

# The instrumental academic: Collegiality and the value of academic citizenship in contemporary higher education

Susan Smith<sup>1</sup>  | David Walker<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>School of Management, UCL, London, UK

<sup>2</sup>Vice Chancellor's Office, University of Brighton, East Sussex, UK

## Correspondence

Susan Smith, School of Management, UCL, One Canada Square, London, E14 5AA, UK.  
Email: [susan.a.smith@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:susan.a.smith@ucl.ac.uk)

## Abstract

Collegiality and the contribution to the sustenance of the academy through academic citizenship are central to commonly held conceptions of what it is to be a university. This study investigates the articulation and recognition of academic citizenship through institutional promotion criteria, including both traditional research and teaching-focussed career pathways. The study adopts a qualitative research approach and examines promotion criteria from a sample of 55 mid-sized universities in the UK. Findings point to a progressive shift in formal recognition of service activities associated with citizenship as part of the core academic workload. Institutional service is pervasive across all academic roles and levels, student service is largely invisible, and activities associated with public service are most notably acknowledged in traditional academic roles at the professorial level. The evolving nature of expectations of citizenship necessitates a more nuanced consideration of the core dimensions of an academic role and citizenship activities to ensure equity and inclusivity in career progression.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

There has been a global shift towards universities being managed in line with the principles of new public management (NPM), or the belief that a market orientation will lead to efficiency and productivity gains (Craig et al., 2014).

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2024 The Author(s). *Higher Education Quarterly* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

This migration started in the 1980s, inspired by moves to increase competition between institutions and to ensure that they were managed efficiently (in a business-like manner) replacing traditional collegial self-governance (De Boer et al., 2007). Such changes have been accompanied by the rise of an 'audit culture' and top-down control focused on output metrics (Kimber & Ehrich, 2015) leading to academics feeling torn between the seemingly irreconcilable demands of modern academia (Bolden et al., 2014). These developments have led to some questioning whether academic citizenship, founded on collegial notions of shared obligations and contributions through service to the maintenance and sustenance of the academic community, can survive (Dean & Forray, 2018a; Kenny & Fluck, 2019).

The embracement of techniques associated with NPM has contributed to a reframing of academic work which traditionally spanned the interconnected activities of research, teaching and course administration (Davies & Thomas, 2002). Workload models have been deployed across the sector to govern academic time (Peseta et al., 2017), allocating activities to foster transparency and accountability (Hornibrook, 2012; Papadopoulos, 2017). However, such techniques have resulted in a perceived devaluation of the role of academic citizenship as faculty divert time and energy to tasks that are perceived to directly facilitate promotion and reward (Beatson et al., 2022), thus favouring an individualistic approach (Bolden et al., 2014) rather than a collegial one. Common output measures include research quality, teaching quality and student satisfaction surveys amongst other metrics.

The centrality of academic citizenship to notions of what it is to be a university is highlighted in Macfarlane's influential study (2007) in which he identified the increasingly performative nature of academia and set out a 'Service Pyramid' which grouped facets of citizenship activity undertaken by academics in service to five related communities. Subsequent studies have tended to focus on the interplay between research and service activity due to the greater measurability of research outputs both in terms of quantity and perceived quality (Carli & Tagliaventi, 2022; Tagliaventi et al., 2020). Studies related to academic citizenship have drawn on a range of international settings including, Denmark (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2024), the United States of America and Canada (Dawson et al., 2022), Australia (Beatson et al., 2022), Italy (Carli & Tagliaventi, 2022; Tagliaventi et al., 2020) and France (Mignot-Gérard et al., 2022) amongst other countries. This implies that the changing nature of academic citizenship is of international relevance, despite differences in local context.

Over this period the higher education sector has also seen a rise in alternative academic career pathways including the disassembly of some academic activities into specialist roles (Macfarlane, 2011b) and the normalization of what are now commonly referred to as 'teaching-focussed' academic roles (Bennett et al., 2018; Flavell et al., 2018; Smith & Walker, 2024b; Whitton et al., 2021). This international phenomenon, a form of academic compartmentalization, has led to a recasting of career pathways and promotion criteria (Smith & Walker, 2024a). This current study, focussing on the UK higher education system, builds on the preceding work in this area, responding to calls to further existing knowledge of academic citizenship (Albia & Cheng, 2023). It does so by considering the effects of formalising the activities associated with academic citizenship in institutional promotion criteria and the interplay between traditional teaching and research and teaching-focussed academics.

## 2 | WHAT IS ACADEMIC SERVICE/CITIZENSHIP?

Collegiality, as the foundation of academic citizenship, has both structural and behavioural elements; 'professional autonomy, organizational citizenship, faculty participation in decision-making, and academic units' decision-making power' (Mignot-Gérard et al., 2022, p. 1). Findings indicate that only faculty participation in decision-making is compatible with the increasingly managerial environment found in French universities (Mignot-Gérard et al., 2022).

Academics have a 'dual affiliation', both to their institution and to their discipline, and as a result, academic citizenship can be conceived as having internal and external dimensions (Organ, 1988, p. 103). It mirrors

'organizational citizenship behaviour' or behaviour that is not explicitly outlined but contributes to the operation of the organization (Organ, 1988). As a result, citizenship is often characterized as a catchall term and refers to everything that is not research, scholarship or teaching related (Blackburn et al., 1995), and this underlines the current debate. An alternative perspective is to consider engagement in academic citizenship as a responsibility of academics (Albia & Cheng, 2023), evoking conceptions of altruism drawn from the sociology of the professions (Abbott, 1988; Friedson, 2001). However, such moral obligations arise from shared norms, often in the form of commitments to a code of ethics, and with the increased diversity in both career pathways and higher education institutions, this can no longer be confidently said for academics.

