Appointment, retention and promotion of academic staff in higher education institutions

Appendix 1: Methodology

Amplified research questions

Research question 1: What are the issues that affect academic staff recruitment, retention and promotion?
What are significant factors outwith control of institutions eg labour market, HEI location, Equal Opportunities, employment legislation? What are issues emerging from within institutions, eg equal opportunities policies and practices; coherence/flexibility of staffing practices across the HEI, discipline and cross disciplinary programmes; individual HEI statutes? Have the minimum levels of required qualifications for academic posts become inflated and detrimental to intellectual excitement? What is already known from previous studies, eg about those moving within the HE sector and those leaving the sector; about recruitment and retention in different regions and in various disciplines? What are the key pay and non-pay issues which influence staff behaviour?

Research question 2: How do HEIs encourage effective recruitment, retention and promotion of academic staff?
What processes contribute to a positive ethos towards staffing: e.g. approaches to recruitment and appointments reflecting equal opportunities policies; conditions of service; nature and length of contracts for various academic staff; salaries and other rewards; expected balance between teaching, research and administration; access to staff development programmes and sabbaticals, career guidance; working conditions and facilities? How have HEIs responded to staff expectations and aspirations? What human resources policies are in place, how effectively are they implemented and how are they monitored and evaluated?

Research question 3: What are the relationships between maintaining and improving standards within HEIs and the progression of their academic staff?
Is staff progression linked to standards? Can evidence from HEIs demonstrate any correlations between QAA, RAE and student attainment with staff progression? Are the following assumptions justified: good practice in staffing will result in enhanced ratings in RAE; good practice in staffing will reduce the costs incurred by wastage rates and staff turnover? What are the effects of external quality assurance and assessment activities on the motivation and balance of academics' work and on human resource approaches generally? Does the profile and composition of staff have an impact, eg proportion of short term contract staff or hourly-paid staff and the implications for quality? What do academic staff count as 'progression'? Does lack of perceived progression have negative effects?

Research question 4: What are the routes available for academic staff to develop their careers?
What variables are associated with concepts of 'career' and 'promotion' – length of service, academic discipline and specialisation, gender, ethnicity, institutional role? How do HEIs encourage movement between teaching, administration, research and management? Do transition mechanisms including redeployment and retraining exist? How much flexibility is possible and are there irrevocable decisions? What are the medium and long-term effects of modularised and cross-discipline programmes on staff career opportunities? How do equal opportunities policies operate in promoting/inhibiting career development? How can career development be enhanced where different assumptions pertain about wastage and retention, eg for contract researchers and hourly-paid staff compared with senior management?

Research question 5: What areas of best practice can be identified in relation to staff appointment, retention and promotion?
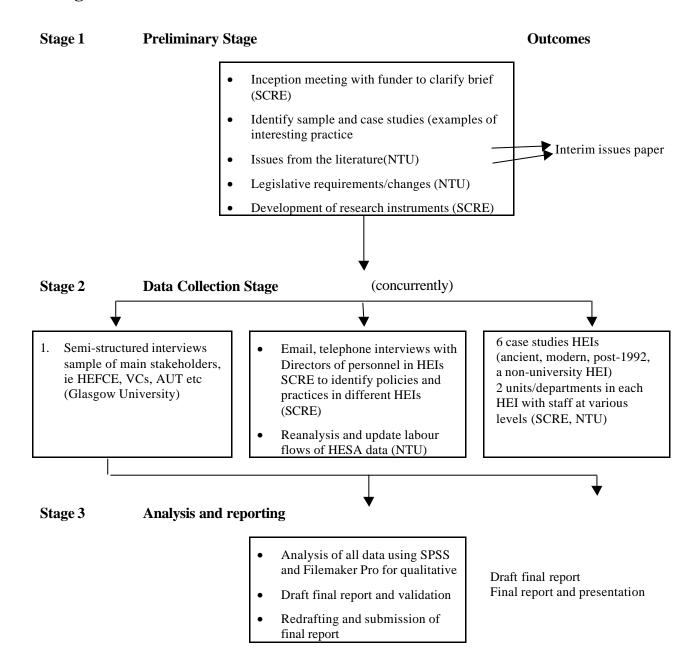What HEI initiatives have been successful/productive in relation to this question? How has the loss of established tenure been offset by good staff practices? How can the issue of individual versus institutional benefits be best resolved to a win:win situation?

***Research question 6: How can strategies be developed in higher education to support depth
and breadth of career opportunities for academic staff across the sector?***
What does it mean to be an 'academic' in the modern world? How will strategies to build the
capacity of HE staff deal with the demographic 'time-bomb'? What recommendations emerge
from stakeholders – including those in HEIs, UUK, ILT, the unions and professional
associations – to develop the national capacity of HE staff. What can HE learn from other
sectors?

Research question 7: What might be the cost implications of such recommendations?
Will the benefits of building national capacity be offset by high turnover costs for individual
HEIs, especially those who have invested heavily in staff development? What staff
development strategies and initiatives are best centralised and which are more appropriately
dealt with at a local HEI level?

