiple 'nested' identities often resulted in people identifying most strongly at the most distinctive level of the organization, contextual salience and relevance (what they termed the 'normative fit') caused more inclusive identities to become the primary identity adopted. Several of the research participants identified this phenomenon (e.g. Anthony [*PS*], Claire [*A*], Akemi [*PS*]) with the latter encapsulating it neatly in practice, saying in response to why she sometimes she did not speak her mind to academic colleagues;

> *"I think I sometimes would like to say something and then I just think 'oh... why bother!'... I think maybe I wouldn't be able to express myself fully, and in the right way, the way that I would want them to possibly understand where I was coming from, and sometimes I just think, depending on who is conducting that conversation, that whether there's any point in trying to put my view across.... So it depends on the conversation and the people that I'm with as well sometimes."* (1(iv)108-109,110-114,117-119)

[7] *Clark 1987, cited in Churchman 2006, p14*

4.8 Identity and interconnectivity

My final assertions are that individuals' length of service and their levels of interconnectedness within the institution impact on their perceptions of their self-positioning. This is in the case of the former simply because they have had longer to foster and build those relationships, as evidenced by Akemi's [*PS*] claim that *".. God knows I've been here God knows how long, so I've got a lot more people, and my network is much bigger because I have to have that within my role..."* (1(iv)256-258). Colin [*PS*] echoes this perception of the value in longevity and the beneficial impact it has on his working relationships in saying;

> *"I've been here a long time so I think I'm very useful to people at times, you know if they're trying to find something out.... I think the people who've been here a while, it's institutional memory isn't it, I've got that and I think that helps."* (3(iii)182-83,189-191)

I also found that those participants who were more involved or interconnected across spaces and networks, such as Faculties or the institution, had different perceptions of their positioning which also affected their working relationships. I suggest this is because they had been enabled to increase their social capital, defined as *"… the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit"* (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998, p247). For example in the mind-mapping exercise, Balvinder [*A*] was the only one of the academic staff to contain elements of interconnectivity between areas unconnected to him; his map is very detailed and has multiple linkages between its components on the peripheries. The other four academic staff maps link solely to the participant in the centre, with no other interconnectivity. In contrast the depiction in the professional services maps was more mixed, with half displaying connections (Anthony [*PS*], Ben [*PS*] and Barbara [*PS*]) and the other half not (Akemi [*PS*], Colin [*PS*] and Cuifen [*PS*]). Notably Balvinder [*A*] has spent a lot of time sitting on UCL-wide committees in the last decade or more, and has a Faculty-wide role in addition to his Departmental duties;

the broader perspective this affords him is reflected in his mind-map. So arguably, as there is normally less day to day interaction with the structural components of the university for academic staff, the linkages between its constituent parts are regarded as more peripheral, as he claimed *"… most of my colleagues don't really operate outside the Department and never have, and that's even true of those at professorial level"* (2(i)352-354). Ben's [*PS*] perception of this same point was "*I suppose academics are more focused within the Department on teaching the students, whereas administrative staff need to have perhaps a more global overview"* (2(iii)106-108). I contend the disparity in interconnectivity is therefore linked to the amount of connectivity individuals have with their broader community or life-world. Balvinder [*A*] said for example his broader perspective changed the way he viewed the institution, in that;

> *"… if you're only inside the Department, you don't actually see what the links are between the other things that you're interacting with… because I've seen things from further up I can see the connections."* (2(i)359-360, 361-362)

Claire [*A*] echoed this sentiment (albeit this was not reflected in her mind map), in that she too emphasized the importance of being connected to areas outside her own unit. She viewed it as a way to broaden her sphere of influence which enabled her to view her place in UCL another way, saying;

> *"… you have to put yourself in places where people can see your value…. And it's not always through your main job, so just doing your job harder and harder and better and better is not necessarily where the value comes from…. I'm a very connected kind of person, so I've got value in [redacted], I've got value in [redacted], I've got value in my Faculty – so you have to kind of do that…."* (3(ii)139-140,141-146)

This viewpoint was also evident in the professional services staff, in that Anthony [*PS*] referenced the impact of the communities of practice on staff identities and relationships, saying *"I think increasingly there are what I call the horizontal identities, so there's the separate identity of teaching administrators… Because people saw that there was a need..."* (1(iii)59-63). Therefore it could be argued that the longer people have been in post, the greater capacity they have to create social and cultural capital, regardless of whether they are employed as academic or professional services staff. This is also true of the amount of interconnectivity people display within the institution, in that larger personal networks similarly increase the capacity to build greater capital.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I explored the UCL habitus through the use of metaphor and considered the impact of physical space and metaphysical place on staff perceptions of their self-positioning. I employed symbolic imagery and messaging and studied the disconnection staff can feel as a result of geographic disconnectedness. Notions of social capital as expressed through metaphysical space were considered, alongside the impacts of individual situatedness within the institution. Staff perceptions of where they identified as 'home' within UCL were then explored, alongside the effects of geographical salience. I also examined the research participants' discourse and what it revealed with regard to their identification with the institution, and concluded with an exploration of interconnectivity on both individual and collective staff self-positioning. The next chapter will explore my research findings through the tripartite lenses of hierarchy, visibility and legitimacy.

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the impact of space and place on staff positionality within UCL. This chapter will explore perceptions of **hierarchy**, **visibility** and **legitimacy** and their effects on perceptions of institutional positionality. It is important to note that there is a degree of interdependence between this trio of concepts. I therefore start by examining the data generated via my meeting observations in which all three feature. I then examine each concept in turn, bringing in data from the participant interviews and their mind maps in order to explore them in more detail through each specific lens. Hierarchy is considered first in terms of its effects on individuals' social capital within the university, with particular emphasis on the influence of differential levels of autonomy and latitude. The concept of visibility and its impact on perceptions of self is then unpacked via an exploration of how spatial configuration can translate into social capital. Finally the notion of legitimacy is explored in terms of staff perceptions of their value, alongside the causal relationship between their feelings of legitimacy as relating to their role.

5.2 An exploration of hierarchy, visibility and legitimacy

An area of my research in which all three concepts occur is my observation of staff meetings, as outlined in Chapter Three. The physical layout of the spaces in which they took place and the level of participation can be directly interpreted as markers of the memberships' hierarchy, visibility and legitimacy, with regard to where they chose to sit and whether or when they chose to speak. The most striking trend in the data they generated is the domination of proceedings by academic staff. In all six meetings they dominated discussion, even when the membership was evenly split with professional services staff or the ratio between the two groupings was nearly equal. In five of the six meetings, professional services staff participated significantly less often than the academics present; in Working Group One they took part only 22% of the time (calculated excluding the Chair's involvement) although

the demographic ratio was 50:50, and in Working Group Two they spoke only 36% of the time (similarly excluding the Chair), although the split was also 50:50. In some ways this is accounted for in that across all six meetings there were 58 professional services staff compared to 76 academics (43% to 57%), but it is still disproportionate, and twice as many of the former did not participate at all in comparison to the latter (15 professional services staff compared to 8 academics). Interestingly however the involvement in proceedings of the professional services staff in the UCL committees was proportionally higher than those in the Faculty working groups. There are various possible explanations for this; that their format is more formal with key staff having been invited to speak on certain subjects for example, or that the UCL committee remit is traditionally designed more to report information than discuss it. Or perhaps it is related to the seniority of the professional services staff present, in that they are typically on higher grades than those who attend Faculty working groups so feel more confident to participate. I will return to this later.

Meanwhile another conspicuous aspect was the domination of proceedings by male participants. Although I was not overtly including gender as a variable in my data generation, I had decided to record this demographic as it was easy to ascertain and I thought its analysis might prove significant. I decided not to attempt to do the same for other variables such as ethnicity, age or seniority, as these are much harder to gauge and would have resulted in very small and potentially misleading sample sizes. My analysis of the data generated with regard to gender reveals that in four of the six meetings men disproportionately dominated proceedings, despite their being outnumbered in two of them and with the other two having very near equal gender ratios. For example in Working Group One the gender split was 50:50 but discussion was 74% male-led (calculated excluding the involvement of the male Chair), whereas in Committee One 59% of the membership were women, but 76% of the discussion was dominated by men (again excluding the male Chair's participation). This is despite there being more women than men present across all six meetings (77 women compared to 65 men, a 54% to 46%

split). It is therefore disproportionate, in that nearly three times as many women did not participate at all in comparison to men (16 females compared to only 6 males). The only two exceptions to this were in Working Group Three which was composed 65% by women and was 64% female-led (and was the only meeting to have a female Chair, albeit the participation rate was calculated without her input), and Committee Three whose membership was 53% female and was 56% female-led (calculated minus the male Chair's input). As discussed in Chapter Three however, the meeting was anomalous in that its remit was changed to accommodate the impending closure of the campus due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, so its business concerned discussion of a draft paper on how to handle the impact on student operations. The paper had been authored by a woman who accordingly led discussion as its sole topic of debate, which arguably affected the meeting dynamic so was not typical of normal procedure. It is also notable that the margins between attendance and participation rates in the two meetings with higher female memberships and female-led discussions are much smaller than in the four committees dominated by men.

The overall impression I was left with is that the voice heard in UCL meetings, both in informal working groups and formal committees, is predominantly (i) academic and (ii) male. This does not seem to be affected by academic discipline (as the working groups took place in three very different Faculties), or by format (i.e. informal working group as opposed to formal committee). I wondered whether this was due to there being proportionally more male academics than female (45 to 31, a 59% to 41% ratio, with more male academics than female being present in five of the meetings), but the discrepancy in those who speak is still anomalous. Likewise there is an even bigger difference in the gender ratio of the professional services staff, made up of 42 women and 16 men (73% to 27%, with female professional services staff vastly outnumbering male in all six meetings), but again this does not account for the relative silence of both professional services staff and women. It called to mind a highly dystopian view of the UK higher education sector

described by Reay (2004), who claims it is a territory ruled by men, who said she was;

> *"… amused at the levels of self-seeking sycophancy operating in academia – all that strategic hot air that goes into pumping up already inflated, usually male, academic egos. It is a culture which is underpinned by the interlacing of flattery and conceit – all that networking for gain with people you don't even like very much.*" (p34)

Although this scathing view is perhaps extreme, aspects of it chimed with my experience of observing these meetings, in that some of the discussion could be conceived as mere posturing; some of what was said did not move the discussion on or serve any purpose, other than forming a platform for people to air their views on any given subject. This said however I can see how meetings as social forums provide an opportunity for public expression of opinion as a method for further refinement. More detailed analysis of group dynamics involving tone and conversational flow would be needed to examine this is any useful detail, something which regrettably falls beyond the scope of this study.

I suggest however that staff meetings present the observer with an insight into the typical everyday interactions between staff within the institutional structures of their working life. Their mechanisms are largely implicit and as such are accepted in the habitus of academe as common sense, so viewed as unremarkable. As Bourdieu (1998) argues, *"Male domination is so rooted in our collective unconscious that we no longer even see it."* My finding that (male) academic staff tend to dominate meeting proceedings may simply be linked to the infrastructure of the university's figured world, in that in all six of the forums under observation the Chairs were academics and the Secretaries were professional services staff. This is common practice across UCL, as the latter's remit is to support the academic mission of the institution which involves the servicing of committees. There is no reason however (beyond perhaps tradition or local custom and practice) why some could not be

chaired by a member of professional services staff (e.g. the Faculty's Director of Operations) as opposed to its Dean, or why the chairing could not alternate between them. Senior members of professional services staff are equally capable of chairing discussion as their academic counterparts, but this rarely happens when the meeting involves members of academic staff. In this way the university habitus subtly and silently preserves the higher status of academics within the institution, who are literally more visible so seen as being more legitimate, and because this elevation is only ever implicit it is viewed as part of the natural order. As Bourdieu (1991) observes, *"The domination of space is one of the privileged forms of the exercise of domination"* (p110). I interpret this as referring to social space within meetings and think it can be viewed as an example of social closure as discussed in Chapter Two, wherein one group dominates another by denying it the same opportunities. I do not suggest any of this is deliberate or even conscious, but a result of the traditional and historically shaped university habitus in which professional services staff are (still) seen (and perhaps see themselves) as novel actors.

5.3 Hierarchy

I will now move on to discuss the concept of hierarchy. Concerning its link to identity construction, Alvesson & Willmott (2002) claim that *"Hierarchy in organizations is often formally based, but status distinctions between different communities and functions can also be central for the regulation of identities"* (p631). With regard to its function in the university life-world, Harris (2005) argues *"The hierarchical nature of the university traditionally has been mystified and underpinned by elitism, social and cultural hierarchies"* (p422). I contend that staff perceptions of their self-positioning within the institution are linked to where they view themselves within its hierarchy, according to their perception of it as a social construct. This is because it was clear during my research that both staff categories viewed the concept of the university hierarchy very differently. Arthur [*A*] said that for academic staff, hierarchy is *"… more a recognition as much of past achievement, whereas on the admin side it's very much a functionalist perspective*" (1(i)144-147). One of these functionalist

perspectives is as Anthony [*PS*] pointed out to facilitate the work of the academic staff, adding that *"… sometimes you need the institutional authority and you need to be able to pull that down"* (1(ii)144-145.

5.3.1 Perceptions of hierarchy in meetings

A sense of hierarchy was discernible in the meetings I observed, in that those who are more senior (so located higher up the hierarchy) are afforded more authority both to speak and be heard. The majority of the academic membership in all six meetings were predominantly comprised of the professoriate so are at least UCL grade 10, or Associate Professor/Principal Teaching Fellow/Senior Lecturer level, so grade 9. There are far fewer professional services staff within Faculties employed on these grades, with only the Faculty Director of Operations and Faculty Tutor at grade 10 and most Departmental Managers at either grades 8 or 9, depending on the size and complexity of the Department, and various Faculty staff such as Research Managers and Operation Managers at grades 7 or 8. This discrepancy in seniority may have an impact on those at a lower level willing to speak, so could have a tacit silencing effect. I noted earlier that the participation in discussions in the UCL Committees was higher than in the Faculty working groups and mooted various reasons as to why this might be; one was the memberships' seniority, as the memberships of UCL-level committees are typically made up of Directors of Professional Services who are at least grade 10. During the interviews, Claire [*A*] said on this point;

> *"... there is no reason for a grade 10 professional services person to be anything other than my equal... We've got one grade 10 and a couple of grade 9s in this Department and that feels a more equal relationship, you know we're able to run ideas off each other much more."*
> (3(ii)103-105, 108-110)

I contend that the perception of hierarchy plays a part in people's willingness to contribute to group discussion in a formal arena, particularly as the spatial

configuration of the meeting room (i.e. around a large table) can feel quite exposing. Those with a seat at the table but placed lower down the hierarchy may feel they lack the authority to participate.

5.3.2 Perceptions of hierarchy in life-worlds

I also examined the concept of hierarchy in the interview participants' mind maps based on whether the maps were structured idiocentrically (with the protagonist at the centre as its fulcrum), or allocentrically (with the protagonist being less dominant). Four of the five academic's maps were strongly idiocentric, whereas only one of the professional services maps was: the remaining five were what I deemed semi-idiocentric in that they all featured the protagonist, albeit not in such a centrally dominant position. Four of the academics' maps did not display any elements of hierarchy (Arthur [*A*], Anna [*A*], Cliff [*A*] and Claire [*A*]) ,whereas in contrast four of the professional services maps were very hierarchically structured (Anthony [*PS*], Ben [*PS*], Colin [*PS*] and Cuifen [*PS*]) - Ben's map in particular features the Provost at the top of his family-tree-like structure. This may be because as Anthony [*PS*] commented, *"…administration needs to be hierarchical... the day job is to facilitate the work of the academics, to provide a structure, the infrastructure"* (1(iii)315-319). In contrast, two of the academic interview participants (Anna [*A*] and Claire [*A*]) forgot to include their line managers in their mind-maps, so the latter added him in while talking me through its construction, saying, *"I forgot my line manager… Because it's kind of well, my line manager doesn't play an important role"* (3(ii)366-368).

I suggest there is less evidence of hierarchy in the academic participant maps due to a difference in how the two groups of staff view the concept, and how it relates to them and their role. By situating themselves as the central pivot of their maps with spokes radiating out and having used themselves as their starting point, the academics see their place as the *"still point of the turning world"*[8] with various actants encircling them in a distinctly non-hierarchical network. This perception

[8] *excerpted from 'Burnt Norton' by TS Eliot (1935)*

would seem to be more individualistic whereas the administrators conceivably demonstrate a more collegial approach, with fewer of them staking their place in the centre so explicitly. Claire [*A*] commented that UCL had a 'first among equals' culture in that she said;

> "*I meet people who go and knock on the Provost's door; you don't meet professional services people who do that very often…. they'll say you know, 'well, I've got something really important to say, I'm going to say it.'"* (3(ii)337-341)

This echoes Bourdieu's claim that "*Entry in certain spaces, and particularly the most 'select' of them, requires not only economic and cultural capital but social capital as well*" (1991, p112). This would seem to suggest that the academics view themselves as possessing more social capital than do the professional services, by virtue of the fact that they are more inclined to enter these select spaces.

It could also be argued that the need for hierarchy is simply not the same for both groupings, as reflected in the structure of their mind-maps. This may be because professional services staff not only view the hierarchy as a means of legitimising institutional power but also of orientating within the institution. Akemi [*PS*] for example believed that hierarchy helps professional services staff know where they sit in the chain of command, in that they think; *"OK, who do I go to next if this can't be resolved or who do I pass this information on to, another manager or somebody else to resolve the issue?"* (1(iv)233-235. Claire [*A*] commented that there was an "…*unwritten rule*" for professional services staff within UCL that was implicit in theory but explicit in practice as she argued it was;

> *"… manifest in many ways; the ways in which you get promoted, the ways in which you have to move Department to get a different kind of job, what you're allowed to have influence over, the checks and*

> *balances you have to go through before you're allowed to make something happen."* (3(ii)328-331

She compared this to the academic staff experience, stating simply *"… that's not the case for academics…. [there's] no-one doing checks and balances - it's that bonkers-ness of UCL"* (3(ii)332-334). I suggest that professional services staff position themselves within the institutional hierarchy, whereas academics situate themselves outside it because they have less need of its authority. Hierarchy simply has more meaning in the figured world of professional services staff in that they are more bound by its strictures.

5.3.3 Perceptions of hierarchy and autonomy

This relates to another theme linked to hierarchy that came through very strongly in the interviews, as to the higher level of freedom afforded to academic staff participants. Anna [*A*] said of her role as a Professor for example *"… it's one of the joys of being an academic... What is wonderful is that you are crafting your own destiny…"* (1(ii)152-153) and Becky [*A*] on her role, *"I am pursuing very much my own agenda and it gives me the freedom to do that"* (2(ii)40-41). Several participants commented however that in some ways the greater autonomy afforded to academic staff encouraged a culture of isolationism. Arthur [*A*] said of this phenomenon *"… academics can become very insular and focused on their own work"* (1(i)108-111) which chimed with Cliff's [*A*] view that *"... some academics retreat into a sort of isolationist state…"* (3(1)65-66). Claire [*A*] claimed that *".... some academics can become incredibly self-absorbed, and so they don't lift their head up enough to notice that what they're doing is offensive; bullying; self-centred; not student-centred"* (3(ii)161-164). McWilliam *et al* (2000) discuss this tendency in academia via its capacity to use time as a weapon, saying *"Retreating into one's subject matter is always a temptation; after all, the privilege of the academic is to study and teach, full-time, what is most fascinating to them*" (p250). Churchman & King (2009) also discuss this phenomenon, in that for them *"Isolation in academia is a recurring script, facilitating opportunities for private stories to be lived every day"* (p513). They

view the avoidance of confrontation as a way of preserving academic identity, which is achieved by confining interaction to those whose characteristics mirror their own. These views are in direct contrast to the collective approach to teamworking espoused by the professional services staff. Barbara [*PS*] reflected this difference in saying "*… we work as a team - there's an element in everything we do… we are their team. We are their team, because they make the decisions, but we make it work for them"* (2(iv)107-109).

This dissimilarity in experience and perception of personal agency is unavoidable in some respects however, precisely because academic staff are purposely employed to be creative individuals so are actively encouraged to adopt an idiocentric stance. As Delanty (2007) argues, *"Most professors see themselves as more like self-employed artisans providing a service to their institution than as servants of a state-funded institution"* (p128). Professional services staff in contrast are working within a hierarchical system that requires that certain systems and processes are used and regulations followed, which necessitates a more allocentric approach. It could usefully be argued therefore that in some instances and to varying degrees, academic staff broadly enjoy greater autonomy than professional services staff in the way in which they perform their roles (although this is by no means the case for all). With regard to this concept, Delanty (2007) asserts that *"…academics with permanent posts have more autonomy than most other professions"* (p128) and Scott (2007) concurs, claiming that academic staff *"… still manage their own time and operate as relatively free-standing professionals"* (p208). This was reflected in the participants' responses to certain questions during the interviews – for example Barbara [*PS*] said that academic staff are "… *allowed to explore their interests, and set their own agenda in how they want their career to go in a sense, to where their interests are*" (2(iv)111-113) while Becky [*A*] viewed UCL as *"… the home for the stuff that I'm doing, which is following my own interests as an academic"* (2(ii)32-33). It was also reflected in their mind-maps, in that those drawn by the academics were markedly more idiocentric in approach, as discussed earlier.

I therefore contend that the difference in the way in which academic and professional services staff position themselves within the institution is based on the amount of autonomy and latitude afforded them, which is in turn directly related to how they view their place in its hierarchy. Kuo's research in 2009 identified this as a contributory factor, in that there was an acceptance of the dominance of academic knowledge and a concomitant recognition that academics are 'free' while professional service staff are 'managed'. Coate *et al's* 2018 research into the concept of prestige in the university workplace also identified this concept, as senior management recognized and accepted the fact that academic work requires greater amounts of freedom to enable creativity to flourish. This recognition is enacted in UCL in the differential way in which staff are rewarded; academic staff roles are judged on personal performance for example, and its academic career framework offers a career ladder to climb without the need to move post. Other staff are judged by role as opposed to personal performance, which means that the only way they can progress their career is to move post, often to a different Department or university. In this way it can be argued that individuals' perception of their personal autonomy impacts on their self-positioning within the institution, in that the institutional hierarchy operates and is applied differently by staff category.

5.4 Visibility

I will now move on to explore staff visibility within the institution. A key component of this is posited on the concept that professional services staff lack a clearly defined identity, and are therefore less visible as a collective in comparison to their academic peers. The very term 'professional services' covers a broad spectrum of roles encompassing all forms of administration and management, such as those employed to support the delivery of teaching and learning (as in the focus of this study), or areas such as estates and facilities management, finance, accommodation, marketing and communications, legal and advisory roles and so on. Professional services staff often struggle to explain their role to those outside (and sometimes within) the HE sector because it is an umbrella term that covers a

vast spectrum of duties, many of which students (and staff) have no idea even exist. They have been termed 'glue' workers for this reason, in that their work is considered to be done best when it is not noticed (Eveline 2004). This invisibility *"…limits the capacity for the collective to be viewed as a genuine and valued profession within society. The profession remains hidden, unnoticed, unrecognized and un(der)valued…."* (Lewis 2014, p47). Bracketing all these activities under one label when they represent such a vast diversity of occupations is problematic, in that it means no clear picture of who they are and what they do is available, even to those based within them. Their multiplicity of identities renders them less visible, to themselves and each other.

5.4.1 Visibility and perceptions of self

I tested this concept of staff (in)visibility by asking all interview participants how they thought they are perceived by their colleagues. It prompted a variety of responses, from the bemused and somewhat defensive to the astute and insightful. Notions of being friendly and approachable dominated the professional services staff responses, whereas the impression academic staff hoped they gave was of being open to potential collaboration. The latter also framed their self-perception negatively, with adjectives such as 'blunt', 'relentless', 'outspoken', frustrating', 'irritating' 'awkward', 'troublesome' and 'aloof' being used in contrast to the professional services staff's more positive self-perceptions of being a 'good team player' and a 'friendly face'. This is interesting in itself, but another enduring feature of the latter group was their sense that their worth was judged in terms of their utility. Four of the six participants commented on this in their responses, with Colin [*PS*] and Cuifen [*PS*] both citing their role as quasi-guardians of the institutional memory which frequently saved their colleagues both time and effort. Colin [*PS*] said of this point *"I think we're quite an important cog - I hope we are! – and we're helping to keep all the other wheels in motion and keeping it going"* (3(iii)157-158). Cuifen [*PS*] referred to herself as 'Aunty Cuifen' who people frequently turned to for guidance. Ben [*PS*] thought his colleagues sometimes regarded him a 'Nelson Mandela-like' figure in that they needed him to say yes or no before they would act,

in effect using his role as a touchstone for truth. This sense of individual utility was entirely absent from the academic staff self-perceptions; although they too hoped their peers saw them as collegiate, it was expressed more in terms of how valuable they might be with regard to collaborative working rather than in meeting the needs of the local unit or the institution. It could therefore be argued that academic staff and professional services staff view their cultural capital differently, with the former viewing it as linked to their individuality and personal situatedness, and the latter as being intrinsically linked to their local workplace; in this way the figured worlds of the two groupings significantly differ.

5.4.2 Perceptions of visibility in staff meetings

Another everyday example of staff visibility may be seen in the operation of staff meetings, in the (in)visibility of the membership. In my experience many invitations to meetings sent by email typically contain academic staff in the 'to' field and professional services staff in the 'cc' field (this was for example how the members of Working Group One were invited until I questioned it following my conducting this research). This artificial division in membership speaks silent volumes to those invited to attend, by effectively 'othering' the category seen as lesser by virtue of only being copied in, even though they constitute a valid part of the membership. According to Wodak (1996), identity construction typically involves a *"… process of differentiation, a description of one's own group and simultaneously as separate from the 'others'"* (p26). In this way the other is constructed not only as different, but also as less desirable, powerful and acceptable (Hall 1997). This perception can be subtly and silently communicated to memberships through their messaging, via for example the tacit separation between the 'to and 'cc' fields.

The spatial configuration of the meeting room also affects its dynamic; during my observations in smaller spaces for example, those members seated at a central table were predominantly (male) academic staff with (female) professional services staff seated on the periphery. The resulting 'spectators' were arguably in a less dominant position, in that they could not be seen as easily as those seated at the

table and were not in the direct eye-line of the Chair in order to be able to catch his or her attention and thereby be invited to speak. Bourdieu (1991) argues that "*The structure of social space manifests itself, in the most diverse contexts, in the form of spatial oppositions, appropriated physical space functioning as a spontaneous metaphor for the social order*" (p106). This is because, as he claims;

> *"Social space is an invisible set of relationships which tends to retranslate itself, in a more or less direct manner, into physical space in the form of a definite distributional arrangement of agents and properties.*" (1995, p12)

It could thus be argued that those members who felt themselves (or were regarded by others) as being more visible in social space ensured that they literally became so in physical space. Both the membership volume and size of agenda are normally quite large, meaning there is insufficient time which can inhibit some people from speaking. These spatial and temporal factors can combine to represent an intimidating space. The chairing of the meeting also plays a part; given physical and temporal pressures it is incumbent on the Chair to ensure people are invited to speak and if that doesn't happen, the most vocal will dominate proceedings and thereby become more visible. This creates a pattern which memberships can become accustomed to and subconsciously adopt as a natural part of their habitus.

5.4.3 Visibility and capital

Another causal factor underlying staff visibility I believe can be found in the nature of the academic role, in that it is built on prestige and reputation; academic staff are used to holding forth on their subject and (more importantly in some respects) to being seen and therefore heard. Academia operates in a 'prestige economy' in which;

> *"… social and cultural capital is generated and exchanged, and where academic approbation can lead to both tangible and*

> *intangible rewards... the term 'prestige economy' denotes a social system in which individuals must participate; academic prestige is a social phenomenon."* (Blackmore & Kandiko 2011, p404)

Bourdieu (1984) claims that the status of some groups varies in relation to the capital to which they lay claim, and this can also apply at an individual level. It can be linked to his concept of habitus which connects the individual with their social context. Concomitant with this is the fact that in a meeting the membership are often not present as individuals but attend as representatives of their units, so feel a need to speak up as its voice and thereby be seen. If they do not, decisions might be made that disregard their localized interests. I suggest that prestige and social capital are symbolically generated during meetings, and in this way individuals can enhance their standing by literally being both seen and heard.