While some studies argue that the formalization of service activity in promotion criteria may have led to an associated de-prioritization of non-itemized activities (Beatson et al., 2022), this approach may focus effort on activities that are of direct benefit to the institution rather than the academic. Studies have also found that academic citizenship behaviour is influenced by perceptions of whether the overall performance management system is fair and indicates that where employees display signs of burnout they disengage from citizenship behaviours (Bauwens et al., 2019). Sectoral normalization of overwork and pressures related to output metrics may be underlying symptoms of the so-called retreat from citizenship activity.

Traditionally, citizenship obligations were implicit in the academic role acting as the 'glue' that holds universities together and connects them to the external environment (Macfarlane, 2005, p. 299). Researchers have previously categorized forms of academic service into three types; disciplinary, community and institutional (Neumann & Terosky, 2007). This categorization highlights the implicit reciprocity associated with these forms of service. Macfarlane's (2007) service pyramid expands the categorization, incorporating two further dimensions and articulates the hierarchical nature of service associated with the level of visibility to others across the institution. Students are placed firmly at the base, progressing through collegial service, institutional service and professional service, with public service at the pinnacle. This hierarchy is argued to reinforce academic structures with junior members of faculty often engaged in tasks of low esteem (Macfarlane, 2007), and associate professors bearing the service burden (Misra et al., 2011). Further, the gendering of tasks results in females undertaking a greater proportion of internal service whilst males of equivalent levels are more engaged in external service opportunities (Misra et al., 2011). This is also true of faculty of colour (Baez, 2000). By contrast, a recent study has called this assertion into question, finding that women are over-represented in all service tasks, both internal and external to the institution (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2024).

Prior studies have investigated the relationship between academic citizenship and research (Tagliaventi et al., 2020), concluding that academics are typically not 'all-rounders' but tend to polarize their activities around research (researchers), internal service (institutional heroes) and public service (ambassadors), with a fifth group who are 'caught in between' (p. 1058). Findings from several studies highlight that the 'institutional heroes' group is typically more closely associated with lower ranking universities with lesser research profiles but that may place a larger emphasis on service activity (Macfarlane, 2007, 2011b; Tagliaventi et al., 2020). Additionally, established concerns around the substitution effect of academic citizenship activities have been countered by empirical evidence from Italian Business Schools which found that disciplinary, public and internal service was complementary to research (Carli & Tagliaventi, 2022).

It is generally accepted that whilst many institutional reward and promotion processes and their associated criteria mention citizenship, measurement of impact can be variable (Dawson et al., 2022) leading to a disproportionately low or negligible weighting placed on this dimension by promotion committees in contrast to publications (Macfarlane, 2007). To some extent, this may be a facet of the measurability of research outputs, seemingly creating a culture of transparency. As a result, the perception for many academics is that recruitment and promotion on a traditional academic career path continues to focus almost exclusively on research (Bolden et al., 2014). This contributes to faculty feeling burdened by service (Baez, 2000), and thereby resisting further demands on their time.

### 3 | THE MERITS OF ACADEMIC CITIZENSHIP

The evaluation of service-related activity is more complex than reviewing output-based activity, with work frequently taking place outside the academic's institution (Bolden et al., 2014). Academic citizenship is an important contributor to disciplinary communities, many of which could not operate without drawing on volunteer time including many learned societies and professional organizations that typically rely on committees of members to undertake operational activities, including, annual conference organization, programmes of events. Further, eminent academics are often called upon to serve on public bodies providing expert input to policy formation, for example. These activities are portable and may lead to a potential prioritization of certain forms of external citizenship activity (Weiherl & Frost, 2016).

The research ecosystem is maintained through several supporting activities typically associated with academic citizenship. For example, engaging in work as a journal reviewer, reviewing grant applications and acting as a journal editor can all support research activity (Kenny & Fluck, 2019). The journal review process, as an example, is reliant on an understanding of reciprocity through the receiving and conducting of review work. However, as increasing numbers of academics submit papers to reputable journals, stimulated by growing demands for specific publication types, the pool of experienced reviewers has not been enlarged to accommodate the additional throughput (Dean & Forray, 2018b). Should this continue to come under pressure, the already lengthy review process is likely to be further compromised, impacting those most dependent on publication outputs (Beatson et al., 2022). Yet, peer review is often 'othered' amongst service activities and not recognized in formal criteria. Whilst it can be argued that the beneficiary of academic publishing is the academic community, the large commercial publishers have built their business on the voluntary work of academics which they then charge their institutions for access to. It could be argued that the system has shifted from a community-based activity founded on altruism and reciprocity to one of systematic exploitation of academic labour (Tennant, 2020) and that academics should reclaim the community-led approach to publishing or demand to be remunerated for their time by publishers. In fact, the shortcomings of the current system have led to the rise of predatory journals that seek to exploit academics desperate to publish by charging fees to publish and without performing the customary quality assurance processes, for example, peer review.

Similarly, external examining duties and other contributions to the sectoral quality processes may not be visible internally yet are critical to the functioning of the academic ecosystem. However, in contrast to peer review activity, the role of the external examiner and participation in validation panels as an external member often attract a fee. Whilst not always representative of the commitment, the element of supplemental remuneration may serve to remove such tasks from the sphere of citizenship.