Design overview

Stage 1   **Preliminary Stage**   **Outcomes**

- Inception meeting with funder to clarify brief (SCRE)

- Identify sample and case studies (examples of interesting practice

- Issues from the literature(NTU)   → Interim issues paper

- Legislative requirements/changes (NTU)

- Development of research instruments (SCRE)

Stage 2   **Data Collection Stage**   (concurrently)

1. Semi-structured interviews sample of main stakeholders, ie HEFCE, VCs, AUT etc (Glasgow University)

- Email, telephone interviews with Directors of personnel in HEIs SCRE to identify policies and practices in different HEIs (SCRE)

- Reanalysis and update labour flows of HESA data (NTU)

6 case studies HEIs (ancient, modern, post-1992, a non-university HEI) 2 units/departments in each HEI with staff at various levels (SCRE, NTU)

Stage 3   **Analysis and reporting**

- Analysis of all data using SPSS and Filemaker Pro for qualitative

- Draft final report and validation

- Redrafting and submission of final report

Draft final report
Final report and presentation

Stakeholders: semi-structured interview schedule

1. What are the main issues that affect the recruitment of academic staff?
Probe: Significant external significant factors <u>outwith</u> the control of institutions eg labour market, HEI location, Equal Opportunities contractual legislation?
What are issues emerging from <u>within</u> institutions, eg Equal opportunities policies and practices; coherence/flexibility of staffing practices across the HEI, discipline and cross disciplinary programmes; individual HEI statutes?
Have the minimum levels of required qualifications for academic posts become inflated and detrimental to intellectual excitement?
What is already known from previous studies, eg about those moving within the HE sector and those leaving the sector; about recruitment in different regions and in various disciplines?

2. What are the main issues that affect academic staff retention?
Probe: Significant external significant factors <u>outwith</u> the control of institutions eg labour market, HEI location, Equal Opportunities contractual legislation?
What are issues emerging from <u>within</u> institutions, eg Equal opportunities policies and practices; coherence/flexibility of staffing practices across the HEI, discipline and cross disciplinary programmes; individual HEI statutes?
What is already known from previous studies, eg about those moving within the HE sector and those leaving the sector; about retention in different regions and in various disciplines?
Impact of forthcoming European Directive?

3. What are the main issues that affect the promotion of academic staff
Probe: Significant external significant factors <u>outwith</u> the control of institutions eg labour market, HEI location, Equal Opportunities contractual legislation?
What are issues emerging from <u>within</u> institutions, eg Equal opportunities policies and practices; coherence/flexibility of staffing practices across the HEI, discipline and cross disciplinary programmes; individual HEI statutes?
Have the minimum levels of required qualifications for promotion within academic posts become inflated and detrimental to intellectual excitement?
What is already known from previous studies, eg about those moving within the HE sector and those leaving the sector; about promotion in different regions and in various disciplines?

4. How do HEIs encourage effective recruitment of academic staff?
Probe: What processes contribute to a positive ethos towards staffing:
eg approaches to recruitment and appointments reflecting equal opportunities policies;
Advertising policy – how wide? Issue concerning internal/externally advertised posts?
the process itself – get opinions on how this works from inception to appointment.

5. How do HEIs encourage effective retention of academic staff?
Probe: conditions of service; nature and length of contracts for various academic staff; salaries and other rewards;
expected balance between teaching, research and administration;
access to staff development programmes and sabbaticals, career guidance;
working conditions and facilities?
What human resources policies are in place, how effectively are they implemented and how monitored and evaluated?

6. How do HEIs encourage effective promotion of academic staff?
Who are the gatekeepers of promotion?
Probe: Examples of good practice.

7. What are the relationships between maintaining and improving standards within HEIs and the progression of their academic staff?
Probe: Can evidence from HEIs demonstrate any correlations between QAA and RAE activities and student attainment?
Are the following assumptions justified: good practice in staffing will result in enhanced ratings in RAE;
good practice in staffing will reduce the costs incurred by wastage rates and staff turnover?
What are the effects of external quality assurance and assessment activities on the motivation and balance of academics' work and on human resource approaches generally?
Does the proportion of short term contract staff correlate with students' attainment?
What do academic staff count as 'progression'?
Do academics who get promoted do less teaching? If so, is this desirable?
Is there a culture of 1st and/or 2nd years being taught by PGs and other hourly-paid and, if so, what impact has this had on standards?

8. What are the routes available for academic staff to develop their careers?
Probe; What variables are associated with concepts of 'career' and 'promotion' – length of service, academic discipline and specialisation, gender, ethnicity, institutional role?
How do HEIs encourage movement between teaching, administration, research and management?
How much flexibility is possible and are there irrevocable decisions?
What are the medium and long term effects of modularised and cross-discipline programmes on staff career opportunities?
How do equal opportunities policies operate in promoting/inhibiting career development?
How can career development be enhanced where different assumptions pertain about wastage and retention, eg for contract researchers and hourly-paid staff compared with senior management?
Questions about secondment – a career boost or bad move?
Ask about the role of Staff Development Offices within HEIs?

9. What areas of best practice can be identified in relation to staff appointment, retention and promotion?
Probe for examples
What HEI initiatives have been successful in relation to this question?
How has the loss of established tenure been offset by good staff practices?
How can the issue of individual vs institutional benefits be best resolved to a win:win situation?

10. How can strategies be developed in higher education to support depth and breadth of career opportunities for academic staff across the sector?
What does it mean to be an 'academic' in the modern world?
How will strategies to build the capacity of HE staff deal with the demographic 'time-bomb'?
What can HE learn from other sectors?

11. What recommendations would your organisation make to develop the national capacity of HE staff?

12. What might be the cost implications of such recommendations?
Will the benefits of building national capacity be offset by high turnover costs for individual HEIs, especially those who have invested heavily in staff development?
What staff development strategies and initiatives are best centralised and which are more appropriately dealt with at a local HEI level?
Could there be costs associated with not doing something?