5.5 Legitimacy

I will now move on to discuss perceptions of staff legitimacy within the institution. One way I explored this was to ask all participants whether they felt valued by UCL. This is because I view their sense of being valued as being causally linked to their sense of legitimacy. The divergence in their responses was startling. In short all six academic staff felt valued (and there was no hesitation in their replies) whereas all six professional services staff did not. There was some degree of nuance of course; for example one of the academics said she felt that everyone had a responsibility to create their own value and four of the professional services participants felt valued at a local level by their immediate colleagues but not at an institutional level. Barbara [*PS*] said as a member of professional services *"I could be replaced by anybody…. UCL doesn't care who I am, I could be replaced"* (2(iv)52,56). Anthony [*PS*] was scathing, saying;

> *"... ultimately in an institution, there's very few individuals that an institution's really going to value. It's just, you know – you could do a*

> *whole lot of work for UCL, and they'd all be 'oh, thank you very much' but in five years' time – pah! You'll be forgotten..."* (1(iii)191-194)

In contrast Cliff [*A*] summed up the academics' viewpoints by saying *"…I mean I am sure there are some people who don't value me, but as an institution, yes. I feel, well you know, we play a part in just challenging the status quo"* (3(i)55-57). I thought it very telling that there was such a marked and systemic discrepancy in response to the same question, and suggest this is because the professional services staff participants perhaps perceive themselves to be of lesser status and therefore less legitimate, due to the disempowerment that the prevailing institutional habitus tacitly maintains. Although as Humphreys & Brown (2002) point out, individuals have latitude to author their own reality, they are always constrained by the available social discourses because the 'menu' their choices are derived from stem from a larger social environment (Owens *et al* 2010). One of the ways in which lower status groups are denied a voice is through the prevention of their accessing entering key discourses, and at UCL there are currently no open forums in which the staff voice can be heard; for example in 2019 no staff opinion survey was carried out and plans for the future of any other mechanism for the collection of this data are unclear. The (rarely disputed) professional standing of academic staff possibly renders other staff to take a lesser, subservient role within the university, as Botterill (2018) notes,

> *In universities, there are many physical and psychological group boundaries, such as campuses, organizational structures, and employment awards, and these implicitly – and on occasions explicitly – affect group legitimacy and visibility as some groups are privileged over others.* (p93)

Hellawell & Hancock (2001) note that professional services staff were traditionally excluded from the 'collegial' model of academia and thereby the decision-making process, whereas Botterill (2018) goes on to claim that;

> *"Different discourses and areas of specialization need to be respected, not only within a team but also within the broader organizational contexts in which they are embedded. This provides legitimacy for the work of all groups, not just those who represent higher status groups."* (p105)

It is important to note however that the perception of a lack of legitimacy was not restricted to professional services staff, in that two of the academic staff I interviewed strongly alluded to it too (Arthur [*A*] and Balvinder [*A*]). This was in relation to their focus on teaching, in terms of its detrimental impact on their career progression, due perhaps to *"… teaching remaining as a Cinderella activity, rewarded through tokenistic prizes and 'fellowships' rather than attracting mainstream kudos despite institutional rhetoric*" (Macfarlane 2011, p71). Botterill (2018) also recognizes this differential, arguing that research is still afforded more prestige and privilege than teaching within academia in both political and socioeconomic terms. For example Arthur [*A*] described himself as "… *someone who's done a lot of teaching, not enough research, which hopefully will be corrected in my remaining time here"* (1)(i)36-38). It is clear that he feels his ability to conduct research has suffered due to his teaching duties, and his use of the rather loaded term 'corrected' implies some form of wrongdoing. Balvinder [*A*] went one step further, saying that in his experience research still dominates at the highest levels despite UCL's reliance on the income generated by tuition fees (2(i)66-71), which had "*squeezed*" (2(i)389) his ability to conduct research because his teaching supported *"… lots of other teaching… and you have to have a few – victims as it were to do that*" (2(i)393-395). His hesitation before opting to describe himself as a victim implies that is how he views his status, as someone who has sacrificed (or been made to sacrifice) his research career in order to further those of his peers. It is not therefore as simple as suggesting that academic staff are valued more highly than other groups of staff thus possess more institutional legitimacy, because the situation is multifaceted and as such highly complex.

5.5.1 Perceptions of legitimacy and function

I think a potential contributing factor which may account for how and why perceptions of institutional legitimacy between the two groupings diverge can be found by the way in which they perceive their fundamental function and subsequent positioning within the institution. Put simply, I suggest that on balance many (but by no means all) academic staff see their role as effectively embodying the institution, whereas many professional services staff (but again by no means all) view themselves as its employees. I suggest that professional services staff broadly view the institution as an independent entity employing everyone equally, whereas academic staff typically consider they own the role of employer as they are more intrinsic to its core function. This may explain why the professional services staff role in supporting the academic mission of the university is often conflated with serving the needs of its stakeholders such as its academic staff, something which can exacerbate the perception of a binary staff divide. For example and as discussed in the last chapter, Balvinder [*A*] claimed academic staff and the university were physically inseparable in that *".. the university is the body of academics*" (2(i)341). This was also evidenced during my research in terms of the greater autonomy many academic staff typically enjoy. This varied by type of role held within each category however, in that the participants who enjoyed the greatest latitude were very senior Professors, so their experience is not necessarily representative of all academic staff within the institution, for example those who hold less senior positions and/or those employed as Lecturers or Teaching Fellows.

5.5.2 Perceptions of legitimacy and non-participation

A perception of possessing less legitimacy may also explain the relative non-participation of professional services staff in meetings, something cyclically linked to my earlier point about (in)visibility. This is because I suggest that professional services staff to some extent share academic staff's view that the latter effectively embody the university, so as its personification are legitimized to lead discussion. In this way they actively contribute to a perception of themselves as being somehow less legitimate. During the meetings I observed for example, many seemed content

to act as the academics' audience, in effect simply bearing witness to what is being discussed. I do not suggest that any of this is explicit on a conscious level, but contend this mindset is tacit within the traditional habitus of the university workplace. It is a vestige of the higher education sector's history in that the professional services staff role originated in the civil servant model, so were not always empowered to contribute. This legacy is perpetuated via UCL's Statute 18 (https://www.ucl.ac.uk/drupal/site_ucu/sites/ucu/files/statute18.pdf), which protects the unique employment rights of academic staff by enshrining their right to academic freedom. Its existence effectively suggests that some staff are of more value to the institution than others, and as a legacy may explain the relative lack of professional staff participation in some meetings, in that they aware of this discrepancy in how their value is perceived by the institution. I think this pattern is likely replicated in other workplaces where one group of people are seen as being more authentically positioned than the other; teachers and support staff in schools for example, or medical practitioners and the administration in hospitals, or curatorial and support staff in museums and galleries. Leathwood (2013) cites the perception that the 'typical academic' is a white, middle/upper-class male with no caring responsibilities, which subliminally influences the ways in which the discursive constructions of their identity are interpreted by students (and other staff) as being authentic or legitimately positioned in their roles. I wanted to test this theory on some of the staff present in the meetings I had observed, so asked the professional services staff present in Working Group One why they had not participated in proceedings as much as their academic colleagues. The response confirmed my hypothesis, in that a male colleague responded to say;

> *"I don't consider myself to actually be a 'member'. I'm 'in attendance' and while that sometimes means that I speak, it's often in answer to something an academic has brought up, or someone specifically calling on me. That idea of valid 'membership' is usually what makes me hesitate in speaking."*

This would seem to suggest that rather than there being a battle for supremacy between academic and professional services staff within the university, some staff (across all categories) struggle to both perceive of and portray themselves as legitimate in terms of their institutional recognition. By virtue of their not being visible (in terms of presence in institutional discussions and decision-making) or vocal (in terms of being denied a voice) they are effectively side-lined, which impacts on both the volume and value of their contribution.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I explored the themes of hierarchy, visibility and legitimacy as to how they were collectively enacted in practice in the public forum of staff meetings. Each concept was then examined more closely, with hierarchy being considered in terms of its effects on individual social capital within the university habitus, with particular regard, for example, to the autonomy afforded to individuals. I then examined the concept of visibility and its impact on perceptions of self, with an emphasis on how spatial configuration can be translated into social capital and moved on to explore individual perceptions of visibility and its relationship to cultural capital. I explored the concept of legitimacy in terms of staff perceptions of their institutional value, alongside the relationship between feelings of legitimacy as related to an individuals' functional sphere and how that is translated into their perception of authenticity. My next chapter will present my conclusions and my conceptual model which describes how staff typically perceive of their identity and self-positioning within the institution.

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions of my study alongside its limitations, its contribution to knowledge and my plans for its dissemination. It starts by summarising the discussion in the last two chapters and then moves on to delineate the limitations of the study, which touch on the weaknesses of a case study approach, potential problems associated with its sampling and the highly subjective nature of phenomenological interpretation of qualitative data. Other issues discussed are those associated with reliability, validity and generalisability, alongside the problem of (insider) researcher bias and the asymmetrical power dynamic between researcher and participant. I then move on to discuss my conclusions and present my conceptual model as to how university staff perceive their self-positioning to be situated at UCL. The chapter concludes with my reflections on the implications of this study on my professional practice and its contribution to knowledge, in conjunction with my plans for its dissemination and some areas for potential future research.

6.1.1 Summary of discussion

In the last two chapters I discussed the findings resulting from my three data generation exercises and my conceptualisation of their meaning. Chapter Four centred on those relating to the twin themes of space and place, and Chapter Five on my perceptions relating to hierarchy, visibility and legitimacy. In the former I explored the UCL habitus through the use of metaphorical imagery and argued that staff interpret it differentially based on both their literal and figurative relationships. This was followed by a consideration of the impact of both physical space and metaphysical place on staff perceptions of their self-positioning, as the primary means by which they orientate within the institution. I explored the university habitus as expressed through its symbolic imagery and messaging, and the sense of dislocation and isolation staff can feel due to its physical transience and geographic

disconnectedness. I then moved on to explore notions of social capital as expressed through metaphysical space, and the fluctuating impacts of individual situatedness within the institution. Staff perceptions of their 'home' within UCL were explored as to whether they identified more strongly with their academic discipline or their Department, alongside the effects of geographically defined proximal and distal salience. This was followed by an examination of the research participants' discourse and what it revealed with regard to their depth of identification with the institution, alongside the effects of a multiple layering of institutional identity. I concluded the chapter with an exploration of the interconnectivity in both individual and collective staff self-positioning.

In Chapter Five I explored the three themes of hierarchy, visibility and legitimacy. How they were collectively enacted in practice in staff meetings was initially considered, and it was noted that male academics typically dominated proceedings. Each theme was then examined more closely in turn, with hierarchy being considered first in terms of its effects on individuals' figured worlds and their social capital within the university habitus, with particular regard to, for example, the influence of differential levels of autonomy and latitude afforded to individuals. This was succeeded by the concept of visibility and its impact on perceptions of self. Staff visibility in meetings was examined more closely, with an emphasis on how spatial configuration translates into social capital, which moved on in turn to explore individual perceptions of visibility and its relationship to cultural capital. The final theme of legitimacy was then unpacked in terms of staff perceptions of their value to the institution, alongside the causal relationship between feelings of legitimacy as related to individuals' role, their functional sphere within the institution and how that translates into their perception of authenticity.

Before I discuss my conclusions, I think it would be useful to explore some of the limitations of my study. This is because it will help to situate my conclusions in the context in which they were reached, i.e. as an iterative process during which various themes and concepts emerged over the course of my data generation. I will

therefore go on to explore this area in more depth before outlining my conclusions and presenting my conceptual model.

6.2 Limitations of the research

I am aware of various limitations in this study and those associated with a case study approach in particular (their non-generalisability for example), as discussed in Chapter Three. It is important to remember however that this was a qualitative study of individual human beings; my research aimed to capture their voices and lived experience. This means that notions of reliability, validity and generalisability are perhaps different from those that would be considered had this research been carried out in the positivist paradigm. Other limitations involve my sampling, in that those who agreed to participate in the interviews might simply just have been those most interested in telling their particular narratives, i.e. the most vocal, meaning that other (contradictory) narratives may exist. My observations in meetings could only ever be a snapshot of membership attendance and participation at a specific point in time. On another day with a different membership or agenda items the data generated could have been different, which might have led me to other conclusions. My theoretical focus also led me to concentrate on identity-related narratives and maybe ignore others that did not relate specifically to that sphere, so the data I included are products of my interpretations which were influenced by my theoretical interest - which makes them as much my narrative as those of my participants. However this paradox is inevitable in the interpretivist and phenomenological traditions, and robust researcher reflexivity can act as an effective counterbalance.

I also recognise that my data were shaped by the context of the interview, i.e. my presentation of myself as a doctoral student researcher alongside my participants' views of me as a colleague. In this way my identity as a member of UCL's professional services who was interested in notions of identity was visible to the participants from the outset. This demanded constant reflexivity on my part as a known actor in the figured worlds of the participants; I needed to be careful in how I reconstructed the lives of others from what they said (and sometimes did not say),

and be accountable in how I then used that to generate theory. In this way my research explored the effect of positionality and therefore my own positionality, both theoretical (as it impacted my choice of subject, research literature and methodology), and practical (as it affected the power relationship), needed acknowledgement. I was very aware that things said and done may have been different if the research had been conducted by someone else, as;

> *"How individuals recount their histories - what they emphasize and omit, their stance as protagonist or victims, the relationship the story establishes between teller and audience - all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives."*
> (Rosenwald & Ochberg 1992, p1 cited in Smith *et al* 2016, p51)

The self-narration of interview participants is not a neutral process, as the act of participation in an interview provides a site for identity negotiation, with both interviewer and interviewee choosing how to present and position themselves to their audience (Smith *et al* 2016). On balance however, I considered that in conducting the interviews in person and thereby creating 'InterViews' as sites for the shared construction of understanding between two individuals with a shared interest (Kvale 1996, p42), this was an active choice on my part. Added to this I acknowledge that throughout the data generation stages, the topics of discussion in the interviews (and to some extent the nature of the observation) created an imbalance of power between me as a researcher and my participants. This meant that the conversations that occurred were often the result of social impressions: what was said could not always be taken at face value. Therefore the emerging themes included not just what was talked about but what was not, and my interpretation of its meaning. In this way I recognise that a further layer of interpretation was applied to the phenomenon under investigation at the point of data generation, which was consistent with my phenomenological approach to the research. However this complexity also extended into my approach to interpretation

of the data, in that I was not trying to interpret from raw data but to re-interpret data that was already to some extent multi-layered.

6.2.1 Insider researcher issues

As referenced above, I was aware that I was conducting research as an 'insider' within an institution I have worked for since 2003, which would inevitably impact on the way in which I was perceived by the participants and likewise on my perceptions of them. Insider researchers are often relatively close to the field being studied in both social and cultural terms. This proximity can solve the problem of accessing closed organizational circuits through drawing on connections in their personal networks and entering sites that are familiar. At one level, it is arguably easier to conduct in-house research precisely because of this familiarity with the culture, which facilitates the construction of meaningful questions alongside a ready network of existing relationships but this is not without its drawbacks; being too close to the participants and the data to take a considered view for example because of the *"… agonizingly familiar "us"'* (Bell & King 2010, p432), or 'going native' by virtue of being a member of the community under investigation. The very ordinariness of conducting research within our daily lives can lead to poor awareness of the social processes and constructs that contextualize them (Ybema *et al* 2012).

Insider researchers in any discipline also make choices (without necessarily recognizing that they are doing so) about how to frame and conceptualize the phenomena in which they are interested. This provides a clear focus for investigation but can also constrain researchers' scope and analytical ambitions. For example I was reflexively aware that as a university employee interviewing other university employees (many of whom I knew very well) I comprised a specific audience for whom my participants maybe authored particular narratives. I suspected that on occasion some reacted to me as a colleague as opposed to a disinterested researcher and that had I been someone else there may have been a different answer. The strategy I adopted to combat this lay in *"… making the familiar*

strange rather than the strange familiar" (Van Maanen,1995, p20), albeit with limited success. I would argue however that there are some benefits to being a known entity to research participants, such as more unguarded conversation and a degree of shared cultural understanding.

I have signposted some of the issues associated with the interpretivist approach and concomitant judgments concerning notions of reliability, validity, generalisability and bias which also need to be considered in the context of a study of a complex phenomenon composed of a small sample. I will now go on to expand on each of these in more detail.

6.2.2 Reliability

Reliability is often described in relation to the consistent way in which a research tool was applied. However consistently applying the same tools to all participants was not my aim; the twelve interviews and six meeting observations were an exercise in data generation as opposed to data collection. Instead I ensured reliability by generating data that were appropriate to my research questions, and by my careful and accurate representation of that data. This included my interpretation and use of it that was not representative of the commonly held views or inconsistent with the findings I anticipated (Mason,1996).

6.2.3 Validity

Validity is also a contentious issue in social science research. Subjective interpretations of the findings of qualitative research is discussed in the methodological literature in relation to such considerations as its broader context, comparison with other studies, researcher reflections and other limitations (Halliday 2002). The work of Fairclough (2001) on critical discourse analysis, in particular regarding Foucault's (1972) ideas about the socially constructive effects of discourse is also significant. Although Fairclough places critical discourse analysis within the critical social research paradigm since it is emancipatory, it can also be considered in relation to more interpretive approaches, in that it aims for an

understanding of social phenomena and the relationship between discourse and social practice and the constitution of identity. Fairclough highlights the importance of vocabulary and the semantic relationship between words in discourse, which he claims has implications for the analysis of interview data in a case study. Questions of validity concern also whether a study is measuring what it claims to be measuring. I would argue that by ensuring ontological clarity, I created a meaningful epistemology and a thorough study of the phenomenon in question. Validity was ensured by careful purposive sampling and by ensuring I had a representative range of voices in the study. Validity of interpretation was also influenced by my theoretical stance and my research questions; although I transcribed all interviews verbatim and all data collected during the meeting observations were considered for inclusion, only a very small fraction of the data they generated can be presented.

6.2.4 Generalisability

The generalisability of my findings concerns both empirical and theoretical generalisability. Since this is a case study with a limited number of participants, the findings cannot be considered as representative of staff perceptions across the sector. My purpose however was to provide an in-depth and nuanced account of the experiences of a small group of subjects in context. By focusing on constructions of identity, this study uses personalized interpretations of this process which limits what can be generalized from the data. Through purposive sampling, the use of a range of workplace locations within UCL and my deliberate choice of research participants from across different areas of the institution however, I assert that despite my modest sample size, many of their experiences and perceptions are likely to be familiar to other staff working in the UK Higher Education sector at this time. This means that it could perhaps be viewed as a 'snapshot' of prevailing discourses.

6.2.5 Researcher bias

Bateson (1972) claims the researcher is *"…bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises which—regardless of ultimate truth or falsity—become*

partially self-validating" (p314, cited in Denzin & Lincoln 2011, p13). Researchers have either tacitly or overtly mapped out their areas of study (Scott & Usher 1996), meaning their account is inevitably positioned. We cannot escape our own ethnography to achieve true objectivity. I recognized as an insider researcher I am biased in various ways by being a situated individual, and that my bias cannot be wholly eradicated as much of it is unconscious. I decided on balance that as long as I acknowledged this and practised high degrees of reflexivity that would suffice.

6.3 Conclusions

Having carefully explored the limitations of my design methodology, I will now move on to discuss the conclusions of my research. The aim of this study was to explore academic and professional staff perceptions of their positioning within one UK university and its impact on their workplace identities and relationships. This was in an attempt to comprehend the factors and dynamics at play and enable some reflection on the subject, in order that effective workplace relations might be optimized. I intended to explore how university staff perceive their status and place within the institution, and how their perceptions of individual self-positioning impact on both their professional identities and working relationships. This is because it is widely accepted in the research literature that some form of binary divide exists between academic and other categories of staff working in the university, as an abiding feature of the higher education workplace. This schism negatively impacts the efficient operation of institutions and makes workplace relationships less effective. My aim was to gain a deeper grasp of university staff identity and self-positioning, in order to provide empirical evidence which could be used for developing approaches to help them work together more effectively, and in so doing ultimately establish whether a binary university workplace divide is fact or fiction.

6.3.1 The binary staff divide in higher education

The working relationship of university staff has been the subject of debate for several decades. Research has largely concentrated on a presumed binary dynamic between academic and professional services staff in that they have typically been characterized as having a difficult relationship epitomized more by divergence than

convergence (Newton 2009; Pick *et al* 2012). Research conducted by Garcia & Hardy (2007) for example into narratives of difference within an Australian university found that professional services staff cast themselves as victims of an academic elite within an institutionalized staff divide, in which academics were cast as the "…*perpetrators of discrimination"* (p378). The extent to which this is true however has been questioned in recent years, as from an organizational perspective, academic and professional services staff can be viewed as two cultural entities that regularly communicate and interact with each other and through which professional relationships are (re)created. Their relationships are typically differentiated by perceived divergences in both workplace priorities and working styles, alongside the extent of autonomy and latitude afforded them by the institution (Kuo 2009). Newton (2009) advances that the reason for the perception of a binary staff 'adversarialism' is that cultural barriers prevent mutual understanding which mean *"… the two major forces within the university really do pull in different directions, not at all diametrically opposed, but not at all aligned, either"* (p113). Kuo's research found that staff relationships appeared to be less cohesive because academic staff believed that they constituted a different and separate cultural entity, which resulted in an *"…us versus them"* mentality (2009, p49). More recent research also concluded that between the two cultures of academic and professional services staff there exists *"… a nuanced but pervasive cultural divide despite the levels of 'boundary crossing' which are clearly taking place"* (Coate *et al* 2018, p7).

6.3.2 The binary staff divide in UCL

In contrast to both the literature and expectation, my research found that although the perception of a negative schism between the two staff groupings exists within the university in theoretical terms, there was no evidence of it in the participants' life-worlds in practice. Various participants expressed surprise that their working relationships were very cordial in comparison to what they had perhaps been led to expect from experiences elsewhere, or from the storying of colleagues. For example Akemi [*PS*] commented;

> *"... from what I've heard, our academics are pretty good, in terms of how they work alongside and deal with professional services staff… I mean none of them are downright rude, or disregard you in any sense..." (*1(iv)243-50).

Anthony [*PS*] concurred, saying *"… the Faculty is actually a very civilized place to work… there's not so much a division between the academics and professional services..."* (1(iii)24-26). Colin [*PS*] emphasized this aspect too, saying;

> *"… the academics are more friendly with professional services staff than they were at my last university – there seemed to be a little bit of an Upstairs Downstairs thing going on there you know - I don't know if there still is. I mean, well, not all the academics were like that, but they seemed more ready to give people dressing downs and they don't here. Well, not nowhere near as much in my experience."* (3(iii)132-38)

It would seem that although the expectation of professional services staff is that they should expect to be treated poorly by academic colleagues as a core constituent of their working life, there is little evidence of it in practice, despite the participants' long periods of tenure within the institution. The fact that this dissonance still features in their narratives of self however serves to show the pervasiveness of the stereotype of academic staff as "… *eccentric individuals with under-developed interpersonal skills*" (Pitman 2000, p173), so is significant in that it forms part of the university habitus into which they have been assimilated. It seems that although their figured worlds are populated by healthy working relationships, their expectation and understanding of what happens elsewhere is that there is a negative binary divide within academia as one of its enduring features. I contend this stems from the fact that university staff life-worlds are culturally and socially different, in that they inhabit complementary but different spheres; academic work is often solitary and self-directed meaning that individuality and independence are

rewarded. This contrasts with the work undertaken by professional service staff, which typically involves using the most efficient methods to support the academic mission of the university, in which teamwork and cooperation are key. This is echoed in Claire's (*A*) claim that; "*I suspect most people in professional services roles really want organisational success. And academics often want personal success… that's the metric of academia… the metric is not 'look how successful my organisation is', it's 'look how successful I am.'*" (3(ii)176-181)

I suggest the existence of the expectation of a binary divide stems from historical legacies and enduring stereotypes. This is largely due to a lack of transparency or understanding of other groups of staff's remit, and is best summed up by the pithy observation that *"Faculty bemoan the lack of support by administrators, administrators wonder what faculty actually do"* (Philips & Holton 1995, p43). Matters have moved on significantly in the decades since this comment was made and the area has been the subject of much research and debate meanwhile, but like all truisms and stereotypes (the latter defined as a '*a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing*[9]'), elements of it still ring true today in the figured worlds of those in its habitus.

I contend that the various spheres of difference and perspective between academic and professional services staff serve to emphasize the diverse experience reflected by both groups, which results in a duality of discourse within the institution. For example, the clear perception the professional services participants have of not feeling valued by the university implies a concept of structural division within its culture. This is sanctioned by a variety of acts in its habitus; the small but significant fact that the institution only recognizes personal titles involving academic credentials as worthy of mention on office signage for example, or the fact that the vast majority of meetings are chaired by academic staff. A contemporary illustration of this structural differentiation may be cited in that the institution has recently developed a 'One PS' initiative (https://www.ucl.ac.uk/professional-services/), aimed at

[9] *https://www.lexico.com/definition/stereotype*

bringing together professional services staff from across UCL to work together more collaboratively. Although a commendable aim, other groups of staff are effectively excluded, which serves to strengthen the perception of the validity of a binary staff divide. Another example may be found in the designation of the Academic Staff Common Room, in that - despite its name - it is open to all UCL staff (https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-staff-common-room/). The inclusion of 'academic' in its name however implies the exclusion and subsequent othering of other groups of staff. A consultation was conducted in 2018 as to the possibility of a name change intended to reflect the true diversity of the membership, but the nomenclature could not be agreed so the managing committee decided to retain the name the following year. These are all small, seemingly insignificant acts and while my findings do not indicate any deliberate attempt to 'other' any staff in any way, they suggest that the prevailing structural habitus encourages some aspects of othering by implicit or tacit means. I suggest that rather than indicating a conscious intent to disempower one group, this may simply be related to the fact that institutional aims in helping staff work together effectively have not yet been realized.

I conclude that any instances of conflict arising from perceptions of staff binary opposition are not systemic in origin, but are caused by how agentic individuals choose to act at any given time. How they decide to conduct themselves is based in part on their perceptions of their place in the institutional hierarchy, in addition to how that impacts on their visibility and sense of legitimacy within their life-world and that of others. Despite this, the expectation of a binary opposition persists as an enduring fiction in the modern university habitus, bolstered by anecdotal evidence and both historical and contemporary inequalities (such as for example UCL's statute 18). I suggest this also stems from a misunderstanding on the part of the majority of staff as to their purpose in working for the institution. I contend this is because there is an enduring presumption (caused in part by the historic collective term for professional services as 'support' staff) that those based in those occupations exist purely to support academic staff, whereas in fact all groups of

staff are employed to support the academic mission of the university. This makes them equally accountable to each other. If all staff working within the university were aware of and accepted this seemingly small but ultimately crucial distinction, their working relationships may be optimized.

6.3.3 My conceptual model of staff positionality at UCL

This leads me on to discussion of my conceptual model, as given in Figure 6a below. It depicts my conceptualization of how, where and on what basis university staff perceive their self-positioning to be situated at UCL. This is labelled as their 'identity', outlined in white at the centre of the diagram. In essence I envisage it as being the point at which my three interlocking concepts of hierarchy, visibility and legitimacy (which could be otherwise expressed via the Bourdieusian concepts of field, habitus and capital) overlap, as the individual experience of them will naturally differ. Some staff will place more emphasis on their place in the hierarchy for example and less on their visibility, whereas others may give more prominence to their visibility and hierarchical status with a lower importance on their sense of legitimacy and so on, as demonstrated in Figure 6b and Figure 6c. This means the precise point at which an individual's identity is defined will differ depending on both contextual and temporal variables.

Encircling this dynamic are both space and place as overarching themes, which also impact on personal understandings of individual situatedness. This is because the metaphysicality of the workplace is experienced differentially based on contextual salience and the local built environment. Put simply, where one is located in relation to others impacts how one perceives them. The same is true of an individual's relationship with the institution, in that the geographic location of their workspace impacts the individual's perception of their figurative place within it. I contend that as a diagrammatic model, it expresses the themes and concepts discussed in my research, and posits a mode of understanding as to how staff at UCL perceive their unique status and place within their institutional habitus.