At the same time, there has been a shift to specialist professional services staff undertaking collegial/disciplinary service-related activities which were traditionally undertaken by faculty for example, mentoring and bid writing (Macfarlane, 2011a). This approach has arguably freed up senior academics' time and provided access to specialist skills on a more equitable basis across the institution, thereby increasing the capacity to focus on the needs of students or the proposed research project, in other words, the academic creativity element. Combined, these changes have led to a more instrumental approach by academics who may seek to extract the maximum benefit with the minimum commitment. In addition to the rise of specialist roles, Macfarlane (2011b) highlights the rise of the '*de facto* para-academic' whereby those on full academic contracts relinquish various aspects to focus on management, for example (p.62). These developments may also have narrowed the scope of citizenship activity within the academic role.

### 4 | THE CONTRIBUTORY ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC WORKLOAD MODEL

The introduction of corporate style metrication of academic work has led to a notional separation of academic tasks, which whilst largely integrated, are now treated as distinct for work allocation and promotion purposes.

Whilst the deployment of academic workload models (ALMs) aids both the utilization of scarce resources (academic time) and makes visible the underlying principles of work allocation to advance equity, it may still mask inequity concerning the complexity of various tasks (Crisp, 2022). This has led academics to focus on those tasks that are most visible, for example, research outputs at the expense of other activities which may be harder to define and specify in terms of threshold performance levels.

The ALM seeks to allocate a tariff (either hours or points-based) for various activities, and is underpinned by an assumption of fairness that when workloads are full the activities can be accomplished in the allocated time (Crisp, 2022). Research shows that the existence of an ALM does guarantee fairness (Kenny & Fluck, 2022) and that dissatisfaction with workload allocation increases with the complexity of the model deployed (Vardi, 2009). Within such ALMs, service activities (those outside specified roles that carry a recognized workload tariff, e.g., head of department, programme director), are often aggregated to account for the significant variation in activities performed (they typically constitute around 20% of annual workload) (Kenny & Fluck, 2022, 2023). The existing literature outlines the transformation of the higher education sector and offers some glimpses into how it has shaped academic citizenship.

## 5 | METHOD

This study adopts a targeted single-country case study methodology employing a thematic analysis to examine promotion criteria for both traditional research and teaching and teaching-focussed career paths from a sample of 55 mid-sized UK universities, reporting between 17,000 and 30,000 students in the 2021/22 HESA cycle (Appendix 1). The UK was selected to better understand the extent to which differences in career path impacted scholarship expectations within one educational system. The UK typifies a higher education sector that has embraced new public management and the characterization of students as consumers. As such it is expected that the interactions between inherent altruism in the form of academic citizenship and the performativity promoted by the system will be most visible. This purposive sampling approach is appropriate to an exploratory study of this nature, enabling a focussed investigation to illuminate both sector-wide expectations related to service alongside those unique to the career paths. The adoption of a purposive approach facilitated the specificity of selection supporting the analysis of similarities and differences between career paths consistent with the objectives of the study (Campbell et al., 2020). Whilst the sample does not include institutions that are at either end of the scale which limits the generalizability of the findings and any conclusions that may be drawn, it does include institutions that belong to a range of mission groups, providing a cross-section of sector data. It is not the intention of this study to compare mission groups.

Some universities maintain promotion criteria behind institutional firewalls which led to the sample being reduced to 29 universities (Appendix 1). This was in line with an investigation of education-focused criteria where publicly available data for 22 mid-sized institutions formed the basis of the analysis (Smith & Walker, 2024a). This lack of transparency continues to obscure the requirements for career progression for those joining institutions that do not make their criteria available. Promotion criteria were manually collected from university websites and uploaded to NVivo to facilitate data management and analysis. We recognize that many institutions also have research-focused tracks and that some have an enterprise or engagement track as well; however, these were excluded as they are not the primary focus of this study and their inclusion risked exacerbating the complexity of the analysis resulting in less clear and conclusive findings.

We applied a framework-based synthesis to the analysis of the data collected, using Macfarlane's (2007) Service Pyramid as a lens through which the data were coded and interpreted. To enhance the reliability and rigour of the analysis, the authors adopted a collaborative approach, each independently applying the framework derived from the five categories of service identified by Macfarlane and subsequently engaging in an iterative dialogue to systematically discuss and reconcile any differences in interpretation to strengthen the validity of the analysis. In adopting this approach, we were conscious that the application of this framework

to the analysis of the data would itself introduce potential bias by limiting consideration of activities that challenge the original structure. The researchers, as academic managers, were similarly aware of their positionality in relation to citizenship activity. One of the researcher's time is allocated via a workload model and they have lived experience with appraisal and promotion processes including how academic citizenship is considered. The primary reflection of having time 'workloaded' is that the ALM is often taken as an accurate tool whereas, in reality, it adopts estimates related to designated activities designed to allocate work (primarily teaching, and departmental tasks) as fairly as possible acting as input control. This misinterpretation can lead to refusal to engage in activities that are not itemized, for example, attending graduation, departmental meetings and training, thus resulting in an ever-greater specification of academic activities. In addition, poor calibration can lead to a mismatch between appraisal and promotion criteria and the opportunities afforded to faculty, for example, as programme directors. Whilst this experience helped interpret the criteria collected, the dual coding approach adopted minimized any subjectivity as areas of uncertainty were discussed and agreed upon by both researchers.

There was a significant variation in the promotion structures with different pathways identified:

- Parallel pathways with separate and contained criteria at each level. The majority of institutions in the sample adopted this approach enabling the researchers to code both education-focused and traditional career pathway requirements.
- Matrix pathways with the same dimensions for all applicants but different levels of performance expected depending on 'specialism', for example, Dundee and Warwick. These were excluded from the coding as the same performance level can equate to various levels. The Warwick example is particularly insightful as it is possible to conclude the minimum contribution of the citizenship category at each level, for example, a minimum of 17% for the Associate Professor level in the overall promotion process (Warwick University, 2023).