13. Any further comments?

E-mail survey structured questionnaire

The appointment, retention and promotion of academic staff within higher education institutions

The Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) is carrying out a survey of all Heads of Personnel of Higher Education Institutions in England This work, commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), aims to identify factors associated with the appointment, retention and promotion of any staff who teach, including research staff, those on fixed-term contracts,and hourly paid staff. At the end of this survey we have listed the main research questions being addressed by the project.
Further information about the project is available on the SCRE website.

The views of Heads of Personnel or Human Resources and particularly those with responsibility for policy development in relation to teaching staff will make a special contribution to the outcomes of the study.

The information supplied in response to this form is confidential and will be held on a computerised database (but will only be used within the project to analyse responses). The responses you give to this survey will only be available to the SCRE research team. Analysis of the survey findings will be passed to HEFCE and anonymity of individuals and institutions is guaranteed in any project report. We look forward to your participation in the survey.

[SCRE Standards of Practice for Research]

A DETAILS OF PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM
Name (surname first):

email address (required field, please type carefully):

Job title:

Name of institution:

Department/Unit:

B INSTITUTION STATISTICS
No of students (FTEs):

Full-time students:

Part-time students:

No of staff (FTEs):

What was your turnover rate of teaching staff expressed as a percentage of all teaching staff in 2000–2001?

Please identify any departments or subjects which are experiencing:
i.higher than average turnover of staff:
ii.problems in recruiting staff:

How many staff employed are less than 0.25FTE?

C POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
1. In your institution, do you have the following human resources policies, procedures and/or codes of practice in place for staff who teach? (Please tick as many as appropriate)

		Applicable to:	
	Permanent	Part-time /fixed contract	Hourly paid
Annual Review of Teaching Staff	__	__	__
Career Guidance	__	__	__
CPD Programmes	__	__	__
Disability	__	__	__
Equal Opportunities	__	__	__
Equal Pay	__	__	__
Harassment	__	__	__
Investors in People (IIP)	__	__	__
Induction	__	__	__
Leave of Absence/Study Leave	__	__	__
Mentoring	__	__	__
Probation	__	__	__
Promotion of Teaching Staff	__	__	__
Recruitment and Selection	__	__	__
Redundancy	__	__	__
Sabbaticals	__	__	__
Staff Appraisal	__	__	__
Staff Development	__	__	__
Staff Handbook	__	__	__

Additional comments:

C RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT
2.In your institution, what policies and practices support the **recruitment** of high quality academic staff who teach?

3.In your institution,what inhibits the recruitment of high quality academic staff who teach?

4.Please describe any particular initiative in your institution which has supported the recruitment and appointment of staff who teach:

C RETENTION

5a.Do you have the following measures in place to encourage staff retention? (please tick as many as appropriate)

__ Continuing Professional Development
__ Equal Opportunities Strategies/Action Plans
__ Fast Track Promotion
__ Leave of Absence/Study Leave
__ Mentoring
__ Performance Related Pay
__ Performance Review
__ Positive Institutional Ethos
__ Redeployment
__ Regrading
__ Retraining
__ Secondments
__ Staff Appraisal
__ Staff Development Opportunities
__ Supportive Management Structure

Others: (please specify below as many as you wish)

5b.Please describe any particular initiative in your institution which has supported the retention of staff who teach:

6.What factors inhibit the retention and development of staff who teach?

7.With regard in particular to part-time teaching staff, hourly paid staff and those on fixed-term contracts, are there any particular initiatives in place to retain their services?

C PROMOTION

8.In your institution, what policies and practices support **promotion** the of high quality academic staff who teach?

9.In your institution, what inhibits the promotion of high quality academic staff who teach?

10.Please describe any particular initiative in your institution with regard to promoting staff who teach.

11.Are there institutional or departmental policies related to promotion of fixed-term and/or hourly paid staff? |Yes |No |

12.Do you have published criteria for promotion of permanent teaching staff? |Yes |No |

13.In practice,how flexible are the promotions criteria? |Flexible |Somewhat |Fixed |

14.How universally are these criteria applied across all departments/units? |All |Most |Some |

C REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

15.When were the last policy reviews undertaken in relation to teaching staff?

	Within Last 2 Years	Currently Under Review
Equal Opportunities	o	o
Promotion of Teaching Staff	o	o
Recruitment and Selection	o	o
Staff Appraisal	o	o
Staff Development	o	o

16. Is there any annual audit of teaching staff? |Yes |No |

17. Please indicate whether Human Resources policies in your institution reflect awareness and implementation of the following legislative changes: (please tick as many as appropriate)

	Aware	Implementing
Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)	__	__
SEN Disability Discrimination Act (2001)	__	__
Human Rights Act (1998)	__	__
EU Directives on Part-time Working (2000)	__	__
Fixed Term Working (2002)	__	__

C YOUR OWN VIEWS

18. Generally, what three factors would you suggest to improve the appointment, retention and promotion of academic staff?

D RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Below are the main research questions which will inform the responses above. If you would like to comment or add anything else, please do so in the box provided:
- _ What are the issues that affect academic staff recruitment, retention and promotion?
- _ How do HEIs encourage effective recruitment, retention and promotion of academic staff?
- _ What are the relationships between maintaining and improving standards within HEIs and the progression of their academic staff?
- _ What are the routes available for academic staff to develop their careers?
- _ What areas of best practice can be identified in relation to staff appointment, retention and promotion?
- _ How can strategies be developed in higher education to support depth and breadth of career opportunities for academic staff across the sector?
- _ What might be the cost implications of such recommendations?