Figure 6a

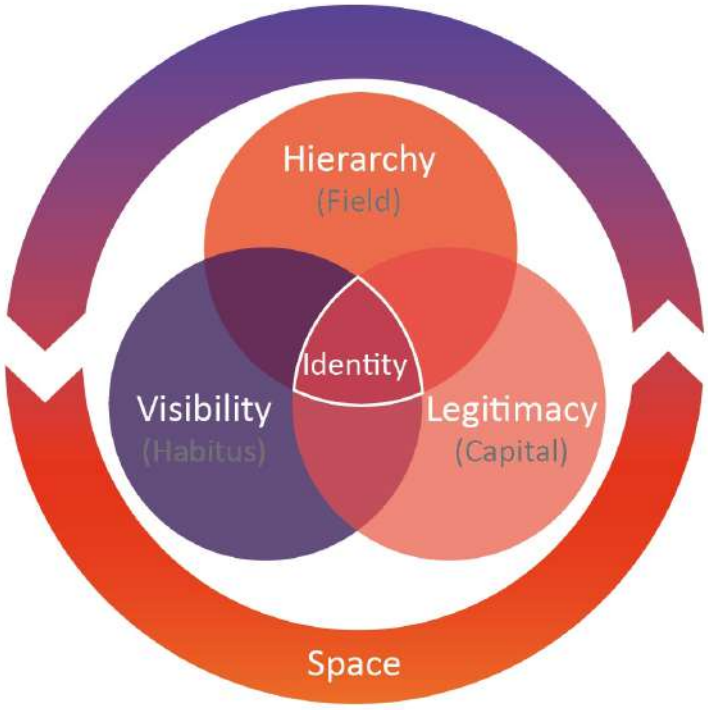


Figure 6b

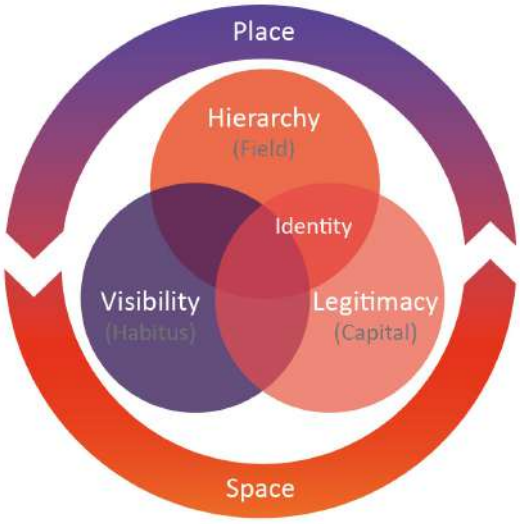
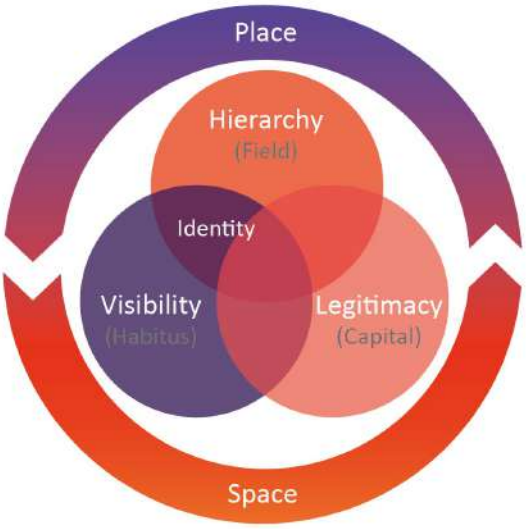


Figure 6c



6.4 Contribution of the study

This research is part of a professional doctorate that has several audiences. It is a small study taking place within a set time period in one institution. Although its scope is limited, it may offer a framework for further discussion of factors that

govern the perception of workplace relationships. Therefore, while its contribution to the field is initially focused on the institution where it was carried out, it has potential to lead to further research and also provides a contribution to a field which has been the subject of limited research to date. It extends the existing research in focusing on the perceptions of university staff on their self-positioning and complements the extensive literature on academic staff identity. I identified a gap in the literature that examines individuals' relationships with their institution as opposed to other aspects of the university workplace dynamic, and contend that my research generated some valuable data. My findings clarify for example the way in which the concepts of hierarchy, legitimacy and visibility (or habitus, capital and field) can interact. This has significance for the development of individual agency but also has potential impact on the scope for collaborative working within the institution. A better understanding of this phenomenon will help to remodel the relationship between academic and professional service staff to create a more collaborative and ultimately more productive university culture. Key to this is the importance of mutual understanding of contextual positionalities within the institution, as a means by which staff can optimise their working relationships. I hope that that my findings will contribute to the furthering of both academic and professional knowledge, and may also enhance the understanding of current practice in UCL. I believe it offers an insight into how academics and professionals view their place and the impact this has on their working identity, and how their interactions and professional complementarity could be better understood. The results should optimize working relationships and be extrapolated to good effect elsewhere.

6.5 Areas for future development and research

There are several areas that it would be useful to explore further in order to complement the outcomes of this research. For example, a comparative study could be conducted with another university to explore any potential (dis)similarities. It might also be constructive to conduct a survey with a number of universities or across the higher education sector, in order to explore how far issues relating to

feeling valued are experienced by staff. The impact of remote working and online participation in meetings (as to whether it has increased or decreased engagement and otherwise impacted on meeting dynamics) could be explored, as could why women typically participate less often in meetings than their male counterparts. Research could also usefully be conducted looking through the lens of staff gender or ethnicity to establish the potential impact of these variables on social and cultural capital. These all exceeded the bounds of my research, but could be interesting avenues to explore and may shed further light on the subject.

6.6 Critical reflection and implications for professional practice

The process of conducting this research has influenced my professional practice. As a result of it I have become more aware of some blind spots in my thinking about the relationships between different groups of university staff, and less naïve in my assumptions and presumptions about them and how they operate. I will be mindful of this in the future and encourage my colleagues to be less stereotypical in their thinking on the subject. I also realize that my previous research did not always engage on a critical level, in that I often adopted theoretical models to provide an analytical framework. In this way the process of conducting this research has granted me an understanding of the development of knowledge generated through empirical research. It afforded me the opportunity to conduct a meaningful study while overcoming methodological and ethical challenges along the way, which is something I will use to good effect in my professional practice. Finally I suggest that helping to develop a better understanding about the differing but complementary aims, focus and remits of different groups of staff would benefit the university. For this reason, I plan to work with the institution to consider how best to support both professional services and academic staff's understanding of their identities and roles. Doing so may encourage the former for example to contribute more in meetings and other forums, which may help staff to work together more effectively for the benefit of all.

6.7 Dissemination

My findings will be shared at institutional level with the senior management in UCL. I will also disclose a summary of my findings to all staff who participated, and make it available on request to those who express an interest. I will produce a separate paper on the data generated via the meeting observations, and disseminate it to the Chairs and Secretaries of the meetings to propagate as they see fit and will present a seminar to staff based in my Faculty Office. It will also be presented in staff seminars, conferences and other events, such as those linked to institutional communities of practice and distributed on online platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Moodle. I aim to contribute to the body of research that exists in this area with the possibility of inclusion in relevant journals, and on a personal level, will use the experience to continue to review and test my own perceptions and professional practice.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the conclusions of my study, which are that the existence of any binary staff divide within UCL is not systemic but the result of how situated and agentic individuals choose to act. I presented my conceptual model explaining how UCL staff derive their perception of their self-positioning. This explains where they situate their locus within the institutional hierarchy, which is based on their feelings of legitimacy alongside how visible they perceive themselves to be within both space and place. The limitations of the study were outlined which include the weaknesses of the case study approach, problems associated with its sampling and the highly subjective nature of phenomenological interpretation of qualitative data. Other issues discussed were those associated with reliability, validity and generalisability and the problem of (insider) researcher bias. The power dynamic between researcher and participant was explored and I concluded by reflecting on the implications of this study on my professional practice, its contribution to knowledge and my plans for its dissemination alongside some potential areas for future research.

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Appendix 1

Begin forwarded message:

From: [redacted]
Subject: IOE ethical approval
Date: 12 December 2019 at 14:01:18 GMT
To: [redacted]

Dear Annabel

Thank you for sending in your ethics application.

I am writing to confirm that ethical approval has been granted by the UCL Institute of Education for your doctoral research project titled:

An exploration of academic and professional staff perceptions of their positioning within one UK university and its impact on their workplace identities and relationships

This ethical approval has been granted from 12th December 2019 and the document you provided has been saved to your student file.

Please can you upload the approved ethics form to your UCL Research Student Log https://researchlog.grad.ucl.ac.uk/.

I wish you all the best for your forthcoming research.

Best wishes,
[redacted]

Ms [redacted]
Programme Administrator |Academic Programmes Office| Centre for Doctoral Education |UCL Institute of Education|20 Bedford Way London WC1H 0AL

[redacted]

Appendix 2

Dear [insert name],

As you may know, I am pursuing a professional doctorate (an EdD) in the Institute of Education. I am now in my fourth year and conducting research for my final thesis. You have been identified as a potential research participant and I would therefore be very keen for you to be involved. To help you decide if you would like to I have supplied some information about what it would involve below. I hope it will answer any questions you might have but please don't hesitate to contact me if there is anything else you would like to know before deciding. Many thanks for your time and consideration in reading this message and I hope to hear from you soon.

Annabel

INFORMATION SHEET

What is the research about?

My working title is '*An exploration of academic and professional staff perceptions of their positioning within one UK university and its impact on their workplace identities and relationships'.*

What does the research aim to do?

I will explore how academic and professional staff view their respective place and status within their home institution and the effect(s) that this then has on their professional identity and daily interactions. I aim to do this by exploring the opinions and views of staff based across UCL in order I can compare and contrast between them. This is because I have worked in university administration for 20 years (in a number of different institutions, Departments and roles) and am intrigued by how staff view their positioning within their socially constructed workplace.

Who is conducting the research?

I am conducting the research as a doctoral student, not as a member of UCL staff.

How will the research be carried out?

The research will be conducted via interview. During proceedings you would be asked your thoughts on your self-positioning within UCL and asked to draw a mind map to illustrate your understanding of your place and workplace relationships. Further information about what this would involve would be provided nearer the time.

Why am I being invited to take part?

I would like to interview you because I think you would be able to make a valuable contribution to my research. I will be interviewing twelve people, 6 academic staff and 6 professional services staff. This is so that I can hear as many different viewpoints as possible. I think you in particular may have some insights I would be keen to capture.

Do I have to take part?

Of course not - it is up to you to decide whether or not to participate. I hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience but understand you may not wish to, so any agreement to do so would be entirely voluntary.

How do I take part?

You will be asked to consent to being interviewed. If you agree the interview should last about 40 minutes and we would identify a suitable date and time for it to take place in a venue of your choosing.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will have the opportunity to tell me how you see your place within your workplace and how you view your relationship to UCL. I hope that it might offer an insight into how staff view this concept, which may help

different groups of university staff to work together more successfully. This is because each could then understand others viewpoints and focuses more clearly.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The cost of participation will be mainly in terms of your time: the interview would last about 40 minutes. You may also feel reluctant given my staff status and our working relationship to discuss your thoughts on this concept, but I am interested in what you have to say as a doctoral researcher, not as a colleague. There are no right or wrong answers; it is what ***you*** think that interests me.

Will anyone know I have been involved?

Only if you tell them. I will use a pseudonym (of your choosing) in the reporting of anything you say and will also conceal your job title and any other potential identifying factors.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

All information collected will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. All data generated in the course of the research will be stored securely in electronic form for one year after the completion of the research project.

If I agree to take part, what happens next?

We would agree a date, time and venue that suits you for an interview. I would also send you a consent form via email and you could ask me any questions about it meanwhile.

What will happen to the results of the research?

It will be used in my EdD thesis, a 45,000 word report that I will produce by May 2021 which forms the culmination of my doctoral studies. If you participate I would release an abridged summary of my findings to you by September 2021 and I would be happy to send you a copy of my thesis on request.

Who has reviewed the ethics of the research?

The research has been approved by UCL's Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the way in which this research will be conducted, please contact my supervisor via e-mail in the first instance (*Dr Celia Whitchurch, c.whitchurch@ucl.ac.uk*) or the Chair of UCL's Research Ethics Committee via ethics@ucl.ac.uk.

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in the 'general' privacy notice: for participants in research studies, click here The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The lawful basis that will be used to process your personal data is 'Public task' for personal data. Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If I am able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide I will undertake this and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible. If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact UCL about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

Contact for Further Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this with me prior to making up your mind whether to take part, please contact me direct in order we can discuss it further, in person, or via email at [redacted] or by telephone on extension [redacted].

Appendix 3

CONSENT FORM

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet

- Working title of research project: "*An exploration of academic and professional staff perceptions of their positioning within one UK university and its impact on their workplace identities and relationships"*
- Name and email address of the researcher: Annabel Brown [redacted]
- Name and email address of the supervisor: Celia Whitchurch [redacted]
- Name and email address of the UCL Data Protection Officer: data-protection@ucl.ac.uk

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The researcher must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to participate. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

- I confirm that I understand that by ticking each box below I am consenting to this element of the research.
- I understand that it will be assumed that unticked boxes means that I **do not** consent to that part of the research.
- I understand that by not giving consent for any one element that I may be deemed ineligible to participate.

I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above study. *I have had an opportunity to consider the information and what will be expected of me.* *I have had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered to my satisfaction.* *I consent to participate in the study and would like to take part in an individual interview.*	☐
I understand that my personal information will be used for the purposes explained to me. *I understand that according to data protection legislation, 'public task' will be the lawful basis for processing.*	☐
I consent to my interview being audio/video recorded. *I understand that the recordings will be stored anonymously, using password-protected software and will be used only for this specific research.*	☐
I understand that all personal information will remain confidential and that all efforts will be made to ensure I cannot be identified. *I understand that my data gathered in this study will be stored anonymously and securely.*	☐
I understand that the data will not be made available to any commercial organisations but is solely the responsibility of the researcher undertaking this study. *I understand that the information I have submitted will contribute towards a doctoral thesis.*	☐

Name of participant Signature *Date*

Appendix 4

From: Annabel Brown [redacted]
Subject: May I observe your interaction in two [redacted] meetings this term?
Date: 6 January 2020 at 13:45:56 GMT
To: [redacted]

Dear colleagues,

As you may know, I am pursuing a professional doctorate (*an EdD*) part-time in UCL's Institute of Education. I am now in my fourth year and conducting research for my final thesis. It involves an exploration of how academic and professional staff view their self-positioning within UCL and the effect(s) this then has on their professional identity and working relationships.

One of my research methods involves the structured observation of staff meetings. In particular I am hoping to gain a better understanding of group dynamics and turn-taking in conversations. I aim to do this by using a simple coding method to enable me to map the flow of discussion. It would take the form of plotting turn-taking in dialogue, ie by assigning each member a number and noting them down sequentially as and when they contribute to discussion. I would not be making any audio-recordings of proceedings.

Please note I am not interested in the content of any dialogue itself as I am only looking to measure the nuances of social interaction as demonstrated by participation. The identity of those observed would remain anonymous both for the purposes of the project and any publications that arise out of it. In addition the content of all discussions would remain confidential and not feature in my research in any way, or be divulged further in any capacity. I would of course be willing to share my findings with participants.

I have identified [redacted] as one of my research sites and hope that you will consent to being observed in two [redacted] meetings this term? (*the first taking place on Monday 13 January, the second to be decided*). **I will assume consent has been given unless you contact me to voice your objection**; no reason need be given.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this with me prior to making up your mind, please contact me direct in order we can discuss it further, in person, or via email at annabel.brown@ucl.ac.uk or telephone on extension 59002.

Many thanks and best wishes,

Annabel

Appendix 5

Interview Schedule & Topic Guide

Working Title:
An exploration of academic and professional staff perceptions of their positioning within one UK university and its impact on their workplace identities and relationships

Research Questions:

- *How do university staff perceive their positioning within UCL and how does this impact on their relationship with the institution?*
- *How do perceptions of individual self-positioning impact on professional identities?*
- *How do perceptions of individual self-positioning impact on working relationships?*

Schedule
Each interview will last about 40 minutes and will be structured as follows:

Opening (*5 minutes*):

- *Introduction – statement that the interview forms part of my research for my EdD*
- *Reminder of research topic (remind them of research title and read them the research questions).*
- *Reminder that project has ethical approval*
- *Ground rules - no right or wrong answers, simply interested in their opinion. All data used in the study will be anonymised and no identifying factors will be used. I'll be taking notes throughout too.*
- *Reminder that during proceedings will be asked to draw a mind-map of their workplace network*
- *Ask respondent for their signed consent form (bring spares for them to sign)*
- *Turn on the voice-recorders and check they work*

Questions *(15 minutes):*

1. How long have you worked for UCL?
2. Has it always been in the same unit or have you worked in different parts of it?
3. Have you worked in other universities and if so, how does UCL compare?
4. Not thinking about it too hard, can you give me up to 5 words that spring to mind when you think of UCL?
5. Now envisage UCL – can you describe what it looks like and where do you fit in?
6. How do you think the people you work with perceive you and the work you do?
7. Do you feel valued by UCL as an institution?
8. Do you think academic staff and professional services staff share the same values / focus?
9. I am interested in the impact of space and place and its effect on people. Do you think where people work (ie where they're based) affects how you interact with them?

Mind Map *(15 minutes – 10 minutes for drawing and 5 minutes for discussion):*

- Present interviewee with paper and coloured pens and ask them to draw their network – who do they work with most closely and how often, ie visualise their work/role (both within/without UCL).
- Ask them to talk me through it
- Show them past findings and ask them what they think the cause(s) are

---

Closing *(5 minutes):*

- *Have the interviewees any queries?*
- *Have they any additional points they'd like to make?*
- *What pseudonym would you like to be known by?*
- *Thank them for their time and input, state that it will come in very useful for my research*
- *Inform them they'll receive the transcript within a month and are free to flag up anything they think is in error or that they would like to be vetoed for any reason*
- *Remind them that they will be sent an abridged version of my findings by September 2021 and can request a copy of my thesis after this date*

Appendix 6

On 24 Jan 2020, at 10:38, [redacted] wrote:

Yes - that's fine. Thank you for asking.

CONTACT DETAILS REDACTED

On 24 Jan 2020, at 10:03, Brown, Annabel [redacted] wrote:

Dear Professor [redacted],

I am writing to request your permission as Chair of UCL [redacted] to formally observe meeting proceedings this term.

To explain, I am in the fourth year of a part-time EdD at the Institute of Education and am conducting research for my final thesis. It involves an exploration of how academic and professional staff view their self-positioning within UCL and the effect(s) that this then has on their professional identity and workplace relationships.

One of my research methods involves the structured observation of staff meetings; in particular I am hoping to gain a better understanding of group dynamics and turn-taking in conversations. This is because meetings are sites of social construction where identity is performed and co-created by those present. I do this via a simple coding method to enable me to map the flow of discussion. It takes the form of plotting turn-taking in dialogue, ie by assigning each member a number and noting them down sequentially as and when they contribute to discussion.

I am not interested in the content of dialogue itself but would instead be looking to measure the nuances of social interaction as demonstrated by participation. I would not be wanting to make any audio-recordings of proceedings. I have secured agreement from the Chairs and memberships of other fora to observe their discussions (both formal committees and working groups) and was discussing it with Professor [redacted] (copied in) yesterday, who suggested [redacted] as another potential forum.

I hope you will agree to my request, as it would contribute greatly to my research and I think could prove to be a useful and interesting exercise in its own right; I would of course be willing to share my findings with you. Presuming you do agree, I would like to observe both meetings this term, on 25 February and 30 April and would liaise with [redacted] (copied in) as Secretary about the logistics of doing so. And I would of course also write to the membership beforehand to seek their consent too.

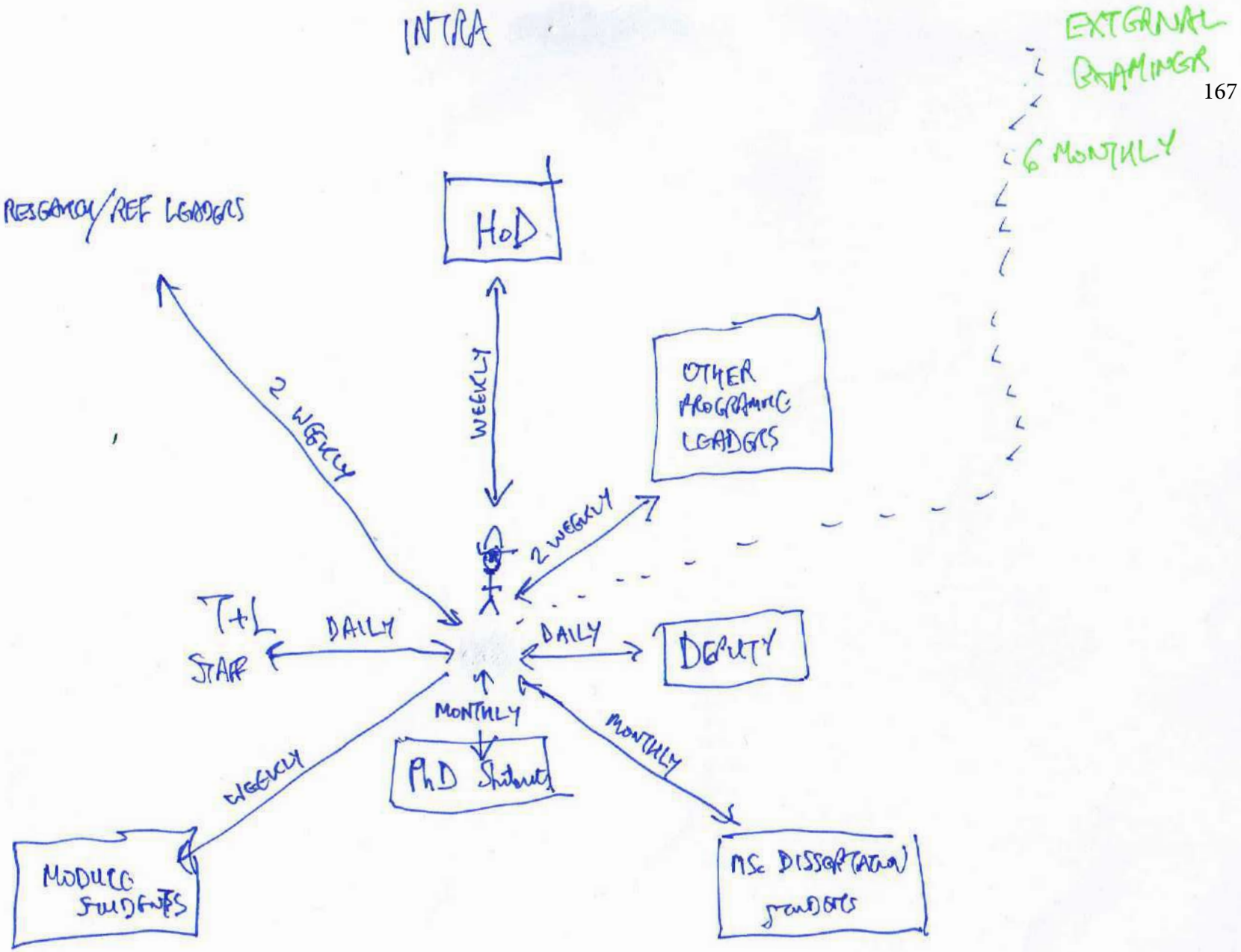
Could you please get back to me to let me know if this would be something you would be happy to agree to? Thank you and best wishes,

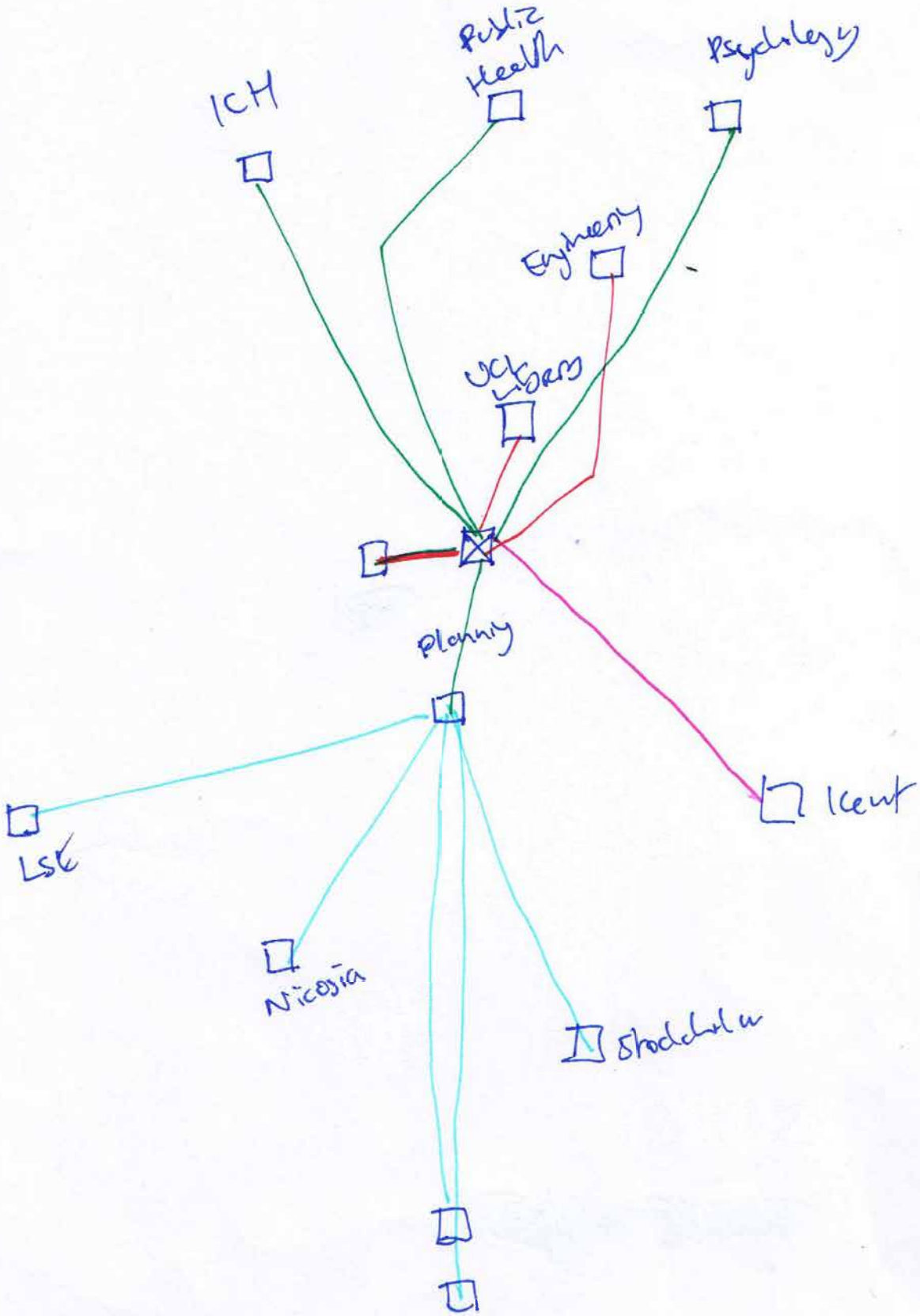
Annabel

Appendix 7

Working Group One [*9 March 2020*]