## 6 | FINDINGS

Consistent with the framework-based analysis adopted to analyse the data, we have organized the findings to correspond to Macfarlane's (2007) Service Pyramid citizenship categories:

### 6.1 | Student service

Student service was largely implicit in the criteria reviewed across each pathway and was predominantly related to activities connected to student welfare, principally through pastoral support or personal tutoring at the more junior academic levels, for example, 'Evidence of ability to provide effective pastoral support in relation to signposting students to specialist services' (Lecturer—UWS), with those at higher levels often expected to work towards 'enhancing' the student experience in various respects, for example, 'creating and implementing strategies and policies which lead to impactful pastoral/academic student support' (Professor—Aston). This is most likely because pastoral duties are typically less tangible and difficult to measure, despite normally being part of the academic workload. Further, it may be surmised from the fact that this was not evident in every institution's criteria that this reflects the continued increase in roles that specialize in various aspects of student service, for example, specialist personal tutors.

Further examples, similar to those listed by Macfarlane are often expected as part of leadership duties associated with roles responsible for coordinating the planning and delivery of teaching on units (also known as modules or courses), including writing references and providing formative feedback on work, and are, therefore, ordinarily recognized in the teaching category, rather than as additional forms of service.

## 6.2 | Collegial service

We find that collegial service, similar to student service, is also implicit in an academic's role with limited recognition identifiable through the mapping of promotion criteria across both teaching and research pathways. Those forms of service that were most frequently articulated included mentoring more junior colleagues, peer observation and supporting the development of colleagues in their career pathways. As a result, such activities were typically found at the Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professorial levels with the standard moving from participating in to leading such activities. A mirroring of expectations was noted for those on research and teaching-focussed tracks, for example, 'mentoring and supporting less experienced staff in the development of their teaching and learning practice' (Oxford Brookes—Principal Lecturer).

One of the activities identified by Macfarlane as associated with collegial service was student recruitment activity through open days. At the lower academic levels, collegial service included 'participation in open days' (Bournemouth—lecturer) and departmental activities, whereas this shifted to 'leadership' for those at the Professorial level (Bournemouth—Professor). Whilst it could be argued that this is a form of collegiality, this activity might be better suited to the institutional service dimension in the contemporary HE environment given the target-driven nature of this activity linked to student recruitment and increasing formalization as part of academic workloads (see, e.g., University of Bristol, 2023). Other tasks that were mentioned less often included 'contribution to areas such as ethical approvals and staff appointments' (London South Bank—Associate Professor).

## 6.3 | Institutional service

Individuals at all levels were called upon to contribute to the running of their department, school, faculty or university with a significant range of tasks being outlined. Many criteria were unclear on how specific roles, for example, Head of Department, Director of Teaching and Learning and programme leader might fit into such assessments. This is an important consideration as academics who take on these administrative responsibilities typically have a specific role description and duties to fulfil that are recognized through the workload model and, therefore, reduce other forms of activity to accommodate them, normally teaching.

In other instances, citizenship and leadership were merged by institutions contributing to a blurring of the boundaries between core aspects of the academic role, for example, leading modules and 'leadership' activity (Essex G9 teaching-focussed lecturer).

Institutional service requirements grew significantly in line with career progression, although they seemed particularly intense at the senior lecturer level, where a demonstrable commitment to the department or school was articulated. Some examples are outlined in the quotes below:

'Sits on departmental/faculty university committees and bodies' Cambridge SL

'Membership of University PhD progress review boards' Essex SL

'Acts as internal/external examiner for research students' Essex SL

'Taking an active part in formulating University, Faculty, School or departmental decisions and contributing to activities beyond the immediate research, teaching or scholarship commitments'  
Swansea Associate Professor



The focus on institutional service is reflective of the institutional requirements. However, where there are not sufficient opportunities to sit on departmental committees or to contribute to the school/department such requirements may constrain career progression and raise questions of equity. For example:

Successful completion of a major task, which facilitates School or organisational unit performance or business leading the successful validation of a new course or establishing a new partnership initiative  
(Sussex—Teaching-Focussed Senior Lecturer)

An emergent area of institutional service was work with alumni which was explicitly outlined in promotion criteria of Bournemouth as a form of internal citizenship. However, this is an area of overlap with specialist alumni relations roles in many universities and was not prevalent in most of the criteria examined.

Macfarlane (2007) also recognized activities that were 'more externally focused and are taken as additional evidence of the scholarly expertise and status of the individual' (p. 266). However, our data did not identify many instances where activity would be classed as institutional rather than disciplinary or public service in this regard, save international recruitment. However, in many institutions, recruitment activity attracts ALM time and would sit outside the service category.

## 6.4 | Disciplinary service

This is a predominantly external-facing form of service that encompasses interactions with both professional bodies and disciplinary societies. Macfarlane claimed that these activities were undertaken with the primary intent of developing colleagues in the discipline and in furtherance of the discipline itself.

At lecturer and senior lecturer levels disciplinary service involves acting as an external examiner and supporting activities in the discipline. As would be expected, there is a progression in the involvement with learned societies or professional bodies aligned to the various levels. This reflects the fact that learned societies and professional bodies are formal organizations that conduct election or appointment processes for their various committees and leadership positions. Members are generally expected to be involved for some time before being successful in securing these positions. For example, as an associate professor participation could be via membership of the 'academic committee for learned societies' (Bournemouth), and organizing conferences and workshops. However, there remains variation in the degree of involvement expected, with other criteria outlining 'networking at conferences or involvement in external groups' (Swansea—Associate Professor).