Comments:

If it is difficult for you to print your form and you would like a record of your submission, please indicate here: __

A copy of your responses will be e-mailed to you at the address you have given above.

[Click Here to Send Completed Form]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey

Case study interview schedules – Management perspective

The depth of this interview will depend on the degree of responsibility and discretion that the HoD has – particularly to vary HEI policy

A profile of the unit
Try to briefly confirm and supplement info we have from secondary sources
mission and progress towards that mission
check numbers and structure (estimates OK)
prevalence of fixed-term/casual
demographics –therefore possible problems/gaps in future
General HR Approach
Is there a HR strategy at this level – is it your responsibility?
How are roles determined/job design/job descriptions?
Any succession planning/HRP?
How do vacancies arise- who decides that there is a vacant post (established posts?, temporary posts?)

Recruitment issues (NB may have to distinguish types and levels of post)

Who has responsibility? (devolved or central)?
Attracting the right pool (probe labour market, international, meeting desirable criteria)
Evaluate the recruitment process (how done)
How much flexibility (e.g. salary level)?
Any barriers (e.g. legal, practical) to obtaining 'best' candidate
Is EO addressed or create problem?
Problems (probe timescales, particular roles, areas, quality issues, salary levels)
Are problems monitored and addressed (how)?
Suggestions of how to improve ID good practice?

Retention issues

Staff motivation and commitment
Any detrimental/enhancing factors?
Rate of turnover – how many and who are leaving and where are they going? (probe for details/examples)
Is this monitored and explanations sought?

Is this problem (how replaceable) or good (bring in new blood)?
Are salaries an issue?
How do you meet staff aspirations (wide issues)?
ID good practice

Career progress and promotion

Does career structure exist across the role in unit (describe)?
Do opportunities exist to actually use it?
How is this managed (appraisal, support etc) – how much discretion – who responsible?
Links to staff development/ do you 'invest' in this?
Any sense of performance mgt ?
How is quality enhanced/recognised?
What are the key criteria to be deemed suitable for progress/more responsibility?
Do you meet staff aspirations (career issues) – balance with unit needs?
Sideways moves / flexibility of role permitted
Barriers and problems (e.g. interdisciplinarity)
How much control/influence do managers (you) have – or subject to other factors?
ID Good practice

Case study interview schedules – Personal perspective

Introduction

Ensure interviewee knows about project (ensure they have leaflet –**in advance**) – key objectives of the interview.

Reassurance on complete confidentiality and anonymity (including to colleagues in own dept).

Indicate that interview record will be returned to interviewee for comment on fairness, accuracy and any omissions and for opportunity to add further comments.

Ensure that we have1 hour clear and uninterrupted to complete interview (for HoDs need 1.5 hours) and **reconfirm** that interview can be tape recorded – begin recording.

The person

Name; Unit; Grade; Gender; Ethnicity; Age-group; Nationality; How would they describe themselves (e.g. social scientist etc)

Career history and previous career development

NB we are less interested in an actual description here and more what these aspects fit into the issues under scrutiny

Qualifications (probe about importance of these to career so far)
Experience – non-HE   Other HE This HEI
How have roles evolved/changed (a coherent career plan or pattern)
Experience of promotion in the past (career in non-academic roles)
What attracted you to academic career (and influenced your choice)?
What attracted you to this subject/path(and influenced your choice)?
Sense of orientation to work – professional? vocational? (why do they work and what do they look for from work)?

Present

NB Again the focus is how they view and interpret their own experience

Describe role (briefly)
Contractual basis (permanent, fixed-term, rolling etc/ part or full time)
What attracted you to this HEI and/or unit (probe on location, reputation, prospects, aspirations)
What attracted you to this post (as distinct from unit/HEI)?
Were there alternatives (other posts elsewhere etc)?
Why do you leave last post?
How were you recruited (probe on process – response to external advert/interview etc but also on approached by friend or at conference, even head hunted)?
(probe on competitiveness of process, sense of EO etc)
Do you know how this post arose (was it designed for you)?

Issues

Do you enjoy the job? (probe on content, variety, autonomy, status, level of responsibility)
Meeting your expectations/aspirations
Good relationships (staff, managers and students - culture)
Level of support (quality of infrastructure)
Workload levels/ stress
Work/home balance - flexibility
Do you think your contribution is recognised?
Teaching – where does it fit (importance to you etc. *probe* on this)?
Are you well rewarded/ desire more reward?
Terms and conditions OK
Do you feel secure/ desire more job security?
Do you feel included – e.g. part of the decision making process – made to feel welcome when you started?
Facilities OK?
Any other good features of working here/ changes that have improved things?
Do they enhance your commitment to staying?
What about bad features/ changes for the worse?

Career progress

Are there promotion/career opportunities here for you (do you fit into the career structure)?
Is the process (interviewee describe) fair and accessible?
What are the criteria for progressing here (e.g. star research)?
Is it possible to progress on the basis of good teaching?
Do you seek progress/promotion?
How would you assess your progress?
Have you ever felt discriminated against (systematic or individual basis)?
Who should take responsibility for your professional career (you?)?
Are you encouraged to develop (by whom)?
Is there an appraisal process that is helpful to you?
Is mentoring available (and helpful)?
Are there staff development opportunities and are you interested in making use of them? (broaden to ILT membership etc)
What is your long term career goal?
What are the barriers to achieving that (probe about networking, reputation)?
Does your future lie here?
If not, where do you want to work and in what type of role?
What are the key features that attract you to stay here or move elsewhere?
Have you actually started searching for other posts/roles – probe?
Are there any constraints to seeking/accepting an alternative post (probe on mobility, employability, maintaining dual careers in couples)?