| Membership | | | Frequency of participation | | |


INTRA
EXTERNAL EXAMINER
6 MONTHLY
RESEARCH/REF LEADERS
HoD
2 WEEKLY
WEEKLY
OTHER PROGRAMME LEADERS
2 WEEKLY
T+L STAFF
DAILY
DAILY
DEPUTY
MONTHLY
PhD Students
WEEKLY
MONTHLY
MODULE LEADERS
MSc DISSERTATION LEADERS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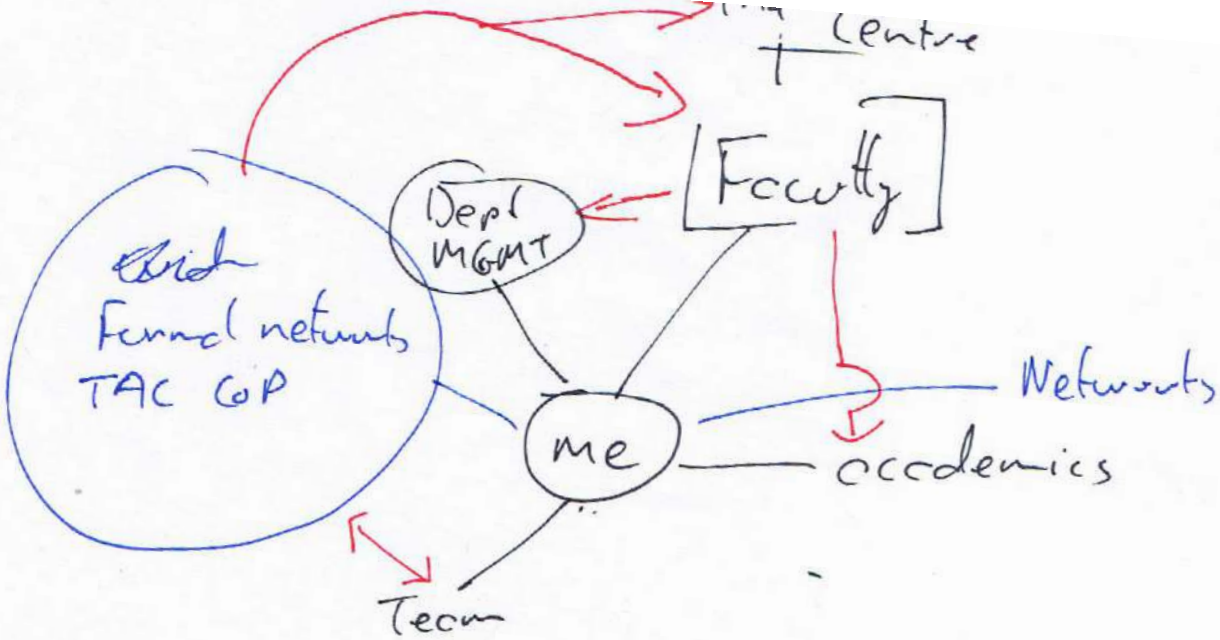
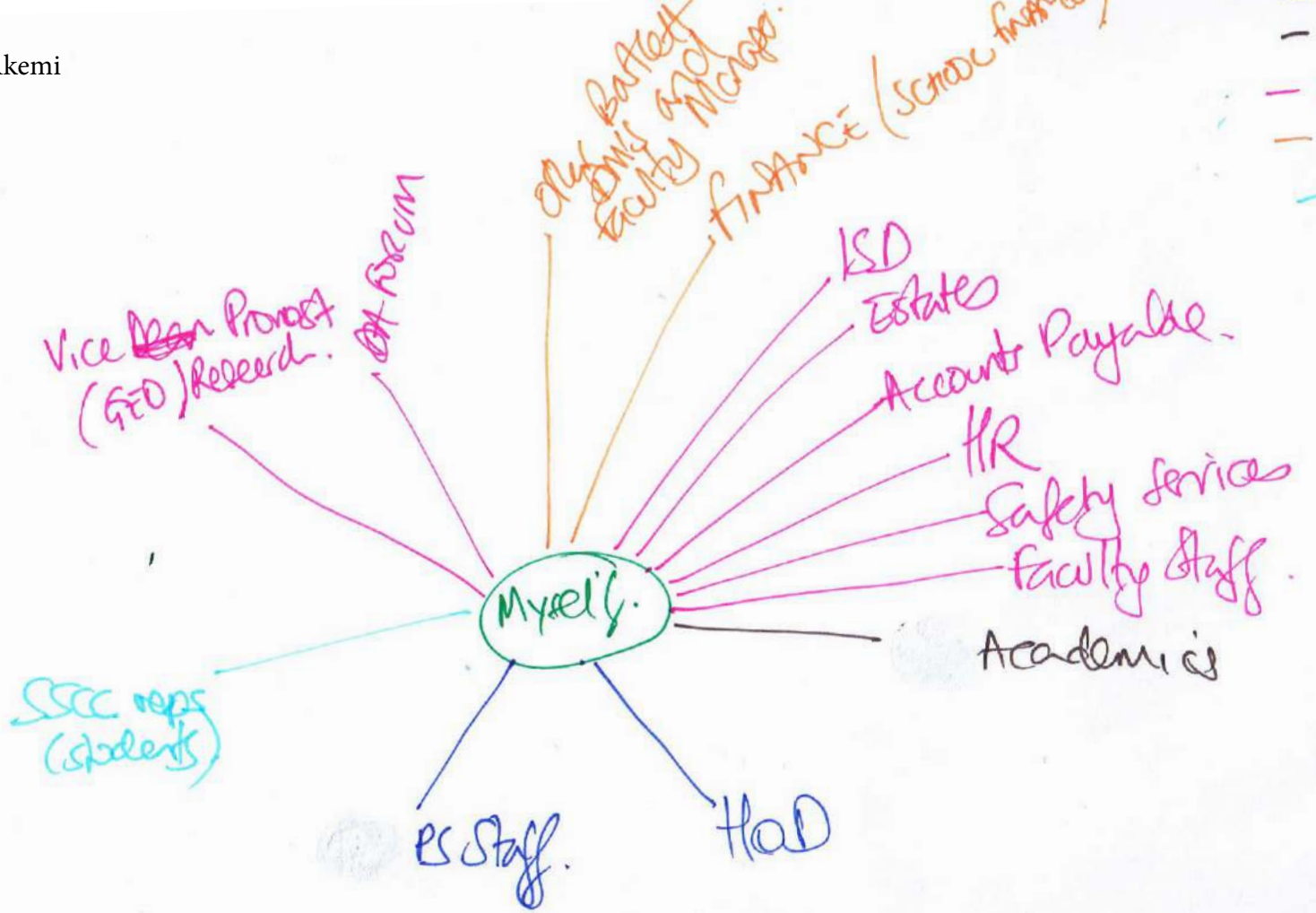
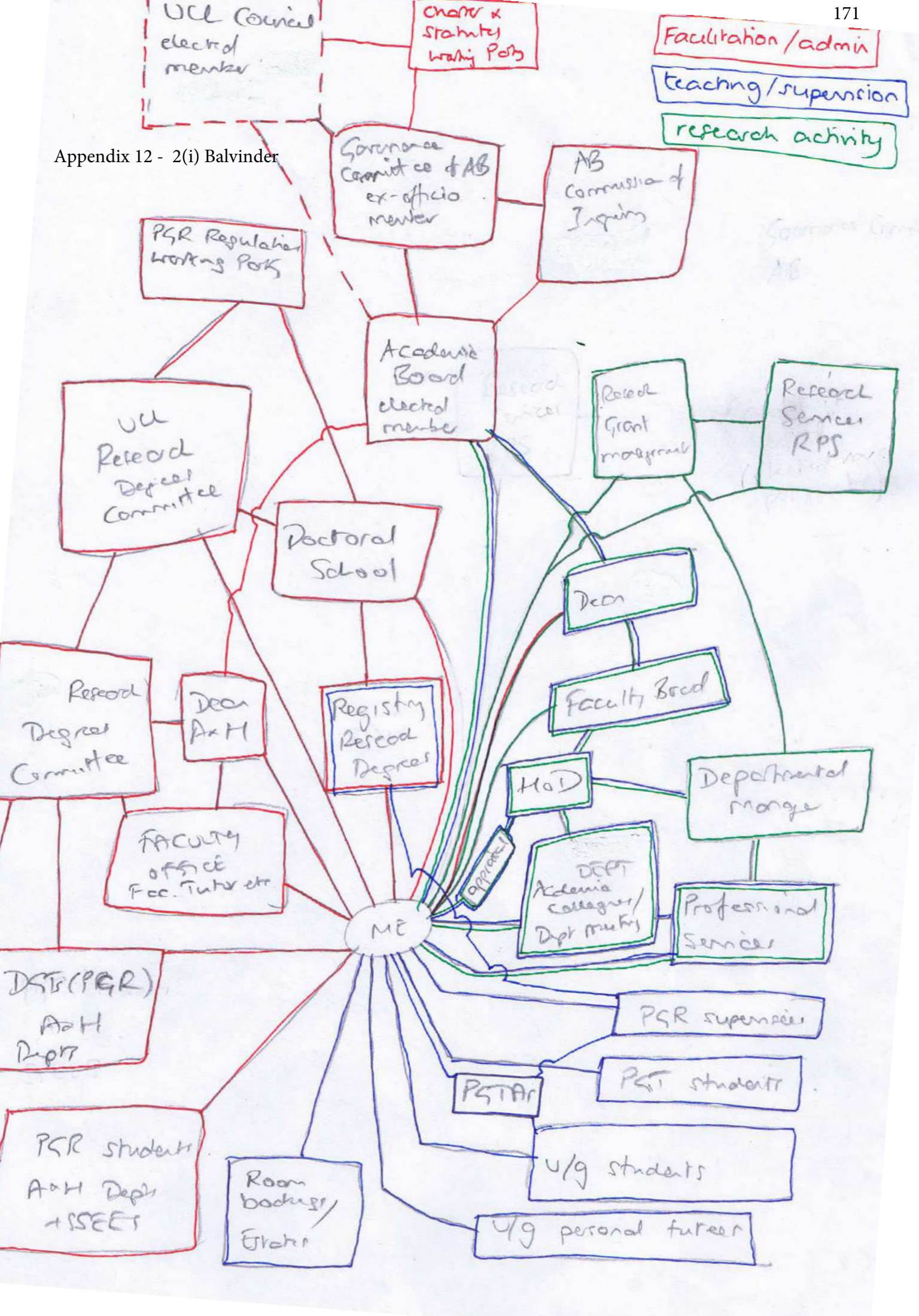
Psychology
Epidemiology
UCL Library
Planning
LSE
Nicosia
Stockholm
Kent



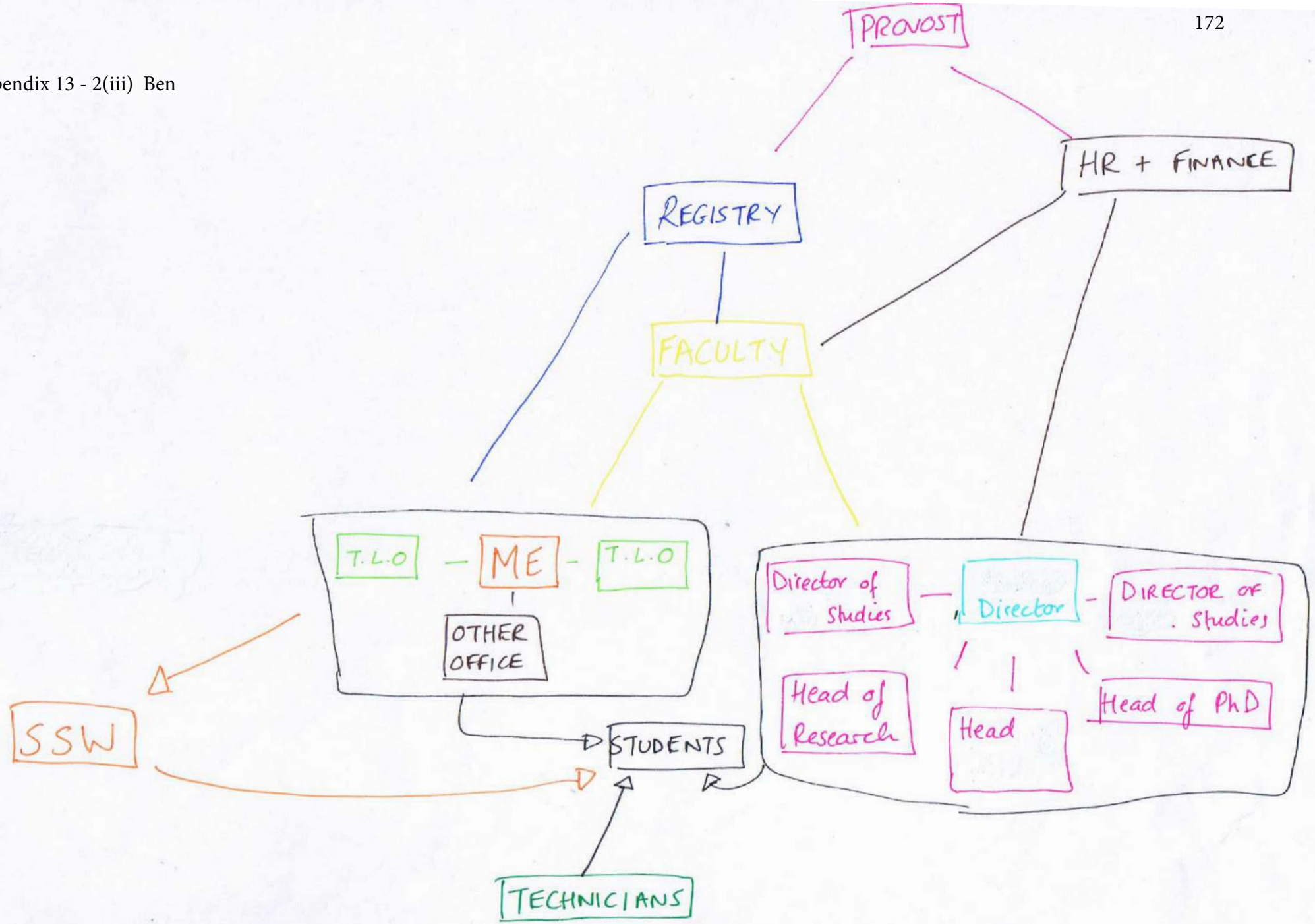
Appendix 10 - 1(iii) Anthony


Vice Dean Provost (GEO) Researd.
Myself.
SSCC reps (students)
PS Staff.
HoD
LSD
Estates
Accounts Payable.
HR
Safety Services
Faculty Staff.
Academics
- once/twice a week
- As and when needed
- Once/twice a month
- Every three months

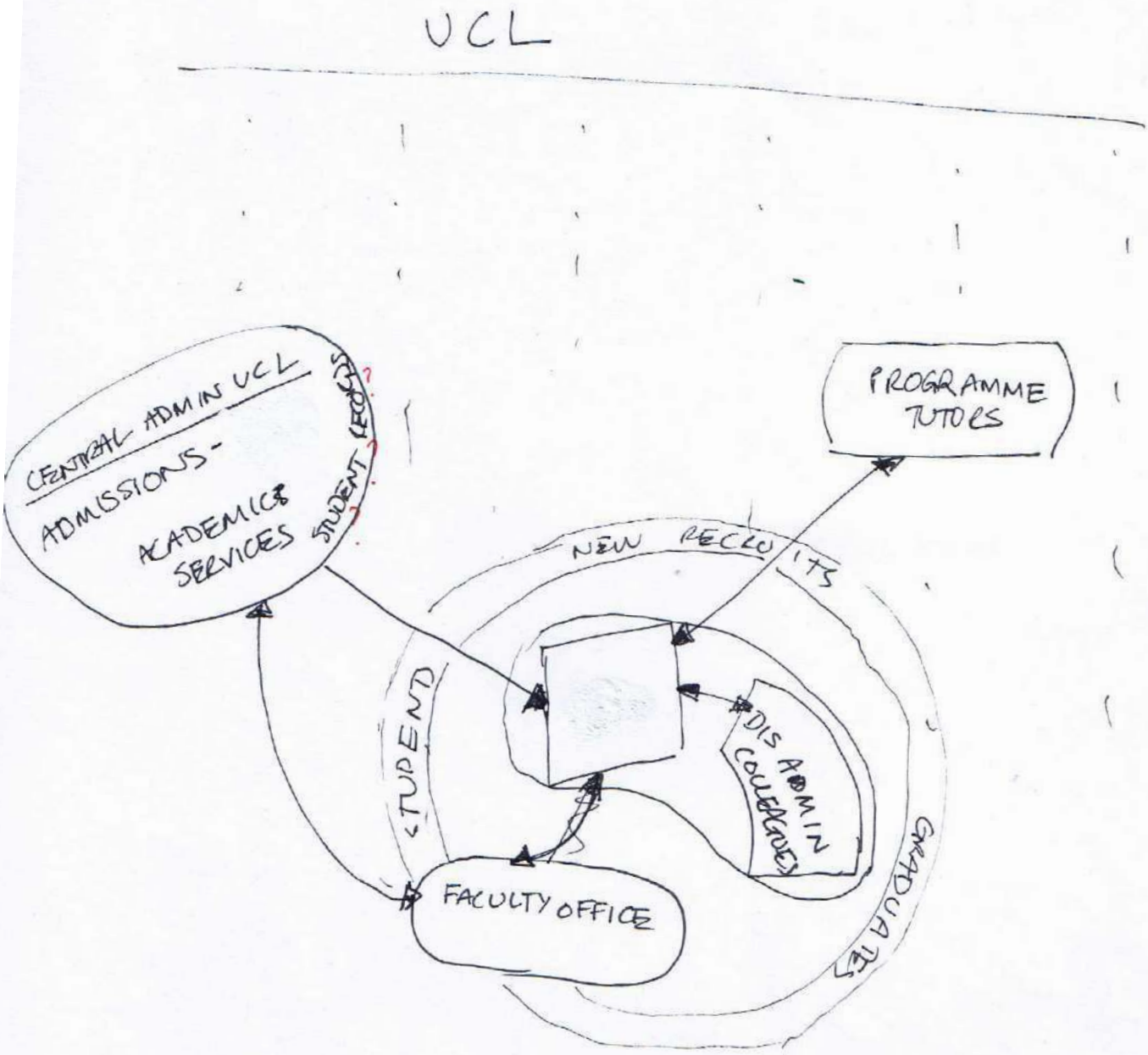
Appendix 12 - 2(i) Balvinder



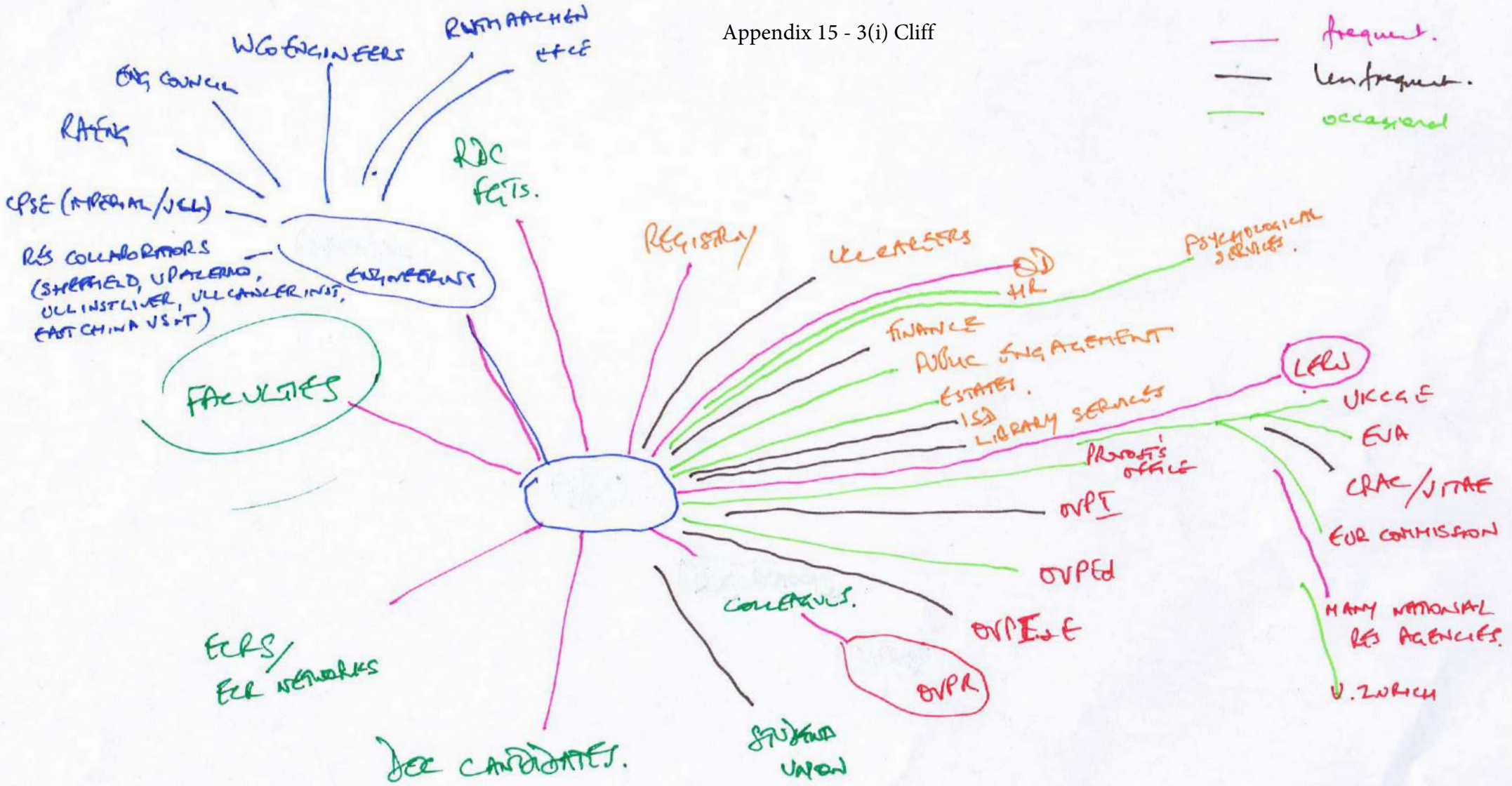
Appendix 13 - 2(iii) Ben



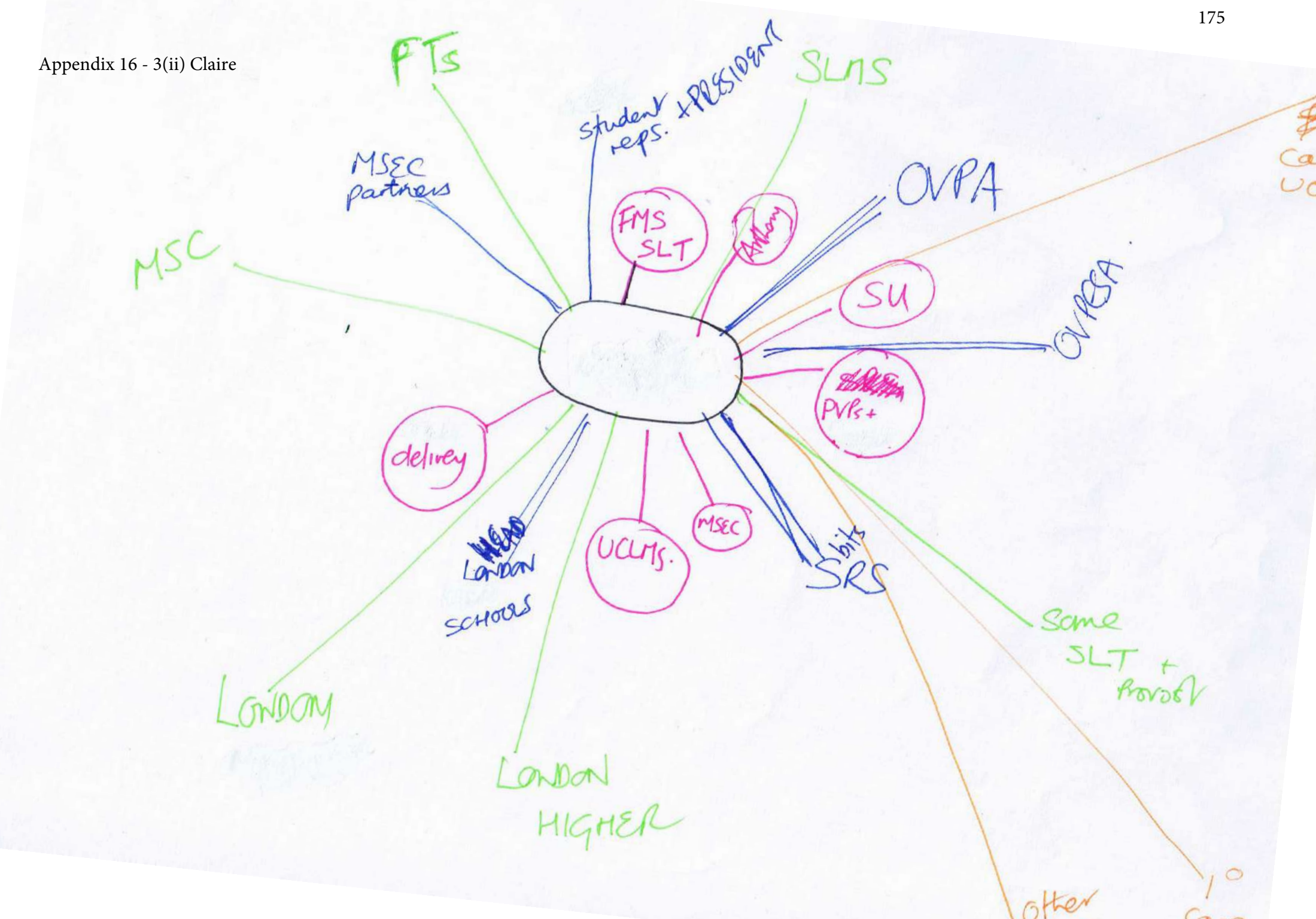
Appendix 14 - 2(iv) Barbara

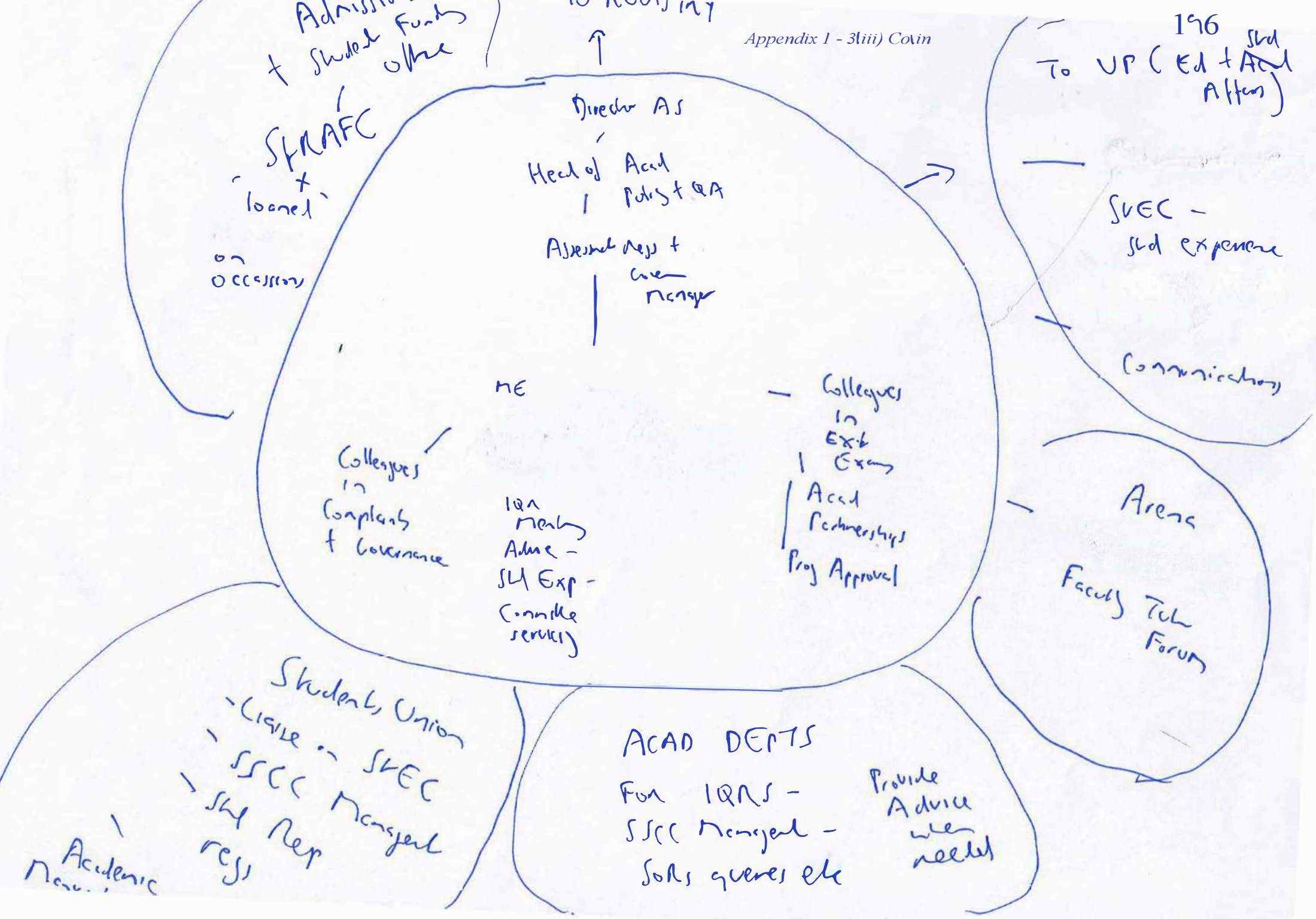


Appendix 15 - 3(i) Cliff

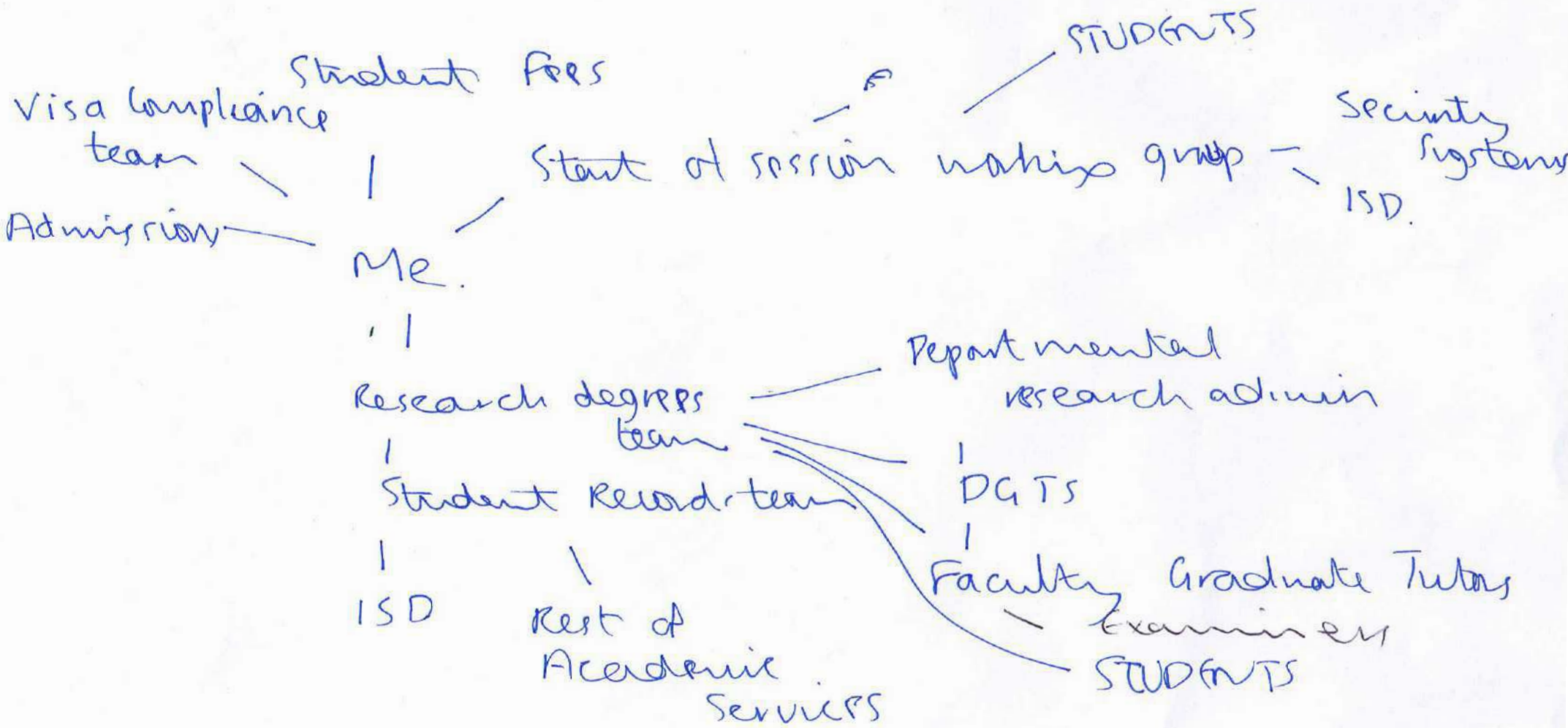


Appendix 16 - 3(ii) Claire




Admiss + Student Funds Office
SFRAFC
+
'loaned'
on occasions
Director AS
Head of Acad Polis + QA
Assistant Reg + Exam Manager
ME
Colleagues in Complaints + Governance
IQA Meetings Admin - SU Exp - Committee services
Colleagues in Ext Exam
Acad Partnerships
Prog Approval
196
To UP (Ed + Acad Affairs)
SLEC - Std experience
Communications
Arena
Faculty Tch Forum
Students Union
- Chair - SLEC
- SSCC Mangmt
- Std Rep
- Std Rep
Academic
ACAD DEPTS
For IQRs - SSCC Mangmt - SORs queries etc
Provide Advice when needed