For teaching-focussed academics, there also appears some mismatch in terms of what might constitute disciplinary service across institutions 'key role in external subject-specific or higher education organisations/bodies' (Greenwich—Associate Professor) or 'membership of educational and accreditation committees of professions' (Imperial—Associate Professor). This variation of expectations between institutions often creates a degree of confusion for those on education-focussed career pathways about the emphasis placed on various types of professional activity.

The sphere of influence expected was markedly varied at the professorial level for those in traditional teaching and research roles, with some criteria specifying 'substantial contribution to, and evidence of, strategic leadership at least at regional level and continuing excellence in professional practice' (Essex—Professor) with others appearing more flexible, for example, 'nationally or internationally recognised contribution to the discipline' (Portsmouth—Professor).

For example, for education-focussed professorial roles, criteria specify 'active leadership in learned societies' (University of Essex—Professor); or 'Evidence of international standing for example membership of international committees concerned with the development of the teaching of their subject in Higher Education' (Oxford Brookes—Professor). It should be noted that the opportunities to be involved across the disciplines will vary,



depending on the presence and standing of learned societies and professional bodies in the discipline, and as such the quality of the interaction is a more reliable criterion to apply.

## 6.5 | Public service

Public service opportunities are typically identified at the higher levels of the career structure, principally concentrated in criteria associated with traditional teaching and research professorial roles, and can extend to 'chairing national policy committees, collaborating with external organisations or leading relevant external or national and international networks' (Essex—Professor). It might include leading a 'review or inquiry for a government, professional or statutory organisation' (Glasgow Caledonian—Professor). Such opportunities draw on individual academic reputations in a specific field, reflective of their disciplinary leadership. Requirements to evidence engagement in public service activities in support of promotion were absent in all mappings for teaching-focussed roles across all levels except a single institutional mapping at the professorial level which included recognition of activities associated with 'membership of national and international committees for example, Research Council and professional or government committees' and a more generic 'involvement in public engagement activities' (Imperial—Professor).

Another facet of public service surfaces from the criteria examined. This relates to expectations to work on the following types of public activity:

knowledge exchange activities such as chairing national policy committees, collaborating with external organisations or leading relevant external national and international networks  
(Essex—Teaching-focussed professor)

Lead the design and delivery of innovative community engagement programmes nationally and/or internationally.  
(Glasgow Caledonian—Professor)

Such moves have been stimulated by the Knowledge Exchange Framework (Research England, 2020), a national assessment framework to evaluate various activities. In some institutions, the academic role has been further disaggregated with a developing enterprise career track, and due to its emergent nature, we did not map this track.

## 7 | DISCUSSION

The academic environment has morphed from one of self-governance and strong collegiality to one which is measured and scrutinized both internally and by the public. This has affected how academics engage with their roles resulting in a shift from an altruistic collectivist ethos to one more focussed on the needs of the individual (Albia & Cheng, 2023; Bolden et al., 2014). This environment has led to the rise of the instrumental academic who engages with academic citizenship tasks that further their careers. Beyond institutional boundaries, activities that once formed the collegial glue of the academy, notably those associated with academic publishing, have developed into a lucrative business for publishers, relying on free academic labour to underpin their financial models. This is in contrast to other activities that attract a small fee in recognition of academic time, for example, external examining and validation panel membership, and may be thought of as additional (unpaid) work rather than a form of disciplinary service.

Key activities that have traditionally been part of the research or teaching ecosystems have been neglected by academics as their focus has been shifted by the ALM and output measurements (Beatson et al., 2022;

Hornibrook, 2012) without an appreciation of how the academic publishing process is supported, for example, through collegial peer review, thereby compounding slow publication timelines (Beatson et al., 2022; Dean & Forray, 2018b). This neglect is mirrored on the part of institutions, as evidenced by the absence of associated disciplinary service citizenship activities in the promotion criteria analysed. Beatson et al. (2022) caution that a decline in mentoring early career academics is likely to leave them to navigate the environment without the guidance of more senior colleagues, thereby slowing their career progress and increasing the levels of stress experienced. In turn, this is likely to result in early career academics not engaging in service activities themselves (Beatson et al., 2022). Such cycles compound some of the issues outlined as expectations of some forms of academic service are largely implicit and based on an understanding of reciprocity, rather than explicitly outlined (Craig et al., 2014). To make such activities explicit would necessitate a seismic shift in the status quo, with previously largely unremunerated activity to be recognized and with that to acknowledge that this work has value and as such should be rewarded, measured and potentially accommodated as part of the workload.

Mirroring changes in the academic environment, academic roles have similarly evolved. There has been a disaggregation of tasks formerly performed by academics (Macfarlane, 2011b) and new career pathways have been developed, for example, teaching focussed. The findings of this study provide insights into those aspects of service activity most valued by institutions as reflected in institutional promotion criteria with noticeable deviation from the activities originally identified by Macfarlane. Across all academic levels, student service activities afforded the least recognition with no discernible difference identifiable between those in teaching-focussed and traditional academic roles. The lack of prominence of student service-related activities is potentially indicative of this work now being formally managed as part of the core academic workload, suggestive of an institutional expectation that this is integral to the teaching function and the various activities afforded prominence via the ALM. It may also be the case that the varied and largely intangible nature of student service activities makes output measures challenging resulting in the overt omission of student service dimensions of citizenship from promotion criteria.