Appendix 2: Background to the study

Background to the study

During the 1970's and 1980's there were few concerns about the ability of HEIs to recruit and retain academic staff. Indeed this was a period of very low turnover with little movement in overall numbers of staff (UGC, 1983). There appeared to be no need for human resource management for a profession with considerable autonomy in an era of financial certainty and security (Scott, 1984). Cuts in central government funding from 1981 led to a slight contraction over the next few years. Attempts to reduce the size of the academic workforce were made more difficult by low turnover. The number of staff employed as contract research staff was rapidly growing at that time (and subsequently since) and such staff were finding it increasingly difficult to find lecturing posts as the supply of these posts was outmatched by demand (Bryson, 1999).

One the more severe consequences of the contraction was that the opportunity for promotion and career advancement available in an expanding university system (Williams, 1974) was now curtailed. Over (1984) suggested that in order to overcome this it might to necessary to introduce 'anti-retention' policies such as restrictions on tenure in order to persuade senior staff to leave. In the event academic tenure was abolished in the 1988 Education Act.

HE was subject to profound change from this period onwards with the ending of the binary divide in 1992; the move from an elite to a mass system of HE; and a growing focus on standards and accountability. Thus contraction was reversed but it is notable that the model of expansion followed a very different pattern from the post-Robbins growth period.

Recruitment, retention and promotion have all come to the fore as problematic issues in the 1990's. This occurred against a background of an alleged deterioration in the attraction of the academic profession as a career or even a profession (Halsey, 1992). Academic salaries and status were perceived to have declined sharply in relative terms (Keep, Storey and Sisson, 1996). There was recognition that the age profile of academics in many disciplines was highly skewed to those close to retirement (Keep, Storey and Sisson, 1996) and the supply of able young staff who were willing to become academic staff was dwindling (Keep and Mayhew, 1995).

1. *Major issues for the employment of academic staff*

Higher education is characterised by sharp distinctions between subject disciplines, as a collection of 'small worlds, different worlds' (Clark, 1987). Thus academics tend to identify far more closely with their discipline than the organisation in which they work. This has created considerable diversity in the norms, practices, cultures and expectations of staff in both their daily work and careers. Thus many staff in the scientific disciplines serve an apprenticeship of PhD and several years in contract research before undertaking a lecturing role which will involve lab based teaching, and research in large teams. Conversely the educationalist or applied

social scientist may have considerable practitioner experience and employ different teaching approaches and research on their own. However, there is also diversity within disciplines and this is sharpened considerably by differences between the HEIs themselves. The ending of the binary divide has not yet had much effect on reducing the differences between HEIs in terms of mission, approach and culture. This is demonstrated by the tension between teaching and research.

Teaching and research

There has been a debate for many years about the nexus between teaching and research in HE. One view is that there is symbiotic relationship – good researchers make good teachers. Indeed many would argue that HE teaching is absolutely dependent on having a base of strong and active research in order to take students to the leading edge (Jenkins *at al*, 1998). Note the absence of an argument that good teachers make good researchers. There is also ambiguity about what constitutes research, is this the RAE variety or more general scholarship? Others dispute the integrationist view, suggesting that research and teaching compete for academic time or are fundamentally different activities requiring different skills (Barnett, 1992).

Evidence to support these views is rather contradictory and the debate remains unresolved. Nonetheless the importance of the point that many lecturers derive enormous intrinsic satisfaction from engaging in active research cannot be underestimated (Bryson and Barnes, 2000a). Thus there has been great opposition to the proposition of recreating a binary divide. Elton (1986) has suggested that the best way to mitigate this tension is give equal value to teaching, scholarship and research and a much greater differentiation in the role between different academics. However, this creates a problem as objective measurement of good teaching is much more problematic than assessing research quality (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999). The latter is more amenable to evaluation by output and peer review whereas student evaluation is only a partial guide to teaching quality.

Quality assessment of teaching and subject review has caused considerable controversy since its introduction. It is moot whether this has the effect of enhancing the quality of teaching at the workface level. Certainly there are no incentives as in the RAE for doing so. Currently revised proposals are under consultation which would greatly reduce the tightness of external scrutiny at subject level and move the emphasis to an approach of institutional and internal audit.

There is a popular conception that academic staff are all lecturers or professors who all teach *and* research. However, the IRHEPC survey (1999) showed this to be misconceived. Of the 134,000 who had a teaching and/or research element in their contractual designation, 21% were employed on research grades and a further 20% were employed on hourly-paid teaching only contracts. This masks further complexity. Bryson and Barnes (2000a) found that more than half of administrative, librarian and information systems staff carried out direct teaching roles. Around half of the staff on research grades also taught. Despite this blurring of role demarcations, there was a contrasting trend, with a 'hard divide' developing between teaching only, teaching and research, and research only staff which was not readily identifiable by their contract designation. Many lecturers undertake teaching or research but not both roles. In addition to the large hourly-paid group there is a growing body of staff who are teaching only and have titles such as tutorial assistant or teaching fellow.

Contracts

The use of fixed-term contracts is very widespread among academic staff in the UK. Over 50% of staff in teaching and/or research roles are employed in this way (Bryson and Barnes, 2000b). Recent HESA statistics (1997-98) shows that 82% of academic new entrants were

appointed on fixed-term contracts with evidence that some HEIs had a policy of employing all new entrants on such contracts (Bryson, 2000).