Appendix 18 - 3(iv) Cuifen



Appendix 19

Administrative Staff (*Figures 7-9*)

Figure 7

Anthony

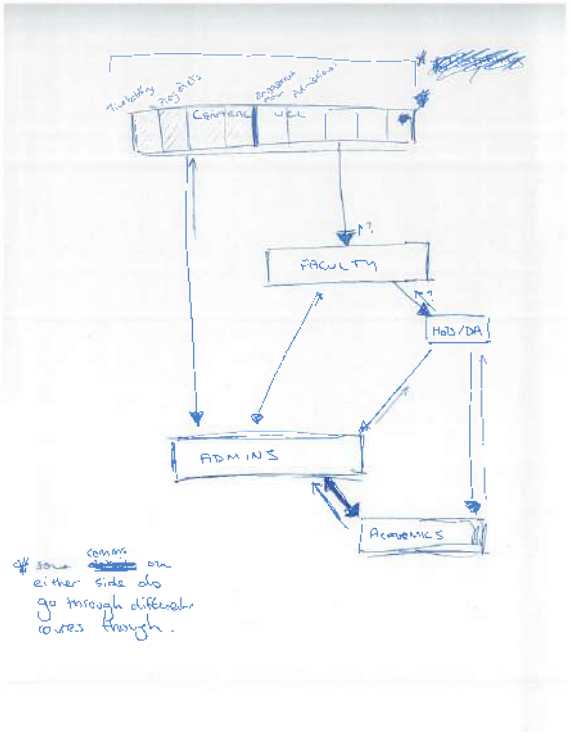


Figure 8

Hazel

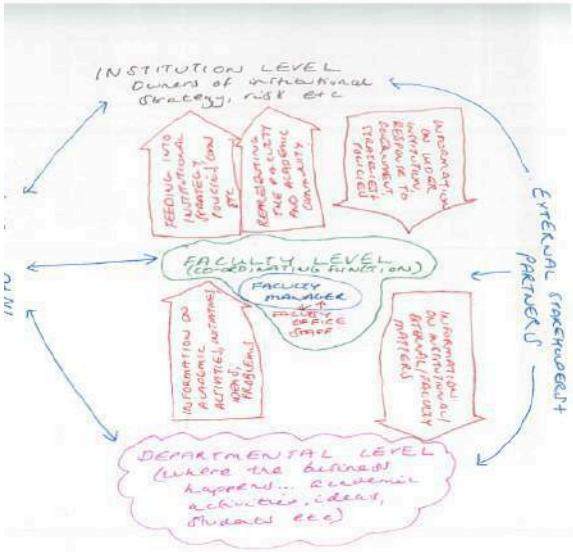
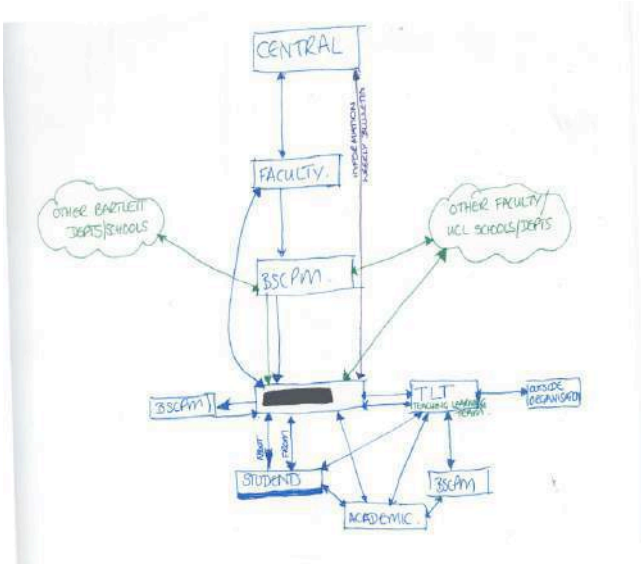


Figure 9

Vanessa



Academic Staff (*Figures 10-12*)

Figure 10

Karen

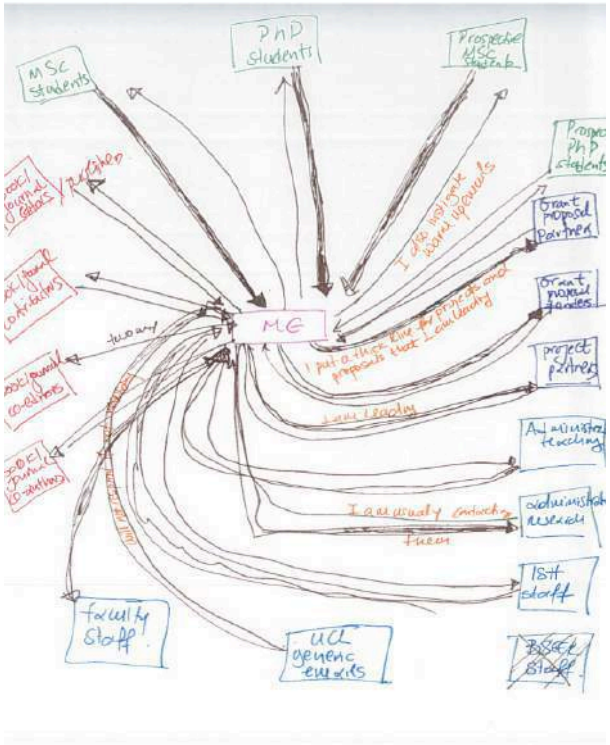


Figure 11

James

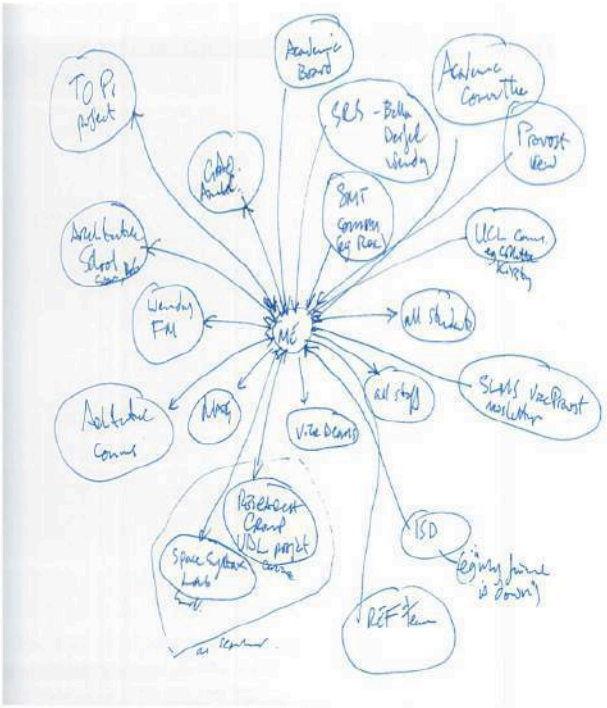
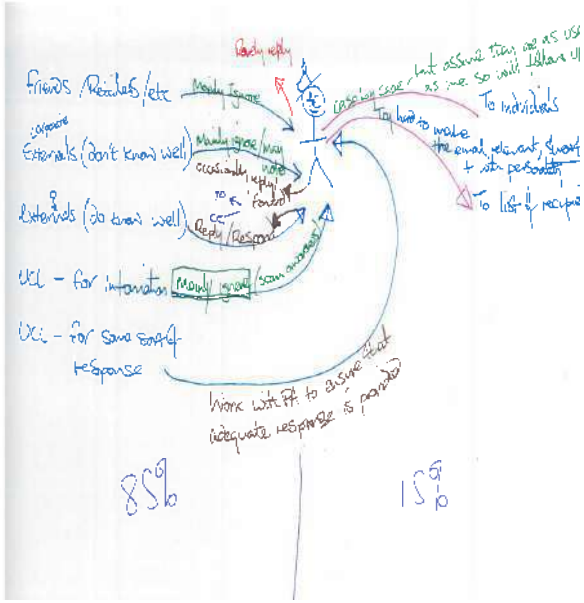


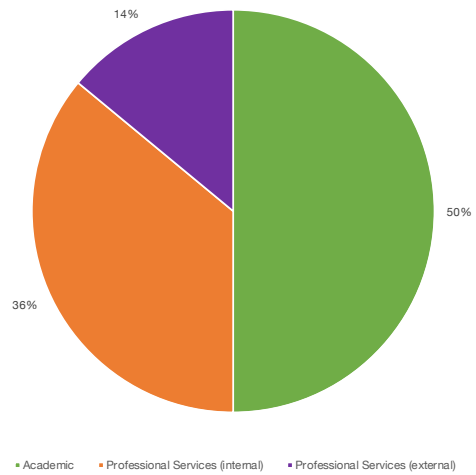
Figure 12

Richard

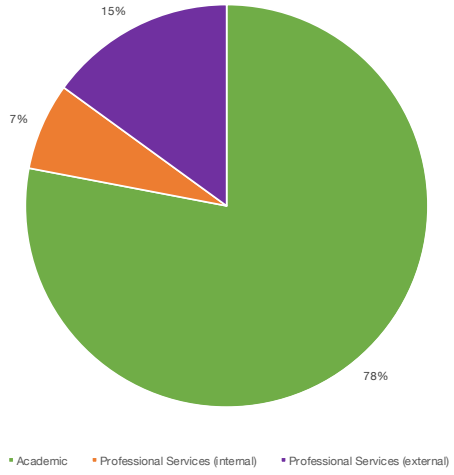


Working Group One [*9 March 2020*]

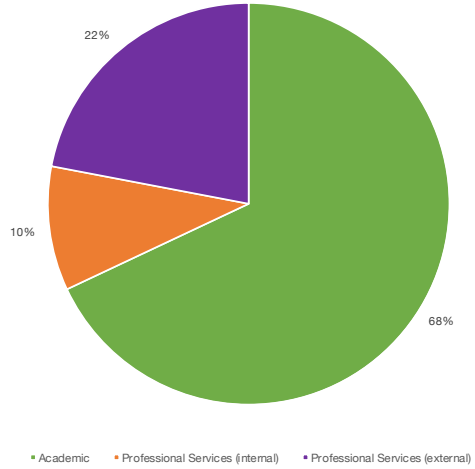
Membership in attendance (*by staff category*)



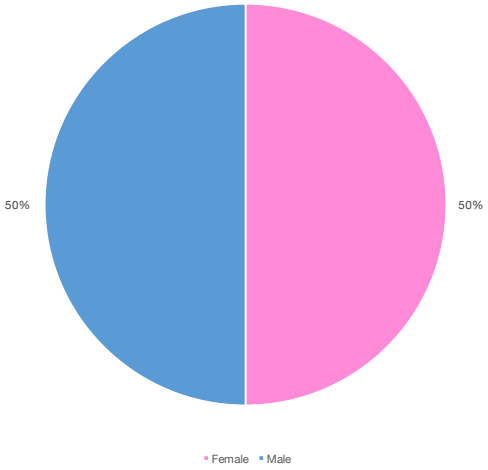
Membership participation (*incl. the [academic] Chair*)



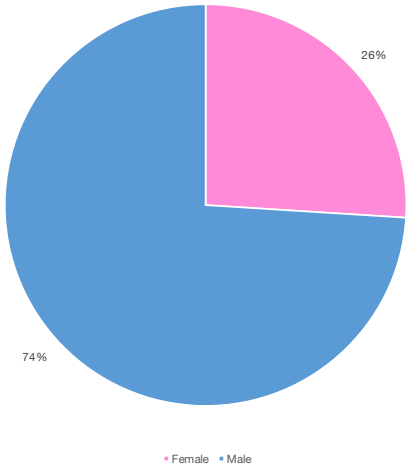
Membership participation *(excl. the [academic] Chair)*



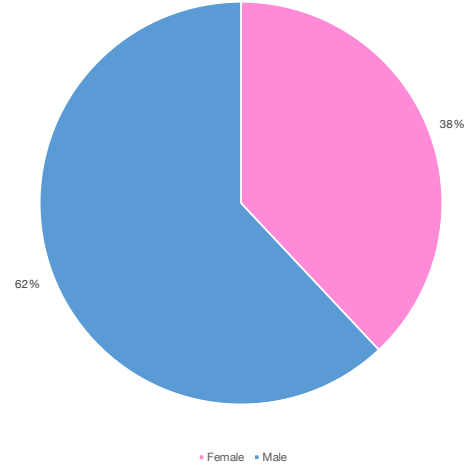
Membership in attendance *(by gender)*



Membership participation *(incl. the [male] Chair)*

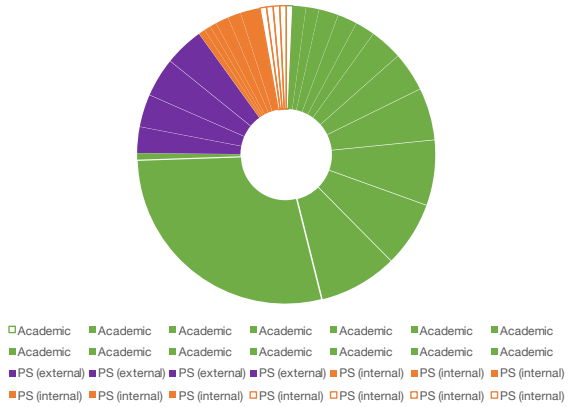


Membership participation *(excl. the [male] Chair)*

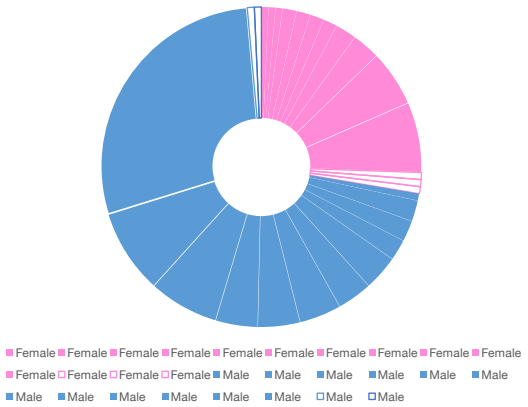


Working Group One [*9 March 2020*]

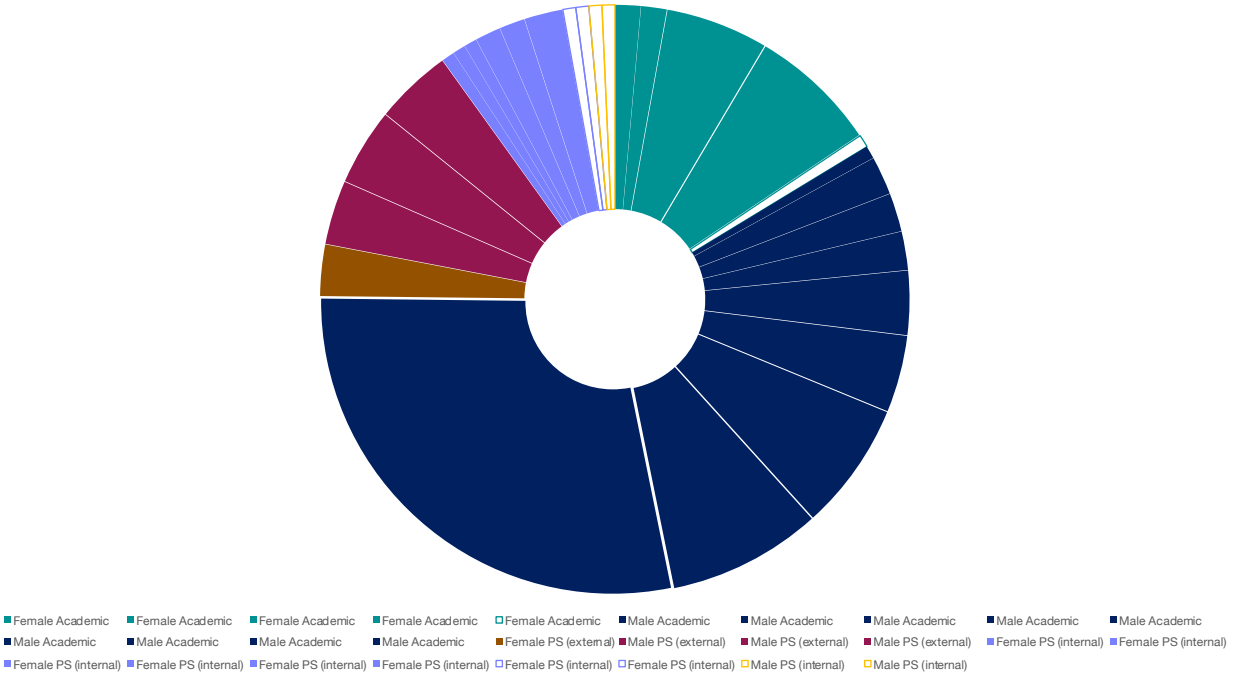
Membership participation (*by staff category*) - individual contribution indicator



Membership participation (*by gender*) - individual contribution indicator

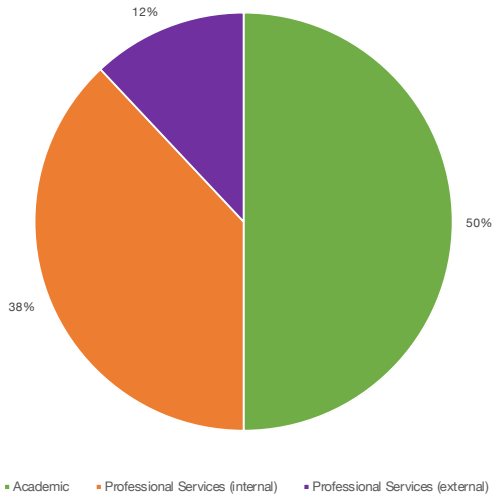


Membership participation (*by gender and staff category*)

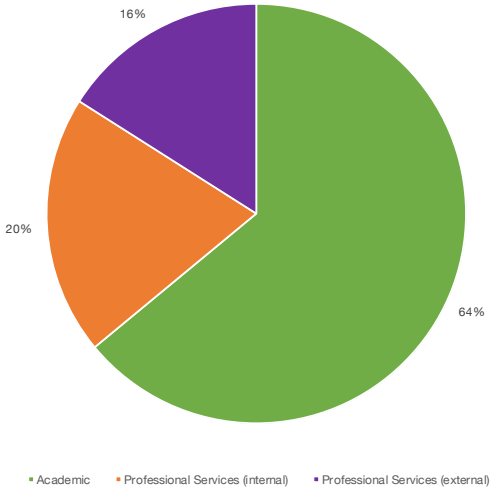


Working Group Two [*18 February 2020*]

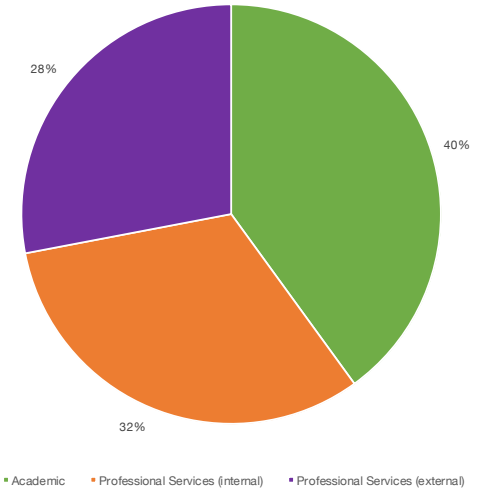
Membership in attendance *(by staff category)*



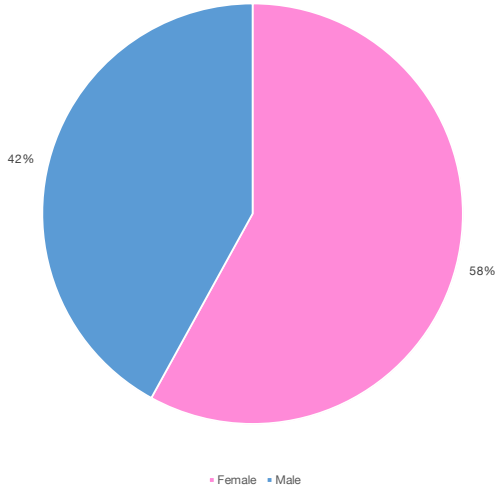
Membership participation *(incl. the [academic] Chair)*



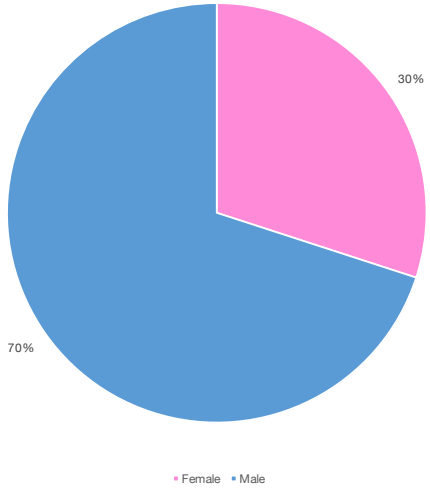
Membership participation *(excl. the [academic] Chair)*



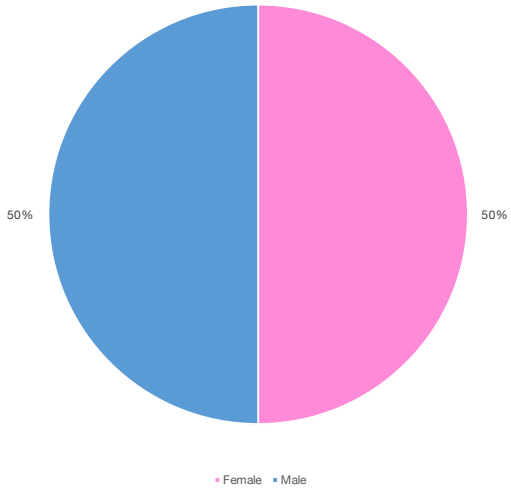
Membership in attendance *(by gender)*



Membership participation *(incl. the [male] Chair)*

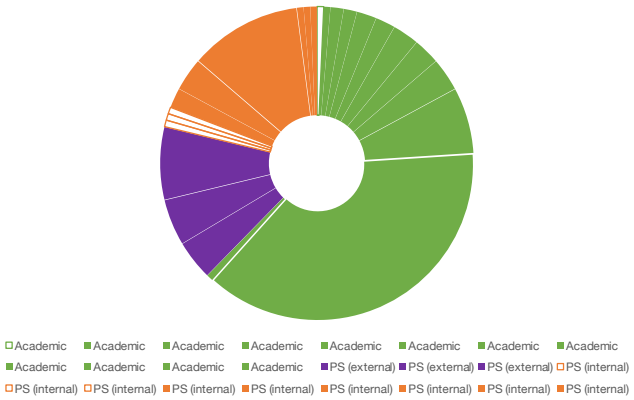


Membership participation *(excl. the [male] Chair)*

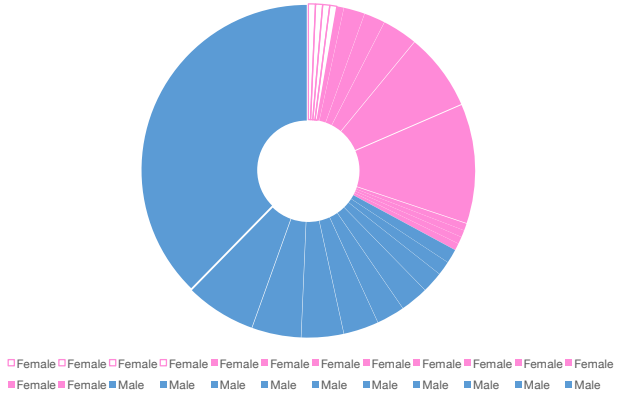


Working Group Two [*18 February 2020*]

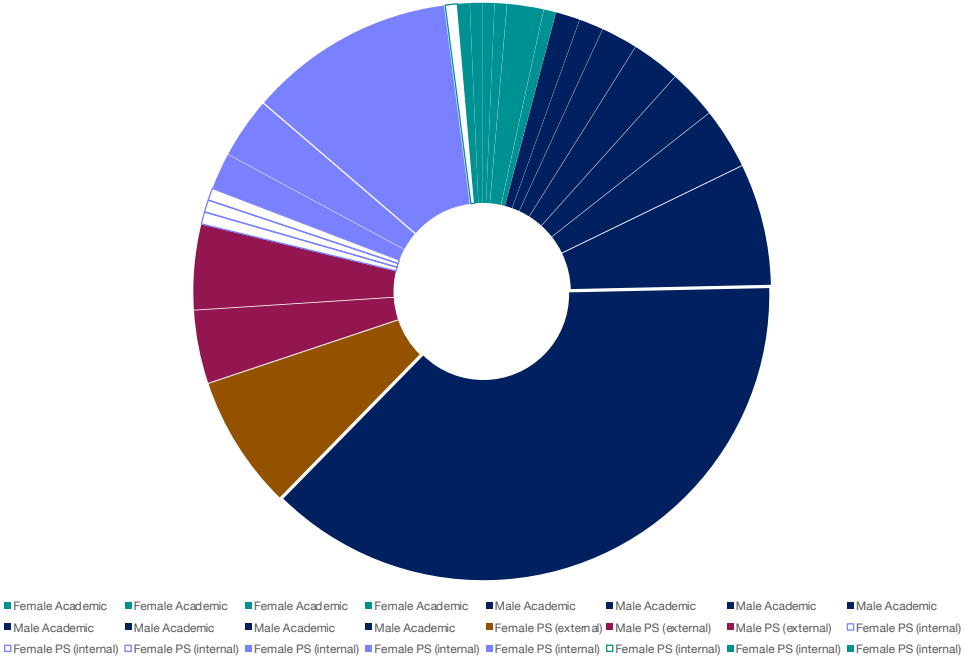
Membership participation (*by staff category*) - individual contribution indicator



Membership participation (*by gender*) - individual contribution indicator

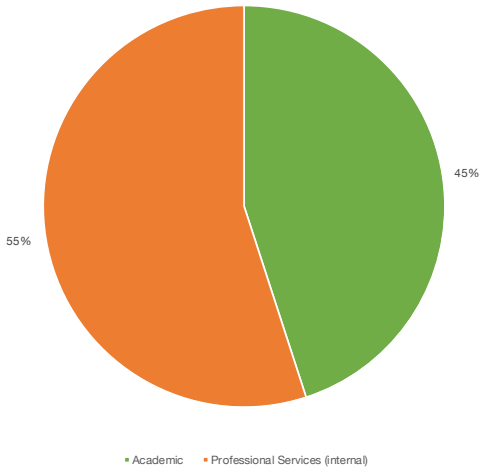


Membership participation *(by gender and staff category)*

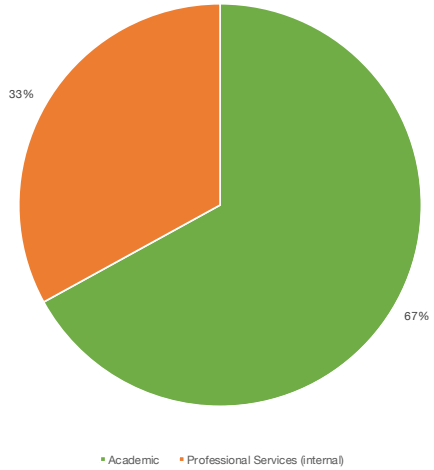


Working Group Three [*19 February 2020*]