Institutional, collegial and disciplinary service featured prominently across all levels and career paths with expectations of engagement in service to the public most prominent for those in professorial roles on traditional teaching and research career tracks with limited expectations for those in more junior positions. The prominence of collegial, disciplinary, institutional and public service expectations for those in professorial roles is perhaps reflective of expectations to participate in or develop internal or external networks in support of future research activities and grant capture rather than activities more closely linked to teaching and support of student learning. It reinforces Macfarlane's (2011a) findings from a study that evaluated professorial perceptions of institutional expectations.

In its original conceptualization, institutional service encompassed tasks that now attract formal workload time, rendering the descriptors originally articulated by Macfarlane (2007) related to service confused in this regard. It is argued that if workload time is allocated to a specific task that a person has been appointed to, for example, as a programme director or head of department that performance should be assessed alongside the requirements of the role and specifically the role description, rather than the general institutional service category. Such a move would make true institutional service via committee work, sitting on reviews, etc., more transparent.

The concept of disciplinary service has similarly expanded beyond Macfarlane's research-related examples to include interactions with professional bodies, and activities more closely aligned with quality assurance and enhancement processes (Albia & Cheng, 2023). At this level, there was some blurring between service to advance the academic discipline and service to advance the profession, for example, through acting as examiner to professional qualifications that may be better placed as public service. It was also acknowledged that there is often significant informal disciplinary service conducted through the sharing of expertise and materials, although Dean and Forray (2018a) caution that the competitive environment may increasingly pose a barrier to this form of academic citizenship. Further, initiatives such as the National Teaching Repository (2023) in the UK, whilst seeking to provide a mechanism to share materials, also offer a means of facilitating measurement, enabling claims to scholarship to be invoked.

What is evident from our analysis is institutions place greater emphasis on activities that fulfil their goals (strategic, financial, reputational) rather than the needs of academics, students or the historical purpose of universities per se. This is consistent with previous arguments relating to the prioritization of itemized activities directly benefiting the institution (Beatson et al., 2022). Where workloads, appraisal and promotion criteria are not appropriately calibrated with these goals, academics may not be able to reconcile the competing demands, leading to a cycle of overwork and the risk of burnout (Crisp, 2022; Dawson et al., 2022).

It is apparent that contemporary conceptions of academic citizenship, as reflected in institutional promotion criteria and academic working practices, challenge the original framework presented by Macfarlane in his Service Pyramid. Just as the nature of academic roles has evolved, we posit that the activities identified by Macfarlane aligned to the categories of service must similarly evolve. We propose that academic citizenship activity includes all activities that do not incur supplemental payments on top of the individual's salary or are accounted for in academic workload models (Tagliaventi et al., 2020). As evidenced by our findings, this would include forms of student service, collegial service and public service. Where promotion criteria accentuate unremunerated activities outside the contract and the formal workload, this raises questions of capacity and opportunities for advancement for those who have other commitments or personal responsibilities beyond work (Misra et al., 2011; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2018). We view this practice as deeply problematic and a contributor to the academic culture of overwork.

In proposing this adapted framework, we acknowledge the drawbacks of solely using promotion criteria as a source of data, not least due to their variability of structure, categorization of the dimensions of service activity and the ambiguous nature of the criteria themselves. Further work could strengthen this through analysis of role profiles/job descriptions aligned to the respective career tracks.

## 8 | CONCLUSION

Collegiality, the organizing principles of academic citizenship, and what it is to be an academic citizen are changing beyond recognition, driven by an increasingly instrumental academic culture that has embraced principles of NPM as embodied through institutional strategies, key performance indicators, enslavement to league tables and the emergence of workload models to account for time. Work (service) that is valued is measured and where it can both be measured and, crucially, is in furtherance of the interest of institutions, it is recognized in promotion criteria. Consistent with this, academic citizenship activity is increasingly a trade-off, with the furtherance of personal and professional advancement in tension with the collegiate ethos of citizenship as originally conceptualized. This echoes prior conclusions which similarly highlighted the increasingly instrumental approach taken to citizenship activity for those seeking career progression (Beatson et al., 2022).

Our study has considered how previously altruistic activities undertaken by academics in a spirit of collegiality in support of the historic aims of their institution and the wider academy are now recognized through institutional promotion criteria, what forms of service are recognized, and whether there are identifiable differences between expectations of those on traditional teaching and research and emerging teaching-focussed career tracks. We find that the five service categories originally articulated in Macfarlane's Service Pyramid are more porous than ever. Indeed, we contend that all activities in this increasingly hyper-performance-driven academic environment should be conceived as essentially servicing the needs of institutions. This is evidenced in our analysis of promotion criteria which typically focussed more heavily on forms of institutional service ahead of others. It is perhaps reflective of the managerialist environment where the institution seeks to maximize the contribution of academics for its benefit rather than the benefit of the academic or those beyond the institution.

The findings of this study highlight the varied nature of academic citizenship expectations across different career levels and between traditional teaching and research and teaching-focussed pathways. It also points to the potential challenges and equity issues linked to the recognition of service activities commonly associated with

academic citizenship in promotion processes. The findings contribute to a better understanding of how institutions define and reward academic citizenship, informing discussions on the alignment between promotion criteria and the diverse dimensions of academic citizenship. The authors advocate the need to consider a more comprehensive and nuanced assessment of academic citizenship in promotion and career advancement processes across all career pathways in higher education institutions.