> Retention might be perceived as less important for contracts where the employer appears to have identified a finite period for the continued need for the employee. However, for many staff, there is ongoing demand for their services and they are employed on a series of fixed-term contracts. Retention does become an issue when staff leave contracts early or become so disillusioned that they no longer wish to pursue an academic career (Bryson, 1999). Bryson (2001) found that 15% of contract research staff left contracts early to secure another post. Thus due to these and other reasons connected with the fixed-term contract employment system, the turnover of fixed-term staff (about 40%, Bryson, 2001) is at least four times greater than staff on permanent contracts.

Low turnover has been identified as a problem among older, more senior staff (IRHEPC, 1998) but high turnover has very significant economic and human resource costs (Staw, 1980). In addition to these issues, the most numerous group on fixed-term contracts are the contract research staff. For most academic disciplines, the labour market for lecturing posts draws almost exclusively on this group who are supposedly undergoing postdoctoral training.

Career development and redundancy

A group of staff who find it particularly difficult to progress their careers are hourly-paid teaching staff with the multiple disadvantage of being on temporary contracts, part-time and not part of any grading system or career structure. Although many such staff consist of postgraduate students and CRS, there would appear to be a considerable number of others who are trying to get a foothold into a more secure HE teaching career (Husbands and Davis, 2000).

There are some legislative developments which should have some considerable impact on human resource issues. The 1988 Education Act has already been referred to, which abolished tenure for new staff and those who had a change in contract. A recent survey indicated that 30% of teaching and research staff claimed to have tenure (Bryson and Barnes, 2000b). Since 1988 a very small number of academic staff on permanent contracts have been made compulsorily redundant. Staff in the pre-1992 universities are covered by statutes which detail a tight procedure in the event of redundancy to ensure academic freedom. This has led to complaints from senior management that such mechanisms inhibit their flexibility (Dearing, 1997).

Staff on fixed-term contracts have no such protection. They are entitled to redundancy consultation although most HEIs still require them to waive their rights to redundancy pay (Bryson, 1999). The UK is obliged to implement the EU Fixed-term Directive by July, 2002 at the latest, and consultations are currently taking place. This is likely to outlaw or severely limit the use of serial fixed-term contracts, offer parity of conditions with permanent staff and remove the redundancy waiver. Given current patterns of use in HE, this legislation should make fixed-term contracts much less attractive to employers.

Already on the statute book are the Part-time Regulations, introduced in 2000. This offers parity to part-time staff. In theory this should offer many hourly-paid staff the opportunity to transfer on to pro-rata contracts with a great improvement in pay, pensions and conditions of employment. Anecdotal evidence gathered by the authors would indicate there is little evidence of this happening yet. Indeed the converse is true with some hourly-paid staff failing to have their contracts renewed.

Equity

The other most relevant legislation is in the area of equal opportunities. Although much of the law is decades old, recent case law on 'equal pay for work of equal value' has thrown doubt on the validity of grading and pay levels between different groups of HE staff. For such pay differences between jobs to be legal they must be justifiable through the equivalent of a system of analytical job evaluation. Interconnected to the issue of insecure contracts are equal opportunities issues. HEIs have been criticised for having a poor record on appointing and promoting women (IRHEPC, 1998; Court, 1999) and ethnic minorities (Carter *et al*, 1999). Discrimination is widespread (Goode, 2000) despite the importance of a global labour market in HE. As a much higher proportion of women and minorities are employed on fixed-term contracts there would appear to some evidence that they are 'ghettoised' and find it difficult to progress onto permanent posts (Bryson, 1997). The recent Race Relation's Amendment Act 2000 strengthens and extends the scope of the 1976 Race Relations Act. All HEIs must now have a general duty to eliminate racial discrimination and will, for example, be required specifically to monitor the recruitment and progress of ethnic minority staff.

2. *Studies on recruitment, retention and promotion*

The first large-scale project to examine recruitment and retention was undertaken by IMS on behalf of the CVCP and the AUT (Pearson *et al*, 1990). They noted that there had been no increase in numbers of permanent staff but a 30% increase in contract researchers over the previous five years. Their survey of departments showed that the only area where there was a major recruitment difficulty was engineering and technology. The response to recruitment difficulties was to readvertise and, to a lesser extent, to raise the salary level.

Staffing and human resource issues were not dealt with in-depth by the Dearing Report (1997). However, as part of the evidence a staff survey was conducted which gave some indication of potential problems. As a consequence and as part of its remit to examine pay and conditions, the Bett Committee commissioned a thorough study of recruitment and retention (IRHEPC, 1998). A follow up survey on a similar basis was also conducted the following year by the Office of Manpower Economics (CVCP, 2000). At the same time a study involving a more in depth analysis of a sample of HEIs was carried out by Industrial Relations Services (CVCP, 2000).

A survey on appointment and promotion was conducted by the AUT (Court, 1999) of a sample of its membership (mainly teaching and research staff in pre-1992 universities). In addition there have also been studies which have focussed on particular disciplines. The EPSRC (1999) examined IT and Computer Science. Staffing difficulties within clinical medicine have been identified since 1995 (HMSO, 1995) which led to the undertaking of the Richards Report (AMS, 2000).

This evidence may be summarised as follows.

Recruitment

The Bett survey concluded that recruitment problems were not widespread but were confined to certain sub-groups and localities (IRHEPC, 1999: E3).