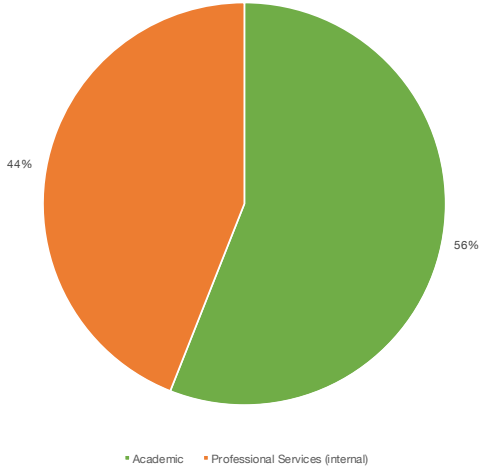
Membership in attendance *(by staff category)*



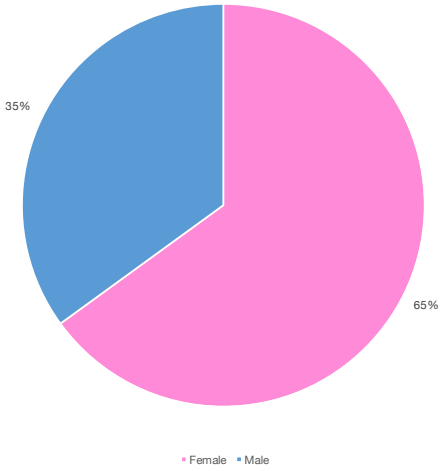
Membership participation *(incl. the[academic] Chair)*



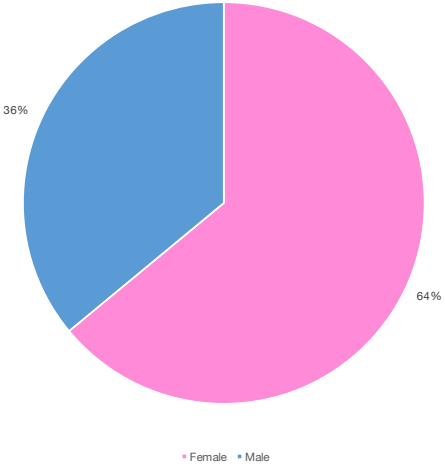
Membership participation *(excl. the [academic] Chair)*



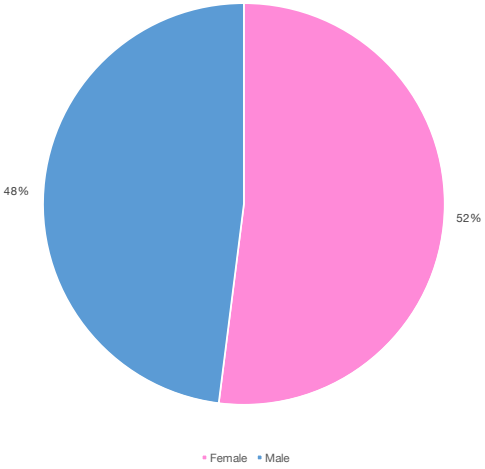
Membership in attendance *(by gender)*



Membership participation *(incl. the [female] Chair)*

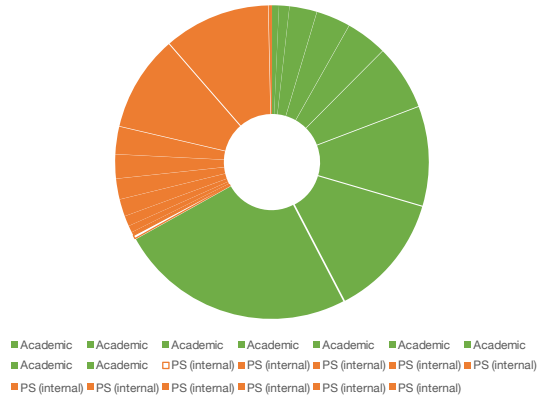


Membership participation *(excl. the [female] Chair)*

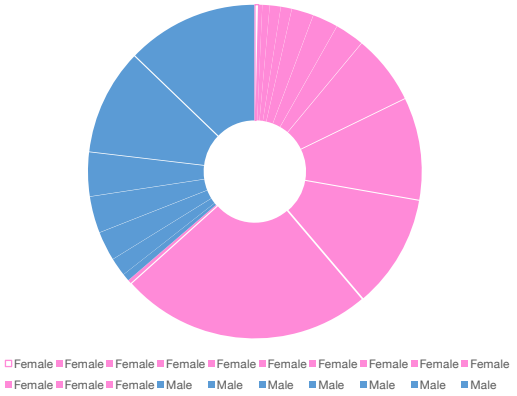


Working Group Three [*19 February 2020*]

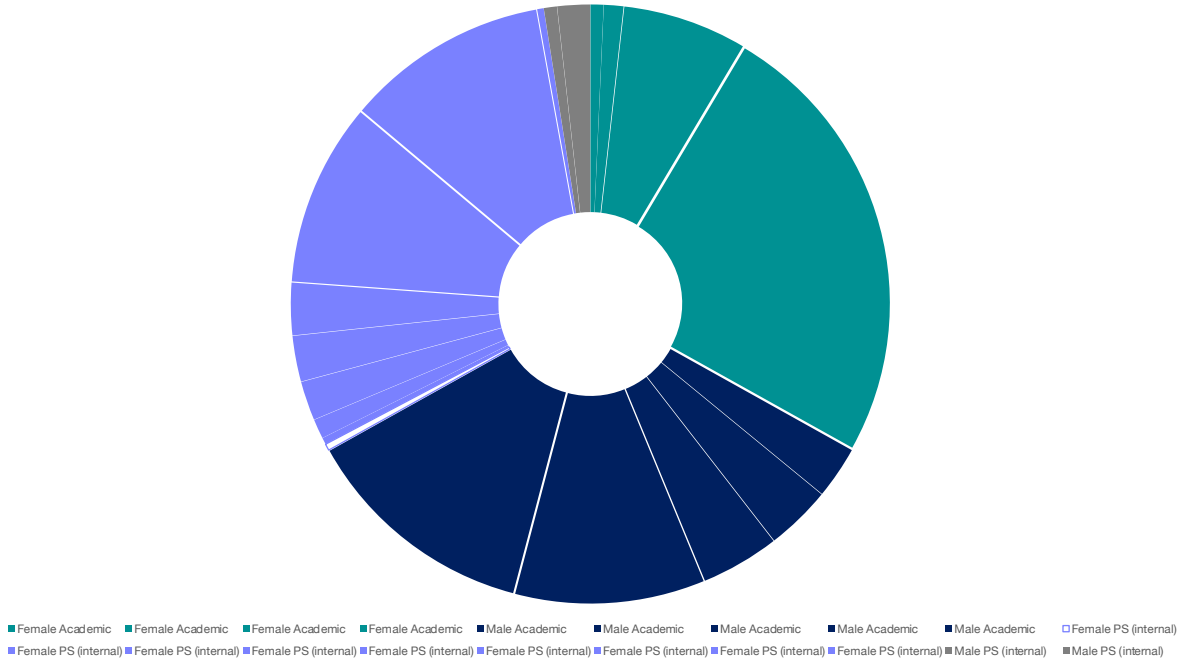
Membership participation (*by staff category*) - individual contribution indicator



Membership participation (*by gender*) - individual contribution indicator

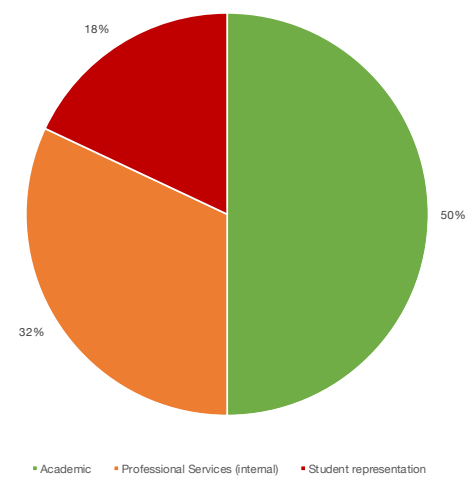


Membership participation *(by gender and staff category)*

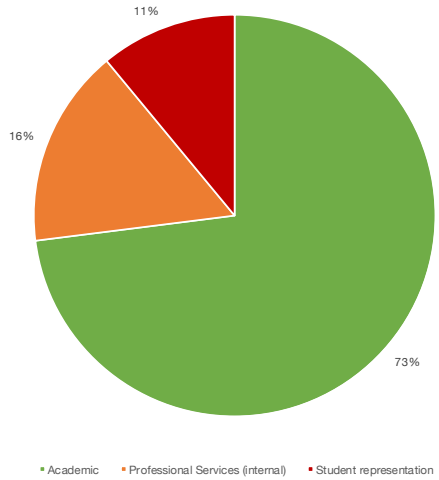


UCL Committee One [*25 February 2020*]

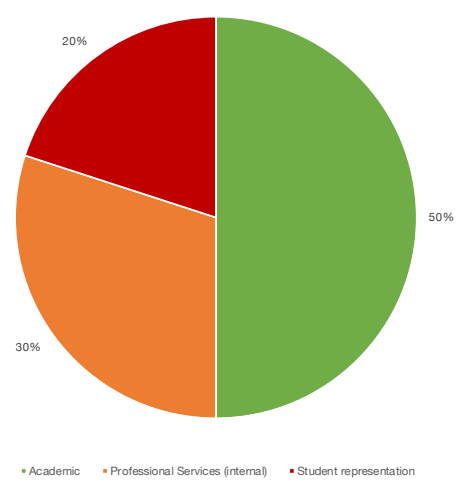
Membership in attendance *(by staff category)*



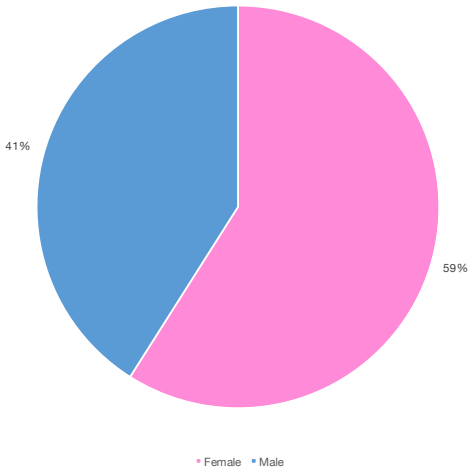
Membership *participation (incl. the [academic] Chair)*



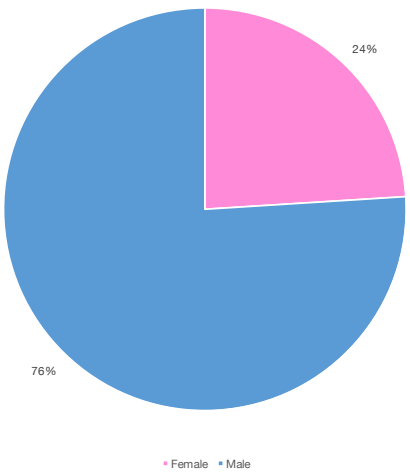
Membership participation *(excl. the [academic] Chair)*



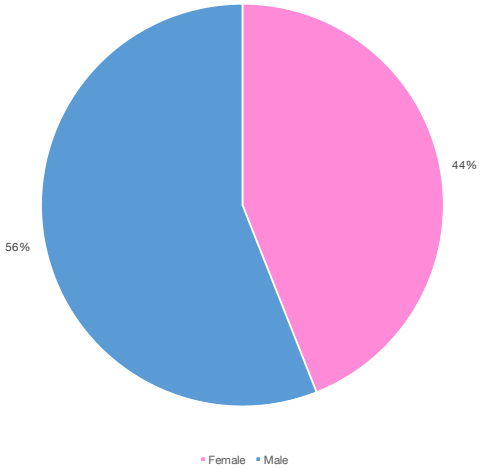
Membership in attendance *(by gender)*



Membership participation *(incl. the [male] Chair)*

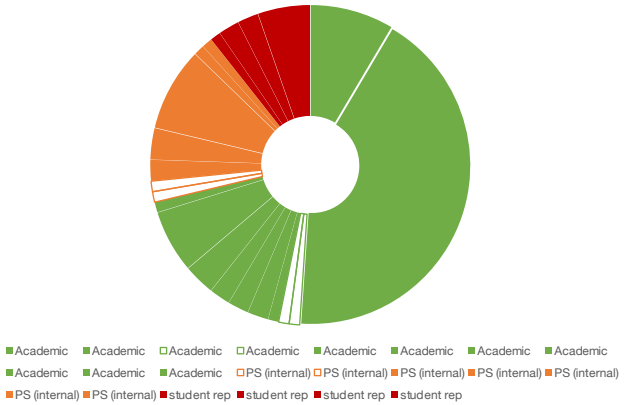


Membership participation *(excl. the [male] Chair)*

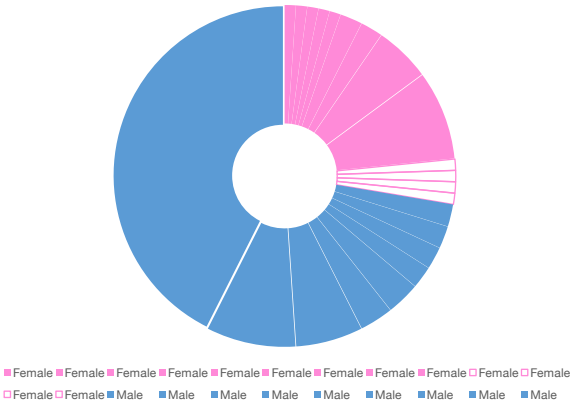


UCL Committee One [*25 February 2020*]

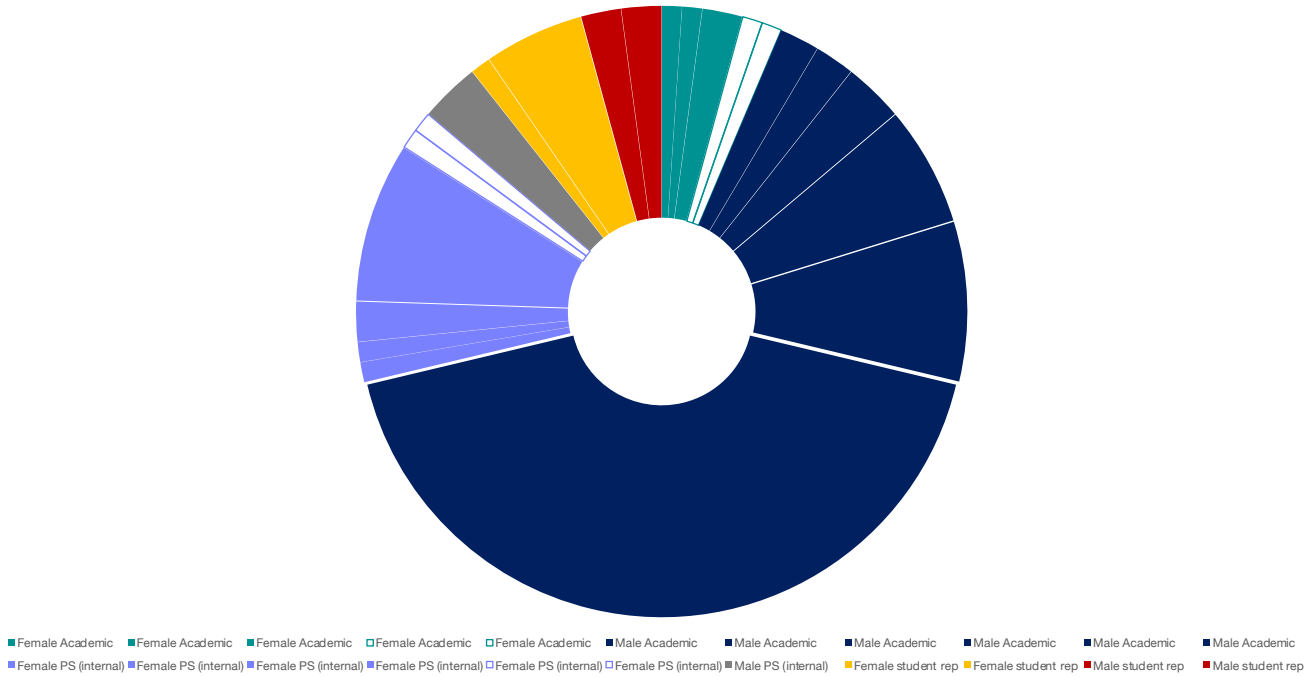
Membership participation (*by staff category*) - individual contribution indicator



Membership participation (*by gender*) - individual contribution indicator

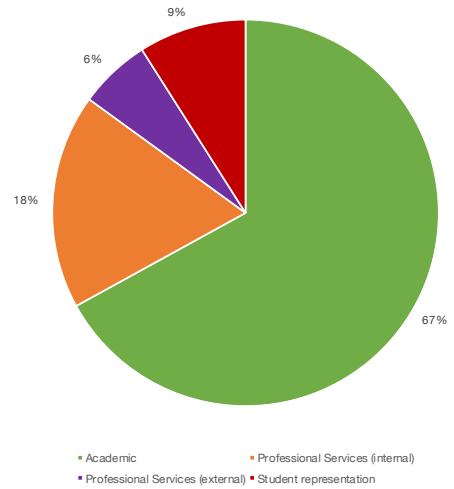


Membership participation (*by gender and staff category*)

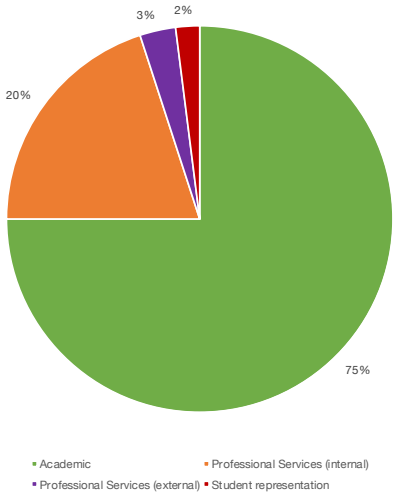


UCL Committee Two [*27 February 2020*]

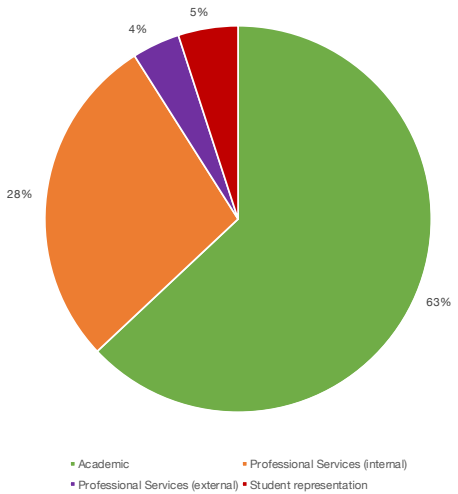
Membership in attendance *(by staff category)*



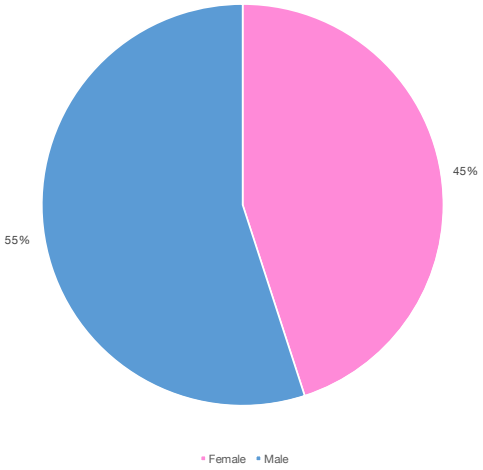
Membership participation *(incl. the [academic] Chair)*



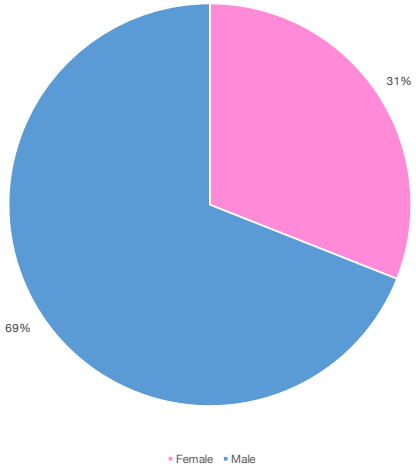
Membership participation *(excl. the [academic] Chair)*



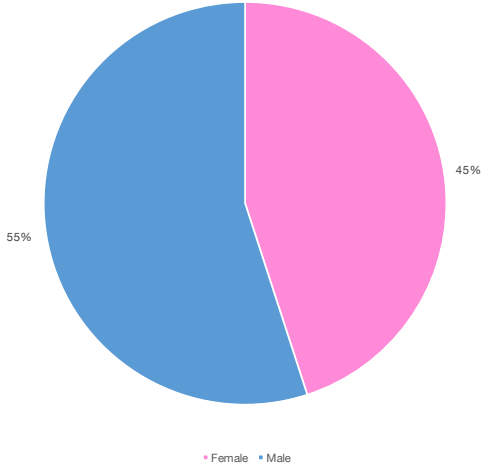
Membership in attendance *(by gender)*



Membership participation *(incl. the [male] Chair)*

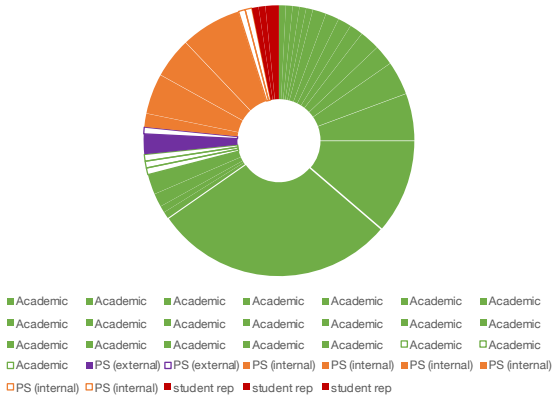


Membership participation *(excl. the [male] Chair)*

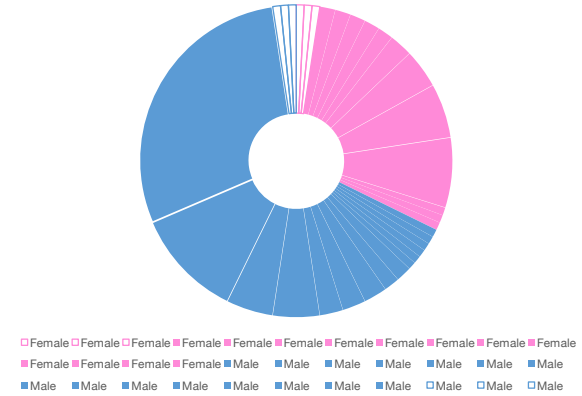


UCL Committee Two [*27 February 2020*]

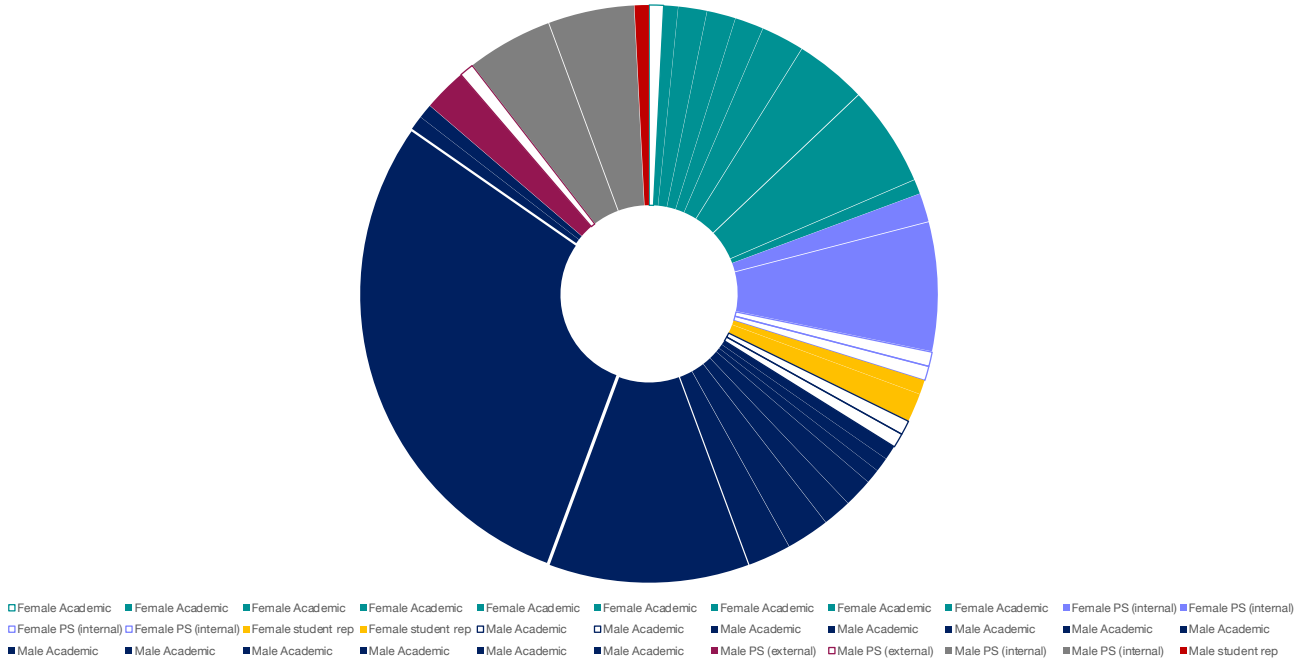
Membership participation (*by staff category*) - individual contribution indicator



Membership participation (*by gender*) - individual contribution indicator

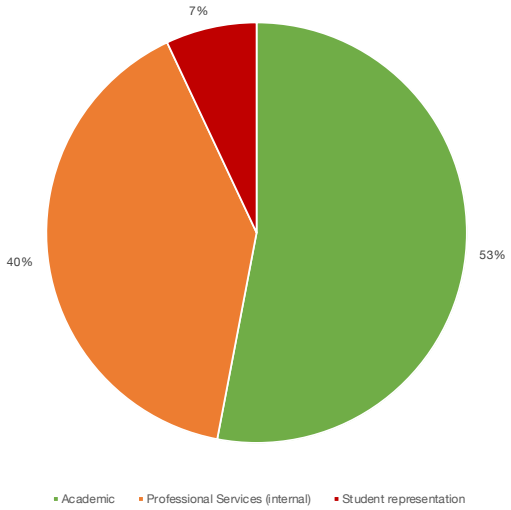


Membership participation (*by gender and staff category*)

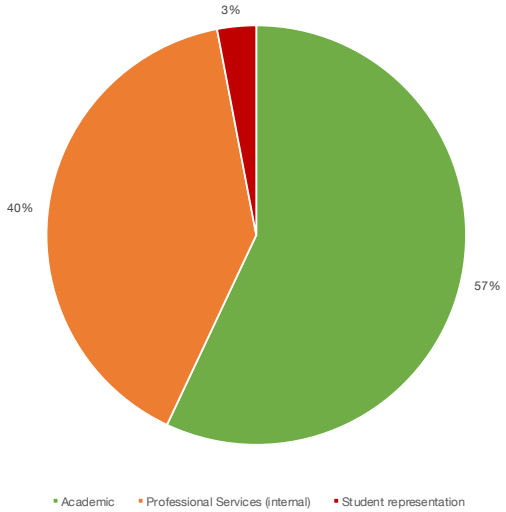


UCL Committee Three [*11 March 2020*]

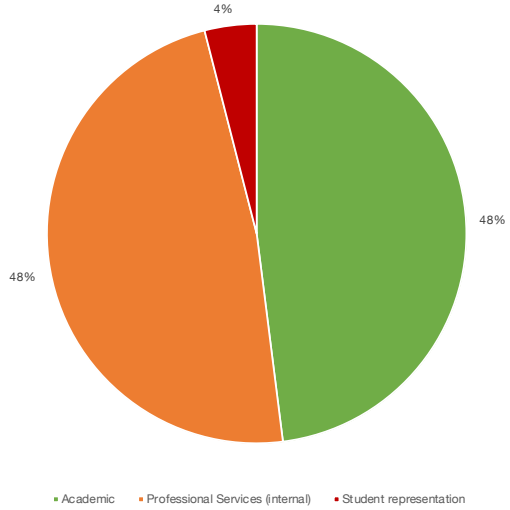
Membership in attendance *(by staff category)*