Findings will be of interest to those navigating the tensions of managerialist approaches adopted in institutions that were founded on a collegial ethos. The limitations of this study and generalizability of the findings beyond the UK higher education sector are acknowledged. Specifically, limitations are noted with the sample size and potential subjectivity of the analysis arising from potential researcher bias when interpreting and categorizing the data. Future research may seek to make comparisons between different institutional mission groups or systems of higher education to establish how academic citizenship expectations are defined and rewarded in different educational contexts. Qualitative studies that explore how senior managers regard academic citizenship and the weighting they attach to different aspects of service would provide deeper insights into their perspectives on citizenship and its importance in the context of career advancements.

### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

**Susan Smith:** Conceptualization; methodology; writing – original draft; writing – review and editing; project administration; formal analysis; software; investigation; data curation; resources. **David Walker:** Software; formal analysis; project administration; conceptualization; investigation; writing – original draft; writing – review and editing; methodology; data curation; resources.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors are not aware of any conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

### ORCID

Susan Smith  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0411-9327>

David Walker  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0281-4775>

### REFERENCES

- Abbott, A. D. (1988). *System of professions: Essay on the division of expert labour*. University of Chicago Press.
- Albia, J., & Cheng, M. (2023). Re-examining and developing the notion of academic citizenship: A critical literature review. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 77(4), 709–721. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12428>
- Baez, B. (2000). Race-related service and faculty of color: Conceptualizing critical agency in academe. *Higher Education*, 39(3), 363–391. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1003972214943>
- Bauwens, R., Audenaert, M., Huisman, J., & Decramer, A. (2019). Performance management fairness and burnout: Implications for organizational citizenship behaviors. *Studies in Higher Education*, 44(3), 584–598. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1389878>
- Beatson, N. J., Tharapos, M., O'Connell, B. T., de Lange, P., Carr, S., & Copeland, S. (2022). The gradual retreat from academic citizenship. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 76(4), 715–725. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12341>
- Bennett, D., Roberts, L., Ananthram, S., & Broughton, M. (2018). What is required to develop career pathways for teaching academics? *Higher Education*, 75(2), 271–286. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0138-9>
- Blackburn, R. T., Blackburn, R. T., Lawrence, J. H., & Lawrence, J. H. (1995). *Faculty at work: Motivation, expectation, satisfaction*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Bolden, R., Gosling, J., & O'Brien, A. (2014). Citizens of the academic community? A societal perspective on leadership in UK higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 39(5), 754–770. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2012.754855>

- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: Complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>
- Carli, G., & Tagliaventi, M. R. (2022). Can you do all in one professional label? Complementarity, substitution, and independence effects in academic life. *Higher Education*, 85, 837–863. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00868-y>
- Craig, R., Amernic, J., & Tourish, D. (2014). Perverse audit culture and accountability of the modern public university. *Financial Accountability & Management*, 30(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1111/faam.12025>
- Crisp, B. R. (2022). Academic workloads: What does a manager need to consider? *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 44(6), 547–562. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2022.2064404>
- Davies, A., & Thomas, R. (2002). Managerialism and accountability in higher education: The gendered nature of restructuring and the costs to academic service. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 13(2), 179–193. <https://doi.org/10.1006/cpac.2001.0497>
- Dawson, D. (DeDe), Morales, E., McKiernan, E. C., Schimanski, L. A., Niles, M. T., & Alperin, J. P. (2022). The role of collegiality in academic review, promotion, and tenure. *PLoS ONE*, 17(4), e0265506. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0265506>
- De Boer, H., Enders, J., & Schimank, U. (2007). On the way towards new public management? The governance of university systems in England, The Netherlands, Austria, and Germany. *New Forms of Governance in Research Organizations*, 1, 137–152.
- Dean, K. L., & Forray, J. M. (2018a). Collegiality and collaboration in an era of competition. *Journal of Management Education*, 42(1), 3–7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562917743014>
- Dean, K. L., & Forray, J. M. (2018b). The long goodbye: Can academic citizenship sustain academic scholarship? *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 27(2), 164–168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492617726480>
- Flavell, H., Roberts, L., Fyfe, G., & Broughton, M. (2018). Shifting goal posts: The impact of academic workforce reshaping and the introduction of teaching academic roles on the scholarship of teaching and learning. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 45(2), 179–194. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-017-0247-6>
- Friedson, E. (2001). *Professionalism. The third logic*. Polity Press.
- Hornibrook, S. (2012). Policy implementation and academic workload planning in the managerial university: Understanding unintended consequences. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 34(1), 29–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2012.642329>
- Järvinen, M., & Mik-Meyer, N. (2024). Giving and receiving: Gendered service work in academia. *Current Sociology*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00113921231224754>
- Kenny, J., & Fluck, A. (2019). Academic administration and service workloads in Australian universities. *Australian Universities' Review*, 61(2), 21–30.
- Kenny, J., & Fluck, A. E. (2022). Emerging principles for the allocation of academic work in universities. *Higher Education*, 83(6), 1371–1388. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-021-00747-y>
- Kenny, J., & Fluck, A. E. (2023). Life at the academic coalface: Validation of a holistic academic workload estimation tool. *Higher Education*, 86, 507–526. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00912-x>
- Kimber, M., & Ehrich, L. C. (2015). Are Australia's universities in deficit? A tale of generic managers, audit culture and casualisation. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 37(1), 83–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2014.991535>
- Macfarlane, B. (2005). The disengaged academic: The retreat from citizenship. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 59(4), 296–312. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2005.00299.x>
- Macfarlane, B. (2007). Defining and rewarding academic citizenship: The implications for university promotions policy. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 29(3), 261–273. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800701457863>
- Macfarlane, B. (2011a). Professors as intellectual leaders: Formation, identity and role. *Studies in Higher Education*, 36(1), 57–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070903443734>
- Macfarlane, B. (2011b). The morphing of academic practice: Unbundling and the rise of the Para-academic. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 65(1), 59–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2010.00467.x>
- Mignot-Gérard, S., Sponem, S., Chatelain-Ponroy, S., & Musselin, C. (2022). *Kaleidoscopic collegiality and the use of performance research metrics. The case of French universities*. Higher Education. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00871-3>
- Misra, J., Lundquist, J. H., Holmes, E., & Agiomavritis, S. (2011, January 4). *The ivory ceiling of service work*. AAUP. <https://www.aaup.org/article/ivory-ceiling-service-work>
- National Teaching Repository. (2023). <https://ntrepository.wordpress.com/home/>
- Neumann, A., & Terosky, A. L. (2007). To give and to receive: Recently tenured professors' experiences of service in major research universities. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 78(3), 282–310. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2007.0018>