> *Academics in business subjects, information technology, electronic engineering, and some rarer specialisms; in recruitment of academics with professional experience (e.g. in law, health studies and teaching).*

Recruitment problems were sharpest in the pre-1992 universities; the South-East (excluding London) and the West Midlands. In terms of the issues giving rise to problems the most commonly cited were:

- Less competitive salaries
- Area problems (e.g. rural, expensive, few job opportunities for partner)
- Job insecurity from fixed-term contracts
- Poor promotion possibilities.

The OME survey (CVCP, 2000) had similar findings in terms of the disciplines experiencing difficulties and found that difficulties had increased since the previous year. Furthermore there were particular difficulties in recruiting senior academic staff and researchers in a wider range of disciplines. Some HEIs reported that there were insufficient qualified candidates applying for posts.

The IRS study (CVCP, 2000) also supported these findings and analysed the labour market situation:

- Supply factors – a shortage of staff with appropriate skills and qualifications in certain specialisms and a shortage of candidates in areas where external (to HE) experience was important
- Demand factors – HEIs now sought candidates with a combination of skills; new posts required a mix of academic and professional expertise, and senior posts required academic *and* management skills.

Thus suitable applicants were hard to attract given very poor starting salaries at junior and senior levels and slow pay progression. The study compared salaries with comparators in the private sector (engineering and computing) and teaching and professions allied to medicine and concluded that experienced staff in these areas were very unlikely to move into academia.

The EPSRC (1999) study on IT and computing posts found that there was a major problem in attracting strong British candidates to PhDs, research posts and permanent posts. Retention of permanent staff was not so much of an issue with most movements being to other HEI posts but PhD students were not moving on to academic careers and researchers were discouraged by lack of career opportunities and job insecurity. In short 'there was an insufficient flow of high calibre people'.

> The Richards Report found that that there was an inability to attract suitably experienced candidates to senior academic vacancies in clinical medicine, particularly chairs. Another study found that the problems had spread to all levels of clinical posts and that the root causes were:

1. The lack of a career structure.
2. Insufficient flexibility in combining clinical and research training.
3. Prolonged insecurity due to short term contracts in the training phase (AMS, 2000).

The BMA reported recently that one quarter of chairs and 300 lecturer post vacancies remain unfilled (THES, 8/6/2001).

Despite the large number of potential candidates in the labour market for CRS jobs, recent surveys have indicated that some posts are proving difficult to fill (SBS, 2000), particularly within certain disciplines (IRHEPC 1998). A recent report into academic career choices after postgraduate training identified many academic researchers had become:

> *Increasingly disillusioned with academic research and that their move to industry had provided them with a career structure, greater job security and a substantially larger salary.*
>
> (Wellcome Trust 2000).

Thus the inability to retain stronger researchers creates recruitment difficulties to attract the high quality applicants to other academic posts.

Retention

The Dearing staff survey indicated that over a quarter of staff stated that they were unlikely to remain in the academic profession until retirement. Younger staff expressed this intention much more frequently. The most common reasons cited were job insecurity (by those on fixed-term contracts), too much stress (by lecturers, particularly those in post-1992 universities) and too much administration (professors). The second most common reason for all groups was poor pay. Older staff complained of deprofessionalisation, poor morale and lack of resources.

The Bett study found retention problems in the same disciplines as there were recruitment difficulties. In addition there were problems in retention of researchers and of academics on fixed-term contracts more generally.

The OME survey had similar findings but also found problems in the psychology and nursing disciplines. More ominous was the finding that retention problems were increasing with younger staff. The respondents cited the following issues as giving rise to problems:

- Pay related – uncompetitive salaries, low London allowance, rigidities of the national pay scale, inferior benefits
- Area problems (such as cost of living in London)
- Insecure contracts
- RAE related pressures
- Increasing academic workload
- Inter-HEI competition.

The IRS survey (CVCP, 2000) found a diverse picture with some departments having too low a turnover. However, they found similar areas having problems in retaining staff to the OME survey. They identified two main causes; the RAE gave rise to head hunting and poaching; and promotion barriers.

In studies of job satisfaction of academics pay has been given prominence as a major cause of dissatisfaction (Oshagbemi, 1996). This contrasts with the WiHE findings of Bryson and Barnes (2000a) where pay was found to be fairly neutral in terms of satisfaction although many academics felt undervalued in terms of their contribution being recognised. Arguably those staff who valued pay highly would not have entered the profession or would have left when relative pay declined many years before. In the WiHE survey respondents gave much more importance to issues such as workload, autonomy and security than pay.

Respondents to the EPSRC (1998) survey cited the lack of security inherent in short-term academic contracts and the need for continual application for funding, alongside issues of salary and career prospects as primary reasons for leaving academic research posts. Bryson (2001) found that the lack of available posts for experienced staff to apply for at the end of fixed-term contracts was a serious practical barrier to retention.

Promotion and career advancement

The primary criterion for progression that has been identified by studies is research expertise (Dearing, 1997; IRHEPC, 1998; Court, 1999). Teaching appears to come a poor third behind

administration. In the pre-1992 universities, contribution to the RAE seems to be given priority.

The Dearing Report noted that pre-1992 universities had responded to modest pay awards for staff by increasing the numbers of promoted posts, frequently to levels of between 50-60% at senior lecturer grade or above whereas only 25% of staff in post-1992 universities were promoted to these grades. The Report suggested that the link between promoted posts and monitoring and reward for promotion was insufficient in most HEIs.

The AUT study showed that research criteria were predominant in selection decisions and normal appointment procedures had been circumvented in the appointment of 'RAE stars'. There was a lack of staff confidence in promotion systems, teaching was the least influential factor and research the most important (particularly RAE research) and that was a lack of equal opportunities (Court, 1999).