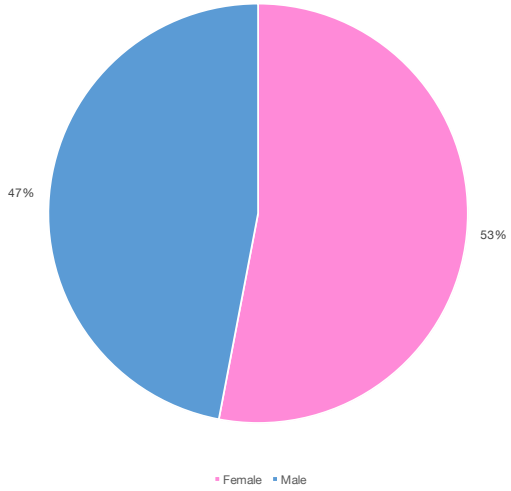
Membership participation *(incl. the [academic] Chair)*



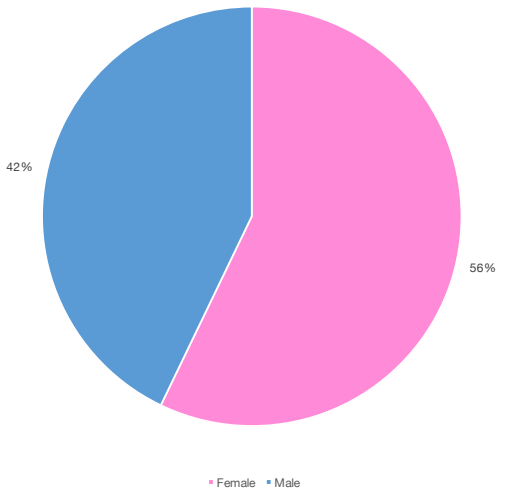
Membership participation (*excl. the [academic] Chair)*



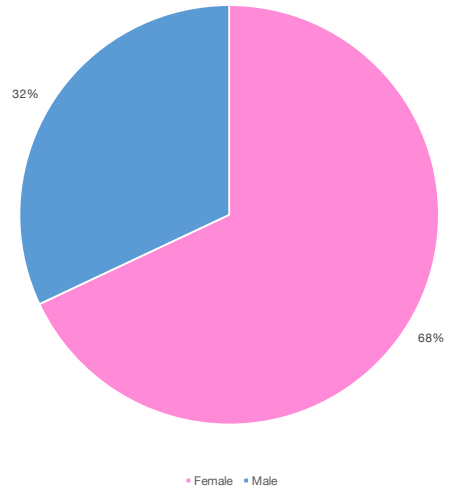
Membership in attendance *(by gender)*



Membership participation *(incl. the [male] Chair)*

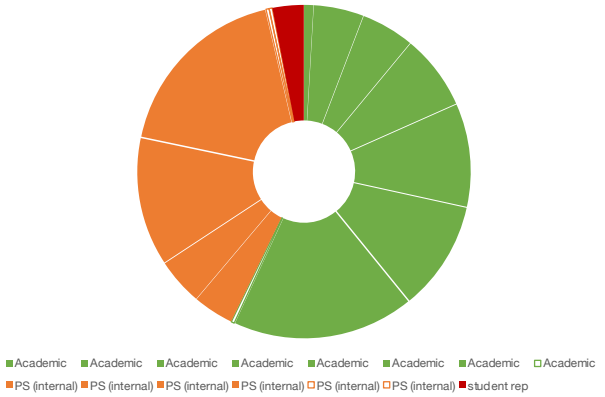


Membership participation *(excl. the [male] Chair)*

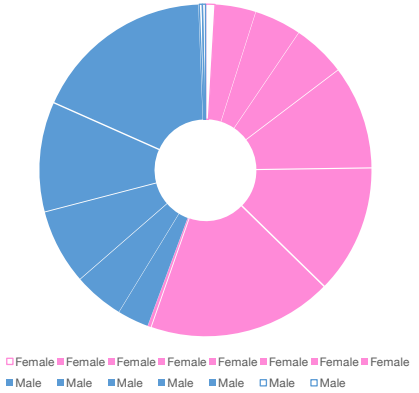


UCL Committee Three [*11 March 2020*]

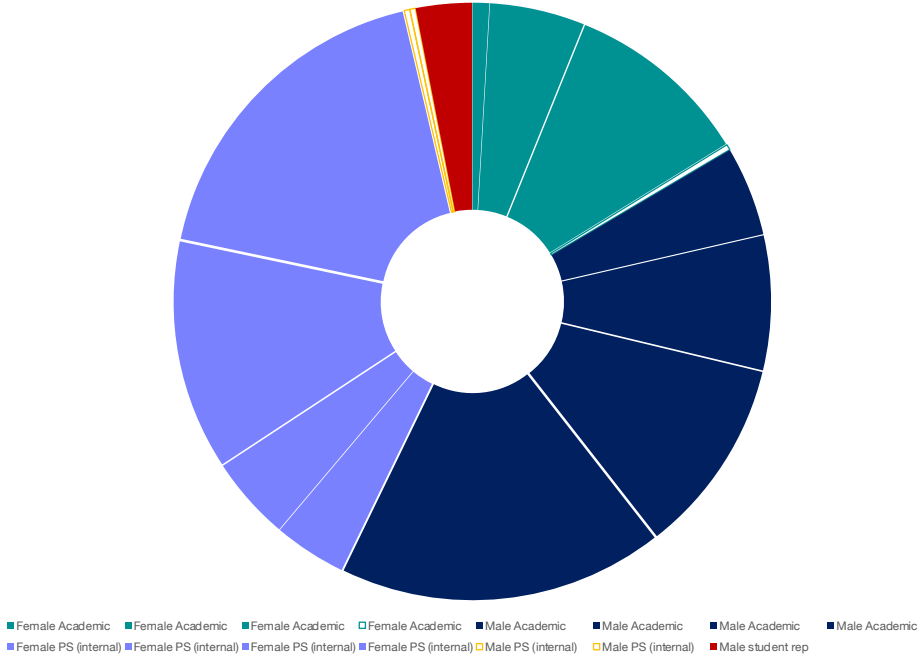
Membership participation (*by staff category*) - individual contribution indicator



Membership participation (*by gender*) - individual contribution indicator



Membership participation *(by gender and staff category)*



	perceive you and your work?	
88	Um, well hopefully, to be honest, I had a 360 – you were part of that I	
89	think? I didn't invite you but I remember you were in that training session,	
90	when we had that training on the 360. I had a 360 and there was excellent	
91	feedback and I did email about twelve or thirteen academics, for their	*asked for feedback*
92	input and all of them responded, which was good. And the feedback was	*from academics:*
93	great; I think they value what I do and I think in another sense, because I've	*no mention of PS*
94	been there for a long time and because most of them are aware that I	*staff feedback?*
95	started off doing programmes and course administration, a lot of them	
96	sometimes come to me. I mean it took a while to disassociate myself from	
97	the programme side and say "actually, I don't do this anymore" because	
98	people just came directly, to me – but um, I do believe that they value me	
99	and they – I'm trying to think of our PS staff – they respect our opinion;	
100	they come you know, most of times to seek advice, guidance, you know,	
101	and I've not had anyone say anything negative; perhaps the fact that they;	*doesn't always*
102	the only issue is that they sometimes feel I don't express myself fully,	*speak her mind*
103	occasionally, otherwise I would hope to think that they find me a valued	*to academics*
104	member of the Department. And someone that they can come to, talk to,	
105	to get advice, guidance, and you know someone that can advise them on	
106	regulations, policies, and so on and so forth. So I would hope that that's	
107	the case.	
	Hmm. Do you think you don't express yourself?	
108	I think I sometimes I would like to say something and then I just think "oh…	
109	why bother!"	
	Why do you not bother?	
110	Sometimes I think maybe erm, I wouldn't be able to express myself fully,	*sense of distance?*
111	and in the right way, the way that I would want them to possibly	
112	understand where I was coming from, and sometimes I just think,	*worried won't be*
113	depending on who is conducting that conversation, that whether there's	*understood?*
114	any point in trying to put my view across. And in some cases I just go	
115	ahead and then we'll maybe across all the, you know, think actually,	
116	they're not seeing it from the right angle, they're you know – I can, I can	
117	advise them from an HR kind of view, finance and so on and so forth. So it	*positionality -*
118	depends on the conversation and the people that I'm with as well	*depends on context*
119	sometimes.	*and company?*
	OK, so the context.	
120	Yes.	
	So thinking about UCL as an institution, do you feel valued by UCL?	
121	… Hmm… currently with TOPS as well going on… I don't know, that's,	
122	that's a strange one for me. Basically I do feel valued by the Department,	
123	the people that I work with – UCL in a sense, I mean, when we, when I	
124	come in to work, I'm doing work that I hope will benefit the Department	
125	and so on and therefore benefit UCL. Um… I, I think that UCL in terms for	
126	example… some of the divisions like HR or policies and you know,	
127	regulations, do help employees, you know, in terms of flexible working,	
128	erm, the salary scale; I mean making it up the obvious in terms of	
129	progression, but in some cases – I'm, I'm not quite sure whether they do	*doubts that UCL*
130	actually value the individual or basically they're protecting themselves from	*values PS staff as*
131	things going wrong or pear-shaped in that sense, so it's a bit of a - don't	*individuals*
132	know. I'd say I feel more valued by where I work, the Department, rather	
133	than UCL.	
	So you feel valued at a local level but not necessarily at an institution level?	
134	Hmm, yeah, that's right. Hmm.	*feels valued locally*
	OK. So thinking about value but in a different way, academic staff, the	

138	just normal. So being really good at your job is just like – "yeah…?". Um, so	
139	you actually have to, you have to put yourself in places where people can	*have to create own*
140	see your value and your... I think you need to work quite hard at that. And	*value by forging*
141	it's not always through your main job, so just doing your job harder and	*connections*
142	harder and better and better is not necessarily where the value comes	*outside role/area*
143	from. So I'm a... I'm a very connected kind of person, so I've got value in	
144	Innovation and Enterprise, I've got value in the Development Office, I've	
145	got value in Anthony's office, I've got value in my Faculty – so you have to	
146	kind of do that, and then that creates people saying "oh, she's a good	
147	person isn't she" and then it kind of does that.	
	Like your spheres of influence?	
148	It is – it's about, you have to get yourself noticed. Um, I'm a third of four	*create a sphere*
149	children, so, it's a characteristic of mine to get myself noticed, you know	*of influence*
150	I'm all kind of jazz hands in the corner. Um, and I think you have to do that	
151	at UCL; I think being quietly good – and I suspect even more so in	*(PS) staff need to*
152	professional services roles – being quietly good is not... you might not feel	*be more than*
153	as valued. But yes, I feel valued, I think you know, people know my name,	*'quietly good'*
154	people ask me to do things, people say thank you a lot. Um, students -	
155	because my job's with students – there's a lot of sort of student thanks,	
156	yeah.	
	Well, that's all good. Um, do you think academic staff and professional services staff share the same values? In the workplace?	
157	Some. I think everyone comes in wanting to do a really brilliant, job;	
158	everyone is student-centred on the whole, or to some extent. I think people	
159	don't – don't particularly want to upset other people, or upset the apple	
160	cart, they want to have a harmonious life. But I think beyond that, some of	
161	their other values do diverge. Um, I think that some academics can	
162	become incredibly self-absorbed, and so they, they don't lift their head up	*academic*
163	enough to notice that they, that what they're doing is offensive; bullying;	*isolationism*
164	self-centred; not student-centred. Um, and I would say that my	
165	expectations – particularly my expectations of people like teaching	*PS staff retain*
166	administrators, they hold on to their values for a lot longer than some of the	*values for longer*
167	academics do. So you know, that whole student-centredness of stuff, they,	
168	they will still lose it as times of extreme stress, but they will hold on to it for	
169	longer, whereas sometimes I think academics will lose it because it's not	
170	advantageous for them, they are – you can pull them back, you can say	*academics forget*
171	'what about the students?' and they say "oh yes, the students – thank you	*about students*
172	for reminding me" but they can lose that thread a little bit more I think.	*[lack in buzzwords!]*
173	But I, I also think professional services on the whole, and it might just be	
174	the tasks they do, are much keener on making an organisation work.	
175	Whereas academics feel that the organisation is rather lucky to have them,	*academic arrogance*
176	um, and it's the job of the organisation to work around them, whereas I	
177	suspect most people in professional services roles really want	*PS staff focus on*
178	organisational success. And academics often want personal success. And	*collective success*
179	that's the measure, that's the metric of academia. You know, the metric is	
180	not 'look how successful my organisation is' it's "look how successful I	*academic*
181	am".	*idiography*
	Hmm, thank you. The last question for now would be how do you – you've been here at UCL in various, um, parts of UCL a long time, do you think your perception of it has changed over that time? As an institution?	
182	So, partly my perception of it has changed because it has changed as an	*perception of UCL*
183	Institution... erm, and partly it's changed because I know more of how the	*changed with*
184	organisation works. And I'm less peripheral. So, so I think the organisation	*increased seniority,*
185	has changed dramatically over the past twenty years or so; it has really	*more involvement?*

Appendix 23

Interview participants' pen portraits

GROUP ONE – SCIENCE-BASED FACULTY

Arthur (1i) is a male academic who has worked in one of the Faculty's academic Departments for 20 years, having spent many years prior in the private sector. During his time at UCL he has been heavily involved in delivering teaching, which he thinks impacted on his ability to conduct research. Arthur identifies very strongly with his local unit, and at times during the interview was unable or unwilling to separate himself from it, filtering his answers through its collective lens. He is proud to work for UCL, feels valued by the institution and views his role as one that is able to shape matters and influence people in various ways. Arthur believes that networks are key to the academic role and need to be built in person; he lamented the tendency in some academics towards self-isolation and thinks that they need to be willing to socialise. He contends that academics don't recognise or respect any institutional power hierarchy whereas professional service staff do, because they are more bound by its strictures.

Anna (1ii) is a senior female academic who has worked in one of the Faculty's academic Departments for 27 years. She believes that the Faculty's interdisciplinary scope encourages intellectual connectivity and views herself as providing interconnections within it and to other areas of UCL. She believes each academic role is unique as they are predicated on individual and therefore highly personal networks. Anna enjoys her autonomy, in that her role allows almost unlimited freedom to research areas of interest; she contrasts this with her view that UCL imposes restrictions on professional services staff, who she thinks it has a tendency to view as generic tools that can be moved around Departments with scant consideration for local ethos and knowledge. Anna feels very valued by UCL and believes that her contribution is recognised. She contends that UCL is messy and complex both literally and figuratively, although considers this no bad thing when it comes to collaborative working. However she thinks its structures thwart this aim, in that the institution fails in enabling its staff to work effectively together. This is partly due to a lack of space and time, both of which act as barriers in various ways. Linked to this are her feelings of exclusion from

some parts of the UCL estate and feeling unwelcome in others due to restrictions on open access.

Anthony (1iii) is a male administrator who has worked at UCL in a number of administrative roles for 14 years, spending the last few in one of the Faculty's academic Departments. Compared to his experience of working in other Faculties, he finds it a "*civilised*" place to work because he feels the working relationships have been deliberately cultivated. Having moved to the Higher Education sector from another occupation, Anthony was initially very conscious of there being an "*inside"* and an "*outside*" to UCL, as his perception was that experience gained from the latter is afforded little value. He contends that the core function of professional services staff is to support the institutional infrastructure, which needs to be hierarchical in order to function. He thinks there are different layers of identity within UCL that overlap at various interstices, and holds that positionality is key in navigating ones way through, so adapts his identity to fit the relevant context. Anthony does not feel valued by UCL as an institution although he feels valued at a local level by his colleagues, and does not identify as an administrator. He feels the professional services role is just a "*day job*", whereas academic staff view their role as a vocation.

Akemi (1iv) is a senior female administrator who has worked in one of the Faculty's academic Departments for 18 years. She is proud to work for UCL, although she identifies very strongly with her local unit rather than the institution as a whole. This was starkly evidenced in the terminology she used during her interview, in that she overwhelmingly used pluralistic rather than singular terms. Although Akemi feels very strongly valued at a local level and interprets her Department as being her 'home', she doubts that UCL as an institution values professional services staff in the same way it does its academic staff. Akemi operates various mechanisms to ensure that no-one feels excluded and everyone's voice can be heard. However she does not always speak her mind to academic colleagues due to concerns about potentially being misunderstood, or not being able to communicate her thinking in a way they would understand. She therefore moderates her level of input dependent on context and audience.

GROUP TWO – ARTS-BASED FACULTY

Balvinder (2i) is a male academic who has worked in one of the Faculty's academic Departments for 25 years. He is heavily involved in the delivery of teaching across various Departments and his modules are very popular. He feels that research still dominates UCL's agenda although teaching is more profitable, and believes that in time teaching will overtake research in terms of importance and prestige. He appeared resentful at times that his contribution to the academic mission is not recognised in the same way as research, at one point referring to himself as a "*victim*", in that his role in delivering teaching enables colleagues to pursue their research interests potentially at his expense. Balvinder believes that academic staff derive "*internal satisfaction*" from their work, as their motivation for working in academia (where personal reputation is important) is cerebral. He sees academic staff as embodying the institution whereas professional services staff are largely peripheral, in that their role is to serve its stakeholders. He feels valued by UCL and lamented that too many academics adopt an insular worldview in their tendency to concentrate their focus within their Department; he believes one cannot get an aerial view from the bottom rung of the hierarchy, but need to be higher up the ladder via involvement in UCL-wide initiatives and activities to best see the lay of the land.

Becky (2ii) is a senior female academic who has worked in one of its academic Departments for 22 years. She likes the freedom and flexibility that working at UCL affords her and feels that UCL has changed significantly during her period of employment, growing in size and improving in many ways, although she expressed impatience with its increasingly bureaucratic approach. Becky feels that as an academic the emphasis is on personal achievement, whereas with professional services staff the onus is placed on a teamwork mentality, in that the nature of administration forces more interaction. She feels that identity is dependent on academic discipline and that it differs between the arts and the sciences. Becky enjoys almost unfettered freedom to pursue her own research agenda and feels largely peripheral, as she is now engaged in personal research rather than management or progressing her career and often feels worlds apart from the institution who she thinks fortunate to employ her. In this way she seems to identify her role as a form of consultant with UCL acting as facilitator,

thereby enabling her to indulge her research interests. Becky feels she is and should be valued by UCL.

Ben (2iii) is a senior male administrator who has worked at UCL in a number of administrative roles for 9 years, spending the last few in one of its academic Departments. He worked for another London university before moving to UCL and his motivation for working in higher education is based on a desire for a stable occupation. He believes that academic and professional services staff work well together in that they share the same goals, albeit have differing foci. Ben believes these differences are heavily influenced by academic discipline, which also affects the culture of an academic Department. He contends that professional services staff have more insight in to their place within the institution because they form part of, and are aware of a longer chain of activity that enmesh most of their duties. In this way their approach is less individualistic than that of many academic staff. Ben feels valued at a local level by his colleagues who he is aware hold him in high regard. He also feels valued to some extent by UCL as an institution, although this is expressed only in terms of the material benefits afforded him during a period of parental leave and in comparison to friends employed in the private sector.

Barbara (2iv) is a female administrator who has worked in one of its academic Departments for 27 years. She has seen UCL change in many ways during the course of her employment and feels it has become more professional in terms of staff ethos and working practices, with academic staff being afforded more freedom and autonomy to perform their roles. Her motivation for working in higher education is stability and she feels a very strong sense of teamwork. Barbara believes that most professional service staff simply want things to work efficiently so strive for collective success, whereas academic staff desire personal success. They view their role as a vocation, whereas professional services staff see their role as a job. Although she feels valued at a local level Barbara feels invisible to UCL, in that she could be replaced with negligible impact beyond her Department.

GROUP THREE – CENTRAL SERVICES

Cliff (3i) is a senior male academic who has worked for UCL for 30 years and feels very valued by the institution. He commenced his employment in one of its academic Departments but now has a UCL-wide remit. Cliff believes that academics' adherence to their subject is stronger than their loyalty to their Department or institution, and asserts that academic staff create very individualistic networks as a means by which to progress their career. He believes that academic staff are trained and encouraged to have an individual focus, whereas professional services staff tend to have a "*bigger picture*" mentality so view their role in its entirety as to how it relates collectively to the organisation. They view it as a job whereas academics view theirs as a vocation, meaning that the latter are keen to expand their role where possible. This sometimes results in a protectionist attitude and a tendency towards isolationism, although he thinks this introspection is caused by a lack of space which prohibits collaborative working and negatively impacts on working practices. Cliff finds that UCL is increasingly full of "*closed doors*" and often feels unwelcome in some parts of the estate due to having had to negotiate tight security to gain access. He thinks that academic and professional services staff share the same values but have different foci.

Claire (3ii) is a senior female academic who has worked for UCL for 25 years. She holds a dual role as a senior academic alongside another UCL-wide remit. She believes the people in and the function of any unit create and feed its culture, as although there may be similarities in systems and languages, culture is largely based on diverse disciplinary and external factors. Claire feels that UCL has become an elite institution in recent years and managerialism has introduced a hierarchy that did not exist twenty years ago. She believes hierarchy to be important as in its absence power structures are unclear which can negatively impact working relationships. Claire feels much of the hierarchy is implicit however and applied almost exclusively to professional services staff. Academics tend to view hierarchy very differently and are maybe in less need of managing in that they are afforded far greater freedom and autonomy. This can lead to isolationism and even arrogance; she feels that professional services staff focus on collective success whereas the metric of academic success is

personal achievement. Claire identifies a lack of leadership as potentially damaging in that it can impact on individuals' sense of identity, and thinks that staff need to create their own sphere of influence by forging connections beyond their workplace. Academic networks are unique to individuals and good connectivity is key to their function, whereas professional services staff connections are of less import and typically less linked to their work. Claire believes that seniority changes behaviour, both that of the role-holder and those around them, having experienced various promotions impacting on her working relationships in diverse and subtle ways. Seniority also grants a deeper understanding and a new lens through which to view the workings of the institution, as she finds that the relationship between academic and professional services staff is more effective and "*equal*" if they are on the same grade. Claire feels highly valued by UCL.

Colin (3iii) is a male administrator who has worked for UCL in its central administrative function for 17 years. His move into higher education was prompted by the desire for a stable occupation and he worked for another London university for several years prior. Colin enjoys close working relationships and identifies very strongly as a team player, placing heavy emphasis on it and predominantly employing collective terminology in his language. He appeared keen to be seen to be useful; one way he demonstrated this was via viewing his utility as gatekeeper of the institutional memory which had on occasion saved colleagues both time and effort. Colin thinks that academic and professional services staff share the same values but feels this can break down under pressure. He also feels that staff based in academic Departments often view those based in UCL's central functions as interfering or imposing work from a distance, with little understanding of or care for local context. He thinks there are different layers of identity within UCL that can overlap and he enjoys experiencing them through different lenses when he visits various units. Colin does not feel that UCL values its professional services staff as highly as it should and thinks the institution cares more for its students than any of its staff.

Cuifen (3iv) is a female administrator who has worked for UCL in its central administrative function for 34 years. She has experienced significant changes to working practices during her period of employment in that the institution is far less formal than it used to be and she contends it has grown too big too quickly which has negatively impacted on both the student and staff experience. She feels invisible to UCL and to its students, having been moved away from the main building on the Gower Street campus several years ago and feels literally unseen owing to this imposed isolation. Cuifen feels both de-valued and undervalued as a result and almost like part of the furniture. The working conditions in her hot-desking office are causing staff stress, and she misses the interaction with students and academic staff who she now very rarely meets in person. Cuifen feels she is regarded highly by those staff she works with closely and knows her own value, but does not think this is shared by UCL, who she perceives tend to view professional services staff as a necessary evil.

Appendix 24

Interview participant 'buzz' words

Size	Research	Qualities	Structure	Reputation	Employer	Students	*Misc.*
Super-tanker	Research-intensive	Cross-disciplinary	Bureaucratic	Distinguished history	Good employer	Overseas students	*Workplace*
Big	Research-intensive	Interdisciplinary	Chaotic	Good reputation	Good employer	Students	*University*
Big	Research	Collaborative	Inconsistent	International reputation	Good employer		*Pride*
Big	Research	Diffuse	Bonkers	Good reputation			*Home*
	Research	Varied	Lawless	Media presence			*Portico*
		Interesting	Muddled	Internationally recognised			*Quad*
		Intellectually vigorous	Messy	Reputable university			
		Conservative	Unstructured				
		Stabilty	Complicated				
		High standards	Slightly chaotic				
		Fascinating	Slightly chaotic				
		Disparate	Noble but arrogant				
			Exciting but infuriating				
			Sprawling				
			Hard to control				

(Academics' data, Professional Services' data)

Appendix 25 **GROUP ONE (***please see Appendices 8-18 for full-size versions)*

Figure 4e - 1(i) Arthur *(Academic)*

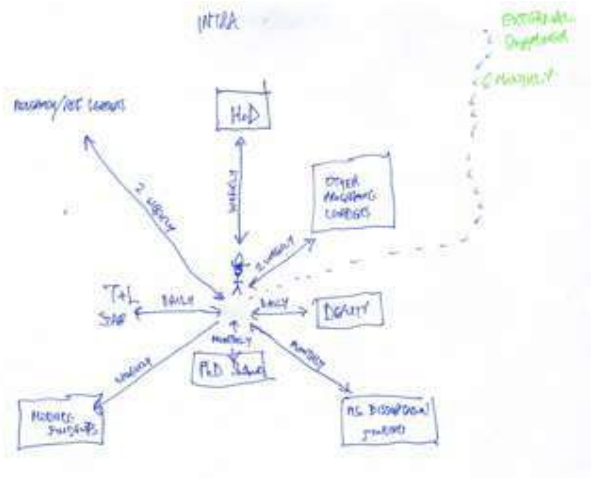


Figure 4f - 1(ii) Anna *(Academic)*

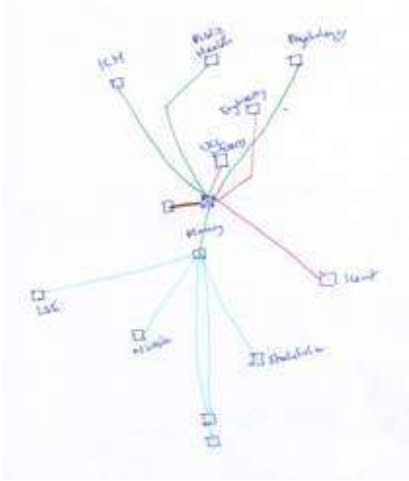


Figure 4g - 1(iii) Anthony *(Professional Services)*

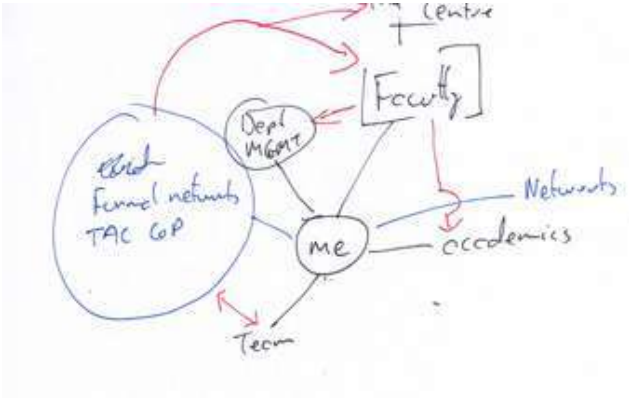
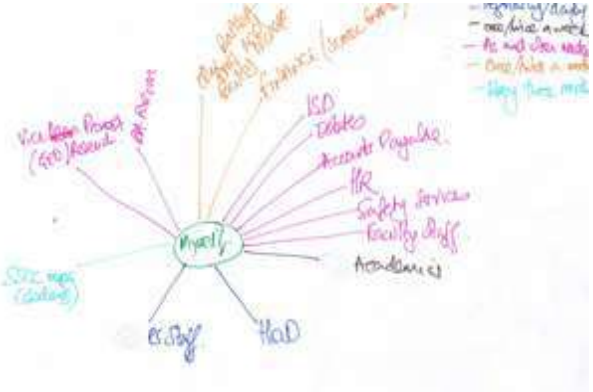