- Organ, D. W. (1988). *Organizational citizenship behavior: The good soldier syndrome* (p. xiii, 132). Heath and Com.
- Papadopoulos, A. (2017). The mismeasure of academic labour. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 36(3), 511–525. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1289156>
- Pedersen, D. E., & Minnotte, K. L. (2018). University service work in STEM departments: Gender, perceived injustice, and consequences for faculty. *Sociological Focus*, 51(3), 217–237. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00380237.2018.1393607>
- Peseta, T., Barrie, S., & McLean, J. (2017). Academic life in the measured university: Pleasures, paradoxes and politics. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 36(3), 453–457. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1293909>
- Research England. (2020). *Knowledge exchange framework*. Research England. <https://re.ukri.org/knowledge-exchange/knowledge-exchange-framework/>
- Smith, S., & Walker, D. (2024a). Scholarship and academic capitals: The boundaried nature of education-focused career tracks. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 29(1), 111–125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.1965570>
- Smith, S., & Walker, D. (2024b). Scholarship and teaching-focused roles: An exploratory study of academics' experiences and perceptions of support. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 61(1), 193–204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2022.2132981>
- Tagliaventi, M. R., Carli, G., & Cutolo, D. (2020). Excellent researcher or good public servant? The interplay between research and academic citizenship. *Higher Education*, 79(6), 1057–1078. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00456-7>
- Tennant, J. (2020). Time to stop the exploitation of free academic labour. *European Science Editing*, 46, e51839. <https://doi.org/10.3897/ese.2020.e51839>
- University of Bristol. (2023). Programme director role description. <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/academic-quality/documents/programme-director.pdf>
- Vardi, I. (2009). The impacts of different types of workload allocation models on academic satisfaction and working life. *Higher Education*, 57(4), 499–508. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-008-9159-8>
- Warwick University. (2023). Academic promotion matrix. [https://warwick.ac.uk/services/humanresources/internal/academicprocesses/academicpromotion/matrix\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/humanresources/internal/academicprocesses/academicpromotion/matrix_-_final.pdf)
- Weihert, J., & Frost, J. (2016). Professional and organizational commitment in universities: From judgmental to developmental performance management. In *Multi-level governance in universities: Strategy, structure, control* (pp. 173–192). Springer.
- Whitton, J., Parr, G., & Choate, J. (2021). Developing the education research capability of education-focused academics: Building skills, identities and communities. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 41(6), 2122–2136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2021.1946016>

**How to cite this article:** Smith, S., & Walker, D. (2024). The instrumental academic: Collegiality and the value of academic citizenship in contemporary higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 00, e12551. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12551>

## APPENDIX 1

Universities with enrolment between 17,000 and 30,000 students in 2021/22.

Provider	Total	Mission group	Pre/post-92
Glasgow Caledonian University	20,050	MillionPlus	Post-92
London South Bank University	19,185	MillionPlus	Post-92
Staffordshire University	18,460	MillionPlus	Post-92
The University of the West of Scotland	20,070	MillionPlus	Post-92
Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine	21,470	Russell group	Post-92
Queen Mary University of London	26,045	Russell group	Pre-92

Provider	Total	Mission group	Pre/post-92
The University of Cambridge	22,610	Russell group	Pre-92
The University of Warwick	28,825	Russell group	Pre-92
The University of York	23,420	Russell group	Pre-92
Leeds Beckett University	23,365	University alliance	Post-92
Oxford Brookes University	17,470	University alliance	Post-92
The University of Brighton	17,835	University alliance	Post-92
The University of Greenwich	26,610	University alliance	Post-92
Aston University	17,595	Non-affiliated	Pre-92
Bournemouth University	17,960	Non-affiliated	Post-92
Liverpool John Moores University	28,100	Non-affiliated	Post-92
Loughborough University	18,760	Non-affiliated	Pre-92
Swansea University	22,290	Non-affiliated	Post-92
The University of Bath	18,890	Non-affiliated	Pre-92
The University of Dundee	18,100	Non-affiliated	Pre-92
The University of Essex	18,110	Non-affiliated	Pre-92
The University of Huddersfield	20,885	Non-affiliated	Post-92
The University of Portsmouth	26,500	Non-affiliated	Post-92
The University of Reading	19,390	Non-affiliated	Pre-92
The University of Salford	25,415	Non-affiliated	Pre-92
The University of Strathclyde	25,715	Non-affiliated	Pre-92
The University of Sussex	19,865	Non-affiliated	Pre-92
The University of West London	18,695	Non-affiliated	Post-92
University of the Arts, London	22,455	Non-affiliated	Post-92

Source: HESA DT051 Table 1, <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-study>.