Figure 4h - 1(iv) Akemi *(Professional Services)*



GROUP TWO

Figure 4i - 2(i) Balvinder *(Academic)*

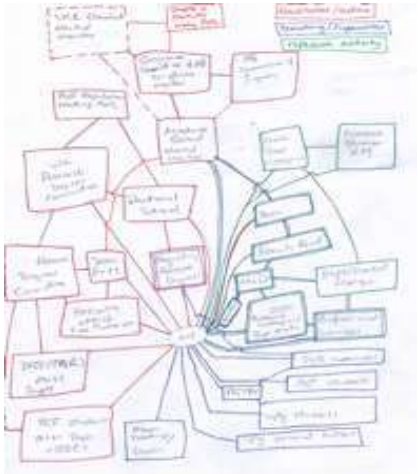


Figure 4j - 2(ii) Becky *(Academic)*

not supplied

Figure 4k - 2(iii) Ben *(Professional Services)*

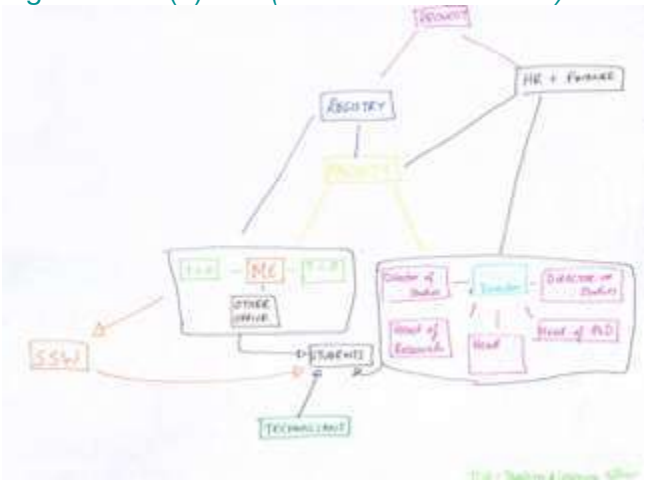
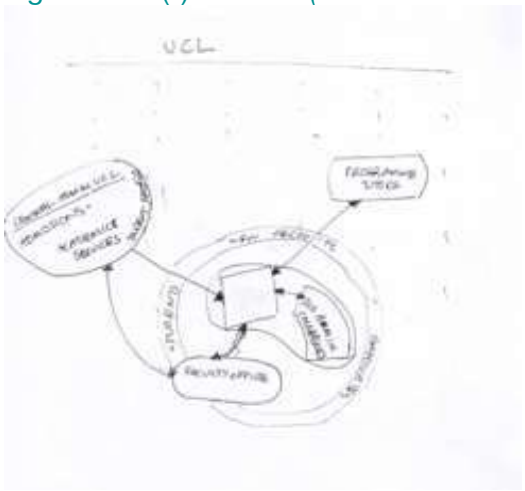


Figure 4l - 2(ii) Barbara *(Professional Services)*



GROUP THREE

Figure 4m - 3(i) Cliff *(Academic)*

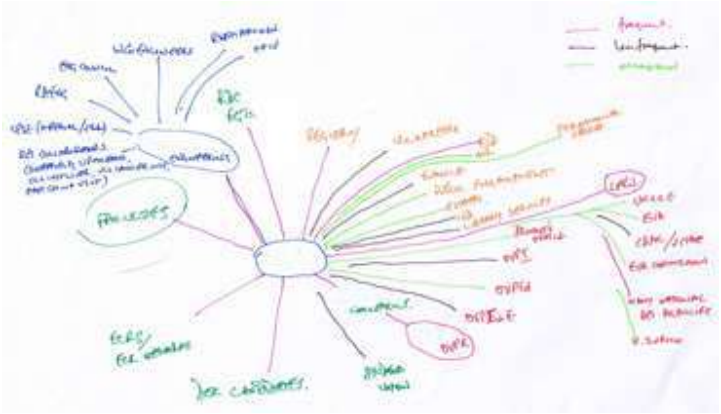


Figure 4n - 3(ii) Claire *(Academic)*

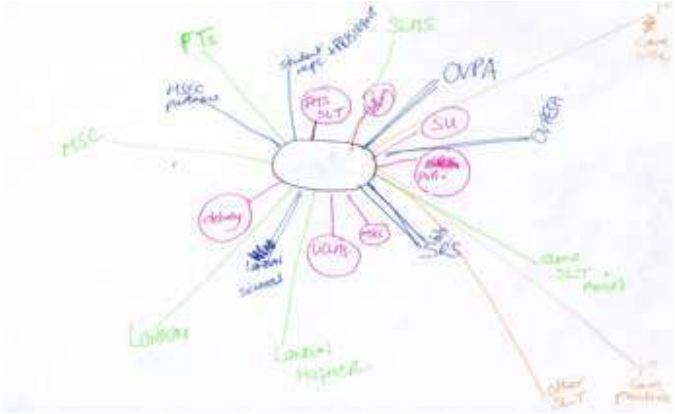
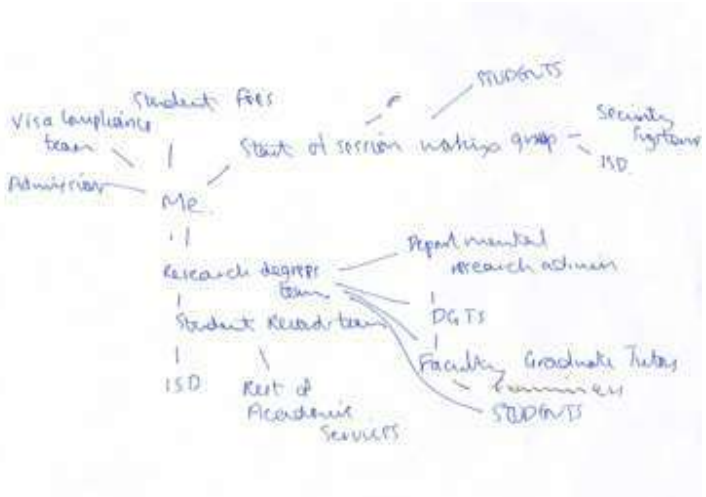


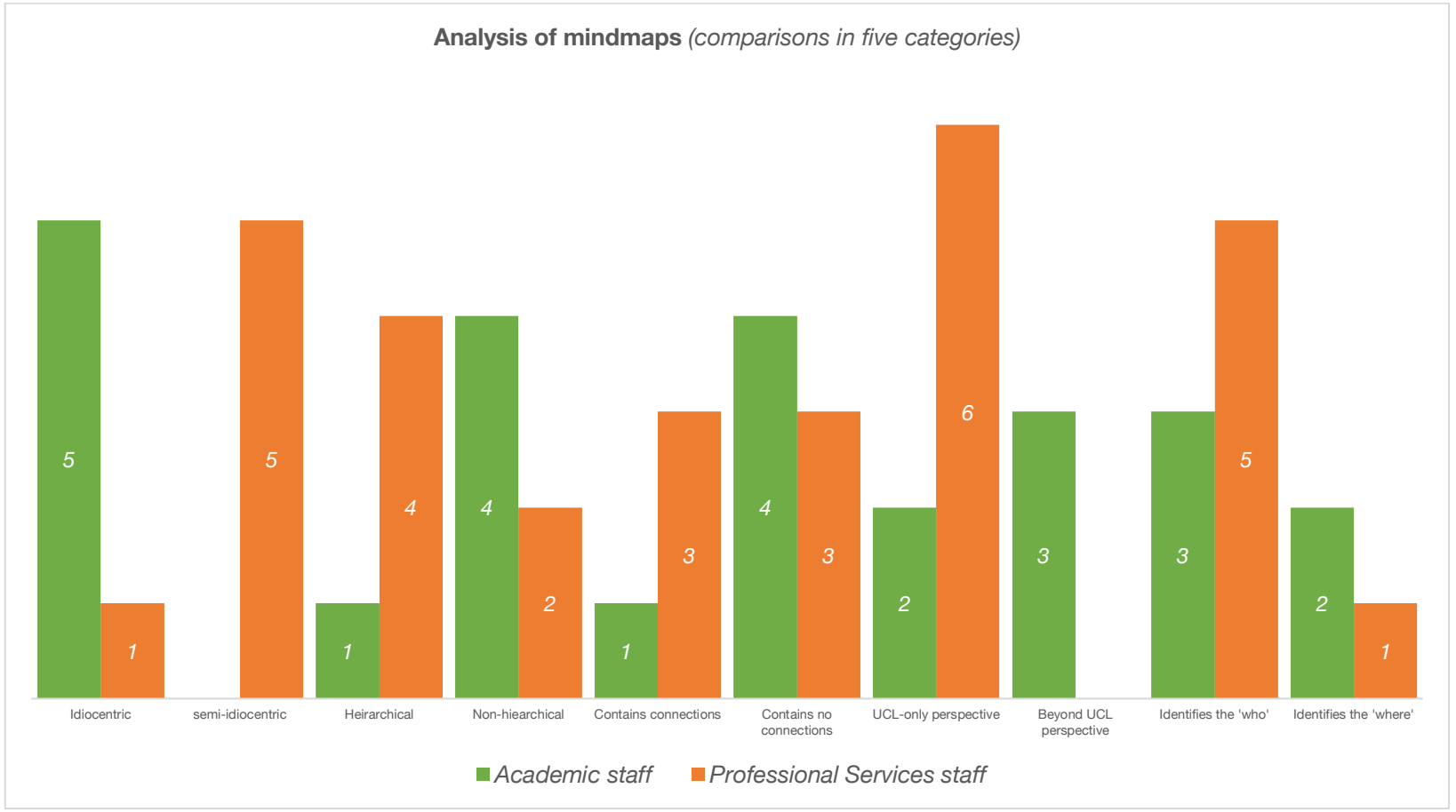
Figure 4o - 3(iii) Colin *(Professional Services)*

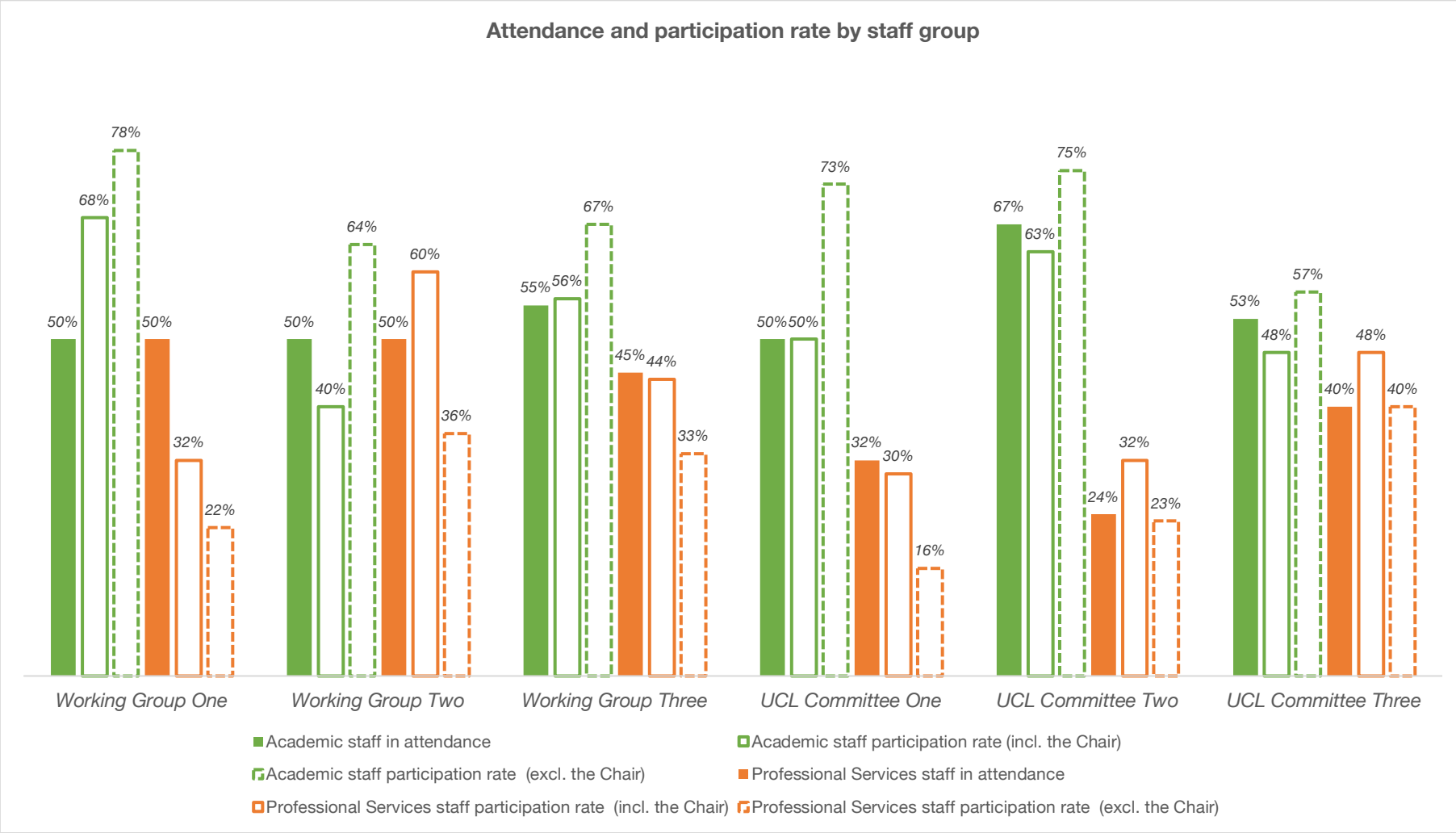
Figure 4p - 3(ii) Cuifen *(Professional Services)*

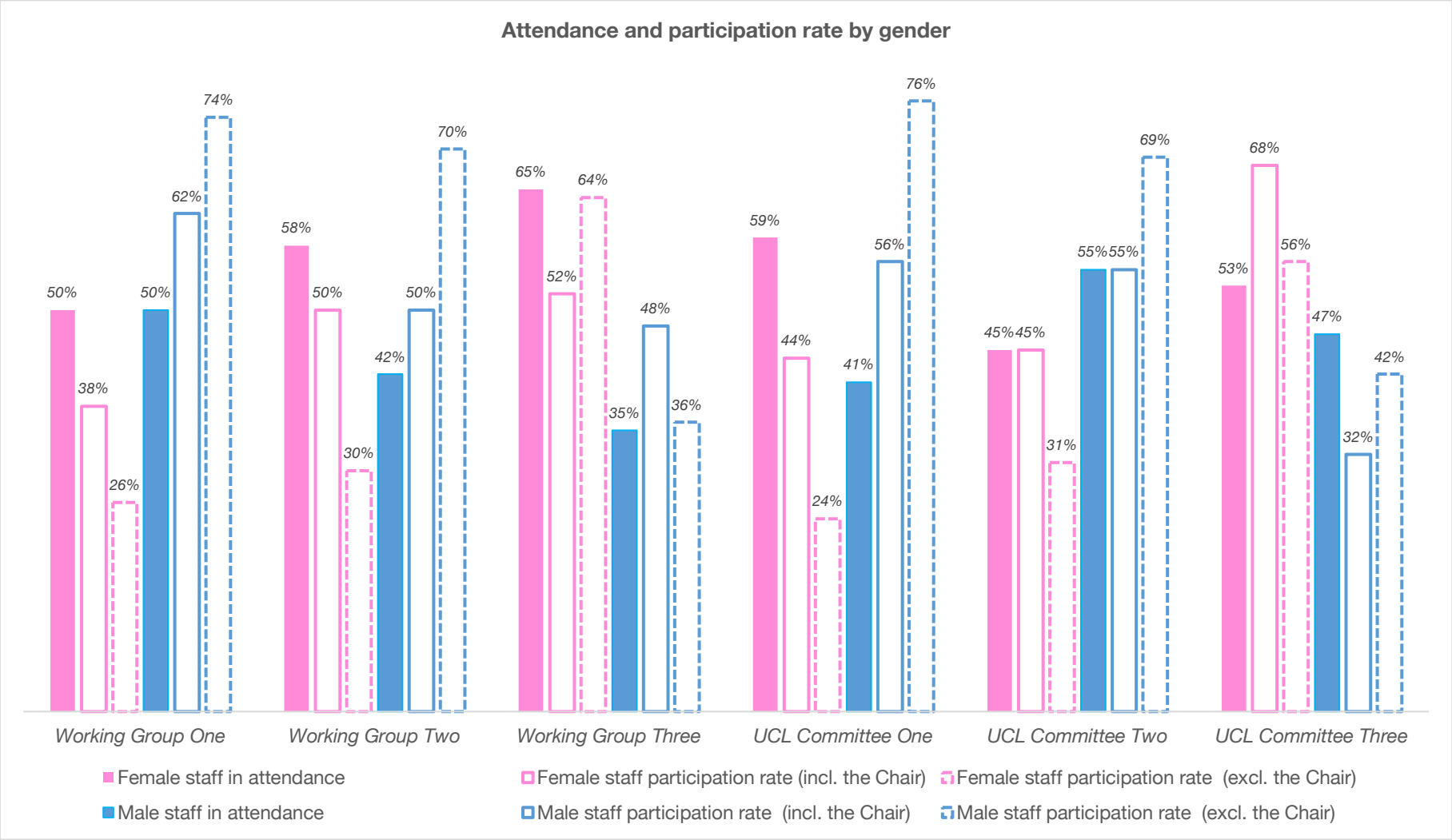


Appendix 26

Figure 4(d)




Attendance and participation rate by staff group
50%
68%
78%
50%
32%
22%
50%
40%
64%
50%
60%
36%
55%
56%
67%
45%
44%
33%
50%
50%
73%
32%
30%
16%
67%
63%
75%
24%
32%
23%
53%
48%
57%
40%
48%
40%
Working Group One
Working Group Two
Working Group Three
UCL Committee One
UCL Committee Two
UCL Committee Three
Academic staff in attendance
Academic staff participation rate (incl. the Chair)
Academic staff participation rate (excl. the Chair)
Professional Services staff in attendance
Professional Services staff participation rate (incl. the Chair)
Professional Services staff participation rate (excl. the Chair)


Attendance and participation rate by gender
50%
38%
26%
50%
62%
74%
58%
50%
30%
42%
50%
70%
65%
52%
64%
35%
48%
36%
59%
44%
24%
41%
56%
76%
45%
45%
31%
55%
55%
69%
53%
68%
56%
47%
32%
42%
Working Group One
Working Group Two
Working Group Three
UCL Committee One
UCL Committee Two
UCL Committee Three
Female staff in attendance
Female staff participation rate (incl. the Chair)
Female staff participation rate (excl. the Chair)
Male staff in attendance
Male staff participation rate (incl. the Chair)
Male staff participation rate (excl. the Chair)

Group	Participant	Margin notes	Micro-theme	Meso-theme	Macro-theme	*Quote (cleansed data)*	Source
3	Claire		*Academic disregard for hierarchy*	Some groups of staff/rolesholders are seen to have more **capital**	***Capital***	*I meet people who go and knock on the Provost's door; you don't meet professional services people who do that very often. And it's a non-hierarchical thing, they'll say you know, "well, I've got something really important to say, I'm going to say it".*	*3(ii)337-41*
3	Claire	seniority changes behaviour? seniority/promotions have impacted relationships	*Identity - impacted by seniority*	Some groups of staff/rolesholders are seen to have more **capital**	***Capital***	*…. no-one calls me anything but [redacted], no matter how lowly; even students call me [redacted], on the whole. But they would close what they're doing when I walk into the room, or they might, they might freeze a little bit - conversation would not continue.*	*3(ii)81-84*
3	Claire	learning the lay of the land – not the work but **how** things work	*Identity (positionality) - dependent on context/audience*	Identity as a **layered/positional** concept	***Capital***	*(**Quote 1**) I moved Departments after a long time only very recently, so moving into a new Department, and trying to learn 'this is how we do things round here', it's been really interesting. What can I ask for, what can't I ask for, what I can touch, what I can't touch… The way in which I'm involved in conversations and when I'm not, who's deferential towards me and who isn't - all that has to be learned and it's that whole going into a new place and - I don't need to know the work, I can kind of work out what the work was, but it was a bit of learning about how things work round here… (**Quote 2**) my relationships are different depending on what role I'm doing…*	*(**Quote 1**) 3(ii)36-44… (**Quote 2**) 3(ii)59*
3	Claire	needs to act the boss, curtail things	*Identity (positionality) - dependent on context/audience*	Identity as a **layered/positional** concept	***Capital***		
1	Anthony	academics don't see the bigger picture and how things interconnect (to support them)	*Academic insularity/myopia - some fail to see broader connections*	Academic **isolationism/insularity**	***Hierarchy***	*I'm actually surprised that they don't have is any connection between all of these different things. So they're not actually saying there is a network of things of which I am part… I'm surprised there's, that none of the network – and that's important because that's actually how things work, it's a network but also there is the structural network of the institution which actually enables them to have the laboratory with the microscope and it enables them to have the research grant, it enables them to have the office and the, the manpower. And, and they're not seeing the foundations….. I'm a bit disappointed that they don't see everything that is supporting them….*	*1(iii)320-22,325-31,340-41*
1	Arthur	Academic isolationism	*Academic tendency to isolationism*	Academic **isolationism/insularity**	***Hierarchy***	*(**Quote 1**) … academics can become very insular and, and focused on their own work. (**Quote 2**) I see people at the other end as well, who are very much concerned only with their own research.*	*(**Quote 1**) 1(i)108-11 (**Quote 2**) 1 (i)81-82*
3	Claire	Academic isolationism	*Academic tendency to isolationism*	Academic **isolationism/insularity**	***Hierarchy***	*…. some academics can become incredibly self-absorbed, and so they, they don't lift their head up enough to notice that they, that what they're doing is offensive; bullying; self-centred; not student-centred.*	*3(ii)161-64*
3	Cliff	isolationism – typically academics - adopt a protectionist attitude	*Academic tendency to isolationism*	Academic **isolationism/insularity**	***Hierarchy***	*(**Quote 1**) … some academics retreat into a sort of isolationist state… (**Quote 2**) … people are shutting themselves off and this is part of these sort of isolationist types, "I'm so busy you know, I'm just going to cut myself off", particularly academics.*	*(**Quote 1**) 3(i)65-66 (**Quote 2**) 3(i)111-14*
2	Balvinder	can't get an ariel view from the ground; need to be higher up to see the lay of the land - insular lives and worldview	*Academics - insular viewpoints (too small a network?)*	Academic **isolationism/insularity**	***Hierarchy***	*(**Quote 1**) I mean most of my colleagues don't really operate outside the Department and never have, and that's even true of those at professorial level. (**Quote 2**) … if you're only inside the Department, you don't actually see what the links are between the other things that you're interacting with.*	*(**Quote 1**) 2(i)352-54 (**Quote 2**) 2(i)359-60*
2	Becky	Feels peripheral, now engaged in personal research rather then management and career building?	*Academic autonomy (UCL seen as facilitator for their research)*	Assumption and existence of **academic freedom and autonomy**	***Hierarchy***	*… on most days I work at home I hardly engage with UCL at all, as a thing… I'm much more on the edge of it, you know, if I disappeared tomorrow, they probably wouldn't notice I'd gone for several months. You know, 'til I didn't turn up to do my teaching or something.*	*2(ii)130-31,134-37*
2	Becky	likes working at UCL - working for UCL has more freedom and flexibility	*Academic autonomy (UCL seen as facilitator for their research)*	Assumption and existence of **academic freedom and autonomy**	***Hierarchy***	*as a sort of academic…. I am pursuing very much my own agenda and it gives me the freedom to do that.*	*2(ii)38,40-41*
1	Anthony	administration needs to be hierarchical in order to function	*PS staff need a hierarchy*	**Hierarchy** as a functional imperative	***Hierarchy***	*administration needs to be hierarchical… the day job is as I said to facilitate the work of the academics, to provide a structure, the infrastructure – structure. So therefore the jobs need to be structured, it it could not function without that structure.*	*1(iii)315-19*
3	Claire	implicit rule but explicit in practice - rank and hierarchy implict	*Hierarchy is more implict than explicit*	**Hierarchy** can be implict or explicit	***Hierarchy***		
3	Claire		*Hierarchy is more implict than explicit*	**Hierarchy** can be implict or explicit	***Hierarchy***	*… it felt quite a first among equals kind of place, like the Provost just happened to have stumbled into that job….*	*3(ii)344-45*
3	Claire	managerialism has brought hierarchy	*Hierarchy as the result of managerialism (so opposed by academics)*	Perceptions of **hierarchy** can differ/evolve	***Hierarchy***		

Group	Participant	Margin notes	Micro-theme	Meso-theme	Macro-theme	*Quote (cleansed data)*	Source
1	Arthur	academics don't' see/respect the hierarchy whereas PS staff do? academics ignore hierarchies - PS staff see power and hierarchy, academics don't	*Academics disregard or don't see hierarchy*	Hierarchy can be implict or explicit	***Hierarchy***	*(**Quote 1**) … the hierarchy in academia in a sense is more a recogniton as much of past achievement, whereas on the admin side it's very much a functionalist perspective. (**Quote 2**) … the hierarchy in the academic sense has less to do with the way academics actually function as a team.*	*(**Quote 1**) 1(i)144-47 (**Quote 2**) 1(i)148-49*
3	Claire	academics have less need of managing? - academics view hierarchy (and how it pertains to them) differently?	*Academics disregard or don't see hierarchy*	Hierarchy can be implict or explicit	***Hierarchy***	*I forgot my line manager - I had to add him in. Because it's like a kind of well, my line manager doesn't play an important role.*	*3(ii)366-68*
1	Arthur	academic dominance? expectation will or should be heard? sees self as shaper/influencer?	*Academic assumption of dominance*	Some groups of staff/rolesholders are seen to have more **legitimacy**	***Legitimacy***	*I can be rather a nuisance by jumping in and saying well, either I'm going to do it or I'm going to bang my fist on the table and say it needs to be done.*	*1(i)48-50*
2	Becky	academic impatience with bureaucratic 'red tape'	*Academic assumption of dominance*	Some groups of staff/rolesholders are seen to have more **legitimacy**	***Legitimacy***		
2	Balvinder	academics are key to the university whereas PS are peripheral - PS are employees whereas academics embody institution - PS staff simply serve stakeholders	*Academics - core, PS peripheral*	Some groups of staff/rolesholders are seen to have more **legitimacy**	***Legitimacy***	*(**Quote 1**) … the university is the body of academics. So you can take the buildings away but the university could still exist. If you take the academics away you have the buildings but the university wouldn't exist. (**Quote 2**) … a perception of the university being a thing that's employing you, rather than you being it.*	*(**Quote 1**) 2(i)341-44 (**Quote 2**) 2(i)345-46*
2	Ben		*Academics - core, PS peripheral*	Some groups of staff/rolesholders are seen to have more **legitimacy**	***Legitimacy***	*And I mean, you know fair enough, UCL is an academic institution, we are about teaching and research, and I suppose academics are fairly central to that, aren't they?*	*2(iii)115-17*
1	Anthony	PS function is to support infrastructure	*Administration seen as infrastructure*	Some groups of staff/rolesholders are seen to have more **legitimacy**	***Legitimacy***	*… it's like a local council providing the basic services; you know, the basic infrastructure, which you don't take notice of until it breaks down.*	*1(iii)102-5*
3	Claire	PS staff relation with manager changes with seniority - need to be same grade to be equal?	*Identity - impacted by seniority*	Some groups of staff/rolesholders are seen to have more **legitimacy**	***Legitimacy***	*… there is no reason for a grade 10 professional services person to be anything other than my equal… We've got one grade 10 and a couple of grade 9s in this Department and that, again, that feels a more equal relationship, you know we're able to run ideas off each other much more.*	*3(ii)103-5,108-10*
3	Claire	Seniority changes understanding; more involved, new lens, deeper grasp - perception of UCL changed with increased seniority, more involvement?	*Identity - impacted by seniority*	Some groups of staff/rolesholders are seen to have more **legitimacy**	***Legitimacy***		
1	Anthony	feels there is an inside and an outside	*UCL has an inside and an outside*	**Internal v external**	***Space/Place***	*….one thing I noticed when I came to UCL was, having worked outside and not being a UCL person, I really felt that I was not a UCL person. And, that it was UCL experience that counted and other experience, actually you kind of kept quiet about.*	*1(iii)156-59*
3	Cliff	there is an inside and an outside: values need to align to be 'inside' - unique UCL values?	*UCL has an inside and an outside (values need to align)*	**Internal v external**	***Space/Place***	*… occasionally you get people coming in from outside whose values don't align but usually the become socialised and they do start to learn about our values. If they don't, they leave.*	*3(i)68-70*
1	Akemi	space impacts working relationships	*Space - impacts relationships*	(Meta)physical **space**	***Space/Place***		
3	Cliff	is isolation more than just or linked to (meta)physical space?	*Space - impacts relationships*	(Meta)physical **space**	***Space/Place***		
3	Cliff	space impacts on working practices - PS staff opposed to working open-plan	*Space - impacts relationships*	(Meta)physical **space**	***Space/Place***		
3	Colin		*Space - impacts working (lateral) relationships*	(Meta)physical **space**	***Space/Place***	*At UCL, you can, you can not see people for a long time.*	*3(iii)123*
3	Cuifen	hot-desking is causing staff stress	*Space - impacts working (lateral) relationships*	(Meta)physical **space**	***Space/Place***		
1	Anna	lack of time and space prevent collaborative working - lack of space as barrier - lack of space results in more home working; less collaboration?	*Space as a barrier*	(Meta)physical **space**	***Space/Place***	*(**Quote 1**)… space is a major barrier. (**Quote 2**) I sit with my door open, because that's another barrier, so I end up very self-consciously overcoming space.*	*(**Quote 1**) 1(ii)114 (**Quote 2**) 1(ii)106-7*
3	Cliff	introspection caused by lack of space? lack of open access prohibits collaboration 'silo-ness'	*Space as a barrier*	(Meta)physical **space**	***Space/Place***	*… people say "Oh we never see you over in [redacted]" and I say actually I go over to [redacted] quite often but all the doors are always closed. I never see anybody there.*	*3(i)109-11*