The IRS survey (CVCP, 2000) discussed the issue of 'bunching' at the top of the scales below the senior grades of principal lecturer (post 92 HEIs) and senior lecturer (pre-1992 universities). They concluded that this created dissatisfaction because of the inability to improve pay for the individual.

Bryson and Barnes (2000a) found that although 41% of teaching and research staff were in senior posts, only just over half of them had been promoted to these posts with the rest being direct entrants. Their survey noted that only half as many women as men were in senior posts and men on average required less service to get promoted 66% of women had to complete ten or more years service to get promoted whereas 52% of men had achieved promotion before this. In the same survey, 35% of staff were dissatisfied about their career progress. However, promotion was not perceived to be a vehicle to gain greater pay but as a recognition of contribution, status and reputation. The main barriers to progress were given as lack of promotion opportunities, insecure contracts, lack of personal mobility, unfair promotion procedures and discrimination. Most respondents cited a lack of adequate infrastructure in their HEI to allow them to pursue a career.

3. HEI policies and procedures

All HEIs have procedures in place for these matters although promotion criteria/procedures for research grades are underdeveloped (Bryson, 1999) and procedures for hourly-paid teaching staff virtually absent (Husbands and Davis, 2000).

New entrants gain posts on the basis of qualifications and experience. In pre-1992 universities, having a PhD is almost universally essential to get a lectureship in any discipline and a research post in the sciences. Bisset *et al* (2001) found that HEIs used a much narrower range of selection tools than other organisations with the main criterion being the possession of publications in suitable journals. In post-1992 universities, suitable professional experience may substitute for a research record but having a higher degree is important. Teaching qualifications appear to be fairly irrelevant.

> Teaching and research staff in pre-1992 universities are subject to a formal system of developmental probation. Successful completion is determined by assessment by senior colleagues and not linked to external quality measures. There is some evidence that staff who are not deemed to be successful researchers are failing probation. The Dearing recommendation, that attaining membership status with the Institute for Learning and Teaching should be a prerequisite of professional academic status, has no evidence to support that this is occurring in practice or that

membership of the ILT is formally recognised as an attribute for career progress.

Monitoring of policies in terms of effectiveness is generally lacking as are many aspects of sophisticated human resource management in HEIs (Keep, Storey and Sisson, 1996). The response to the inability to recruit in 1990 (Pearson *et al*) was to readvertise or to offer a higher starting salary. Little seems to have changed according to more recent surveys (CVCP, 2000). Recruiting on a higher salary is not without problems as the employee will be fairly rapidly pressing for promotion and there are problems of equity with other colleagues (HMSO, 1997).

In the IRS study (CVCP, 2000) heads of department sought more flexibility to offer market supplements and relax the grading restriction and adherence to the national scales. Thus in some HEIs individuals had been appointed on individual contracts above the scales and attracting performance related pay. There are clear equal opportunities difficulties which may arise in these circumstances in a sector which has a poor reputation in this area (Goode, 2000). Another strategy was to offer a 'whole package' to senior staff which included access to good research facilities and relief from administrative and teaching 'burdens'.

The IRS study identified some other approaches to counter problems (CVCP, 2000). They cited the policy of 'growing their own' where the most able CRS, PhDs and even undergraduates were nurtured and encouraged to stay. Recruitment measures also took the form of advertising in an increasing range of media and 'head-hunting' either through informal networks or the use of specialists. Retention measures included offering enhanced pay by: responsibility allowances and discretionary pay; staff development; and opportunities to undertake consultancy.

Promotion procedures have also been subject to criticism rather than commended for effectiveness (Court, 1999). This criticism has frequently been on equal opportunities grounds (Heward and Taylor, 1993; Carter *et al*, 1999).

> There are some examples of particular positive local initiatives. For example the universities of Warwick and Leeds (among a small number of others) created a substantial number of research fellowships in 1995 on the basis of a five year initial contract leading to a permanent teaching and research appointment. They received applications from a very wide and strong field of candidates (HMSO, 1995).

Overall it is difficult to identify broad strategies by HEIs to address staff concerns about the deterioration in the academic profession as an attractive and sustainable career. Bryson and Barnes (2000a) found that the most dissatisfied of all staff groups were lecturing staff who had failed to gain the promotions they thought were their due and now felt their careers were stagnant; most of these staff were in their fifties. There would also appear to be a gap between procedures and policies and practice on the ground. For those on fixed-term contracts as a whole, implementation of effective policies, such as they exist, seems to have been particularly weak (Bryson and Barnes, 2000b).

Thus it is often left up to the individual to manage their own career. There is a tradition in the academic profession as in other professions that career development is a matter for the individual and not the employer. Voluntary changes between roles such as researcher, teacher and administrator seem to be solely on the initiative of the individual although for fixed-term staff these may be pragmatic choices in order to gain a more secure contract (Bryson and Tulle-Winton, 1994). Given the sharpness of focus of selection criteria on the possession of appropriate publications in the field and 'fitness' for the RAE such role changes are difficult.

Some staff are subject to involuntary changes of role. There is evidence this is a consequence of their being deemed research inactive and therefore moved to teaching only or administrative roles. Many of these staff were very unhappy about this (Bryson and Barnes, 2000a). Such changes may also occur when staff are redeployed if their post becomes redundant.

4. *Overview*

All the evidence points to increasing problems in the areas of recruitment, retention and promotion of academic staff. The neglect of the role of teaching despite its core importance in the quality of higher education has created distortions which will be difficult to remedy. It may be inadequate to assume that by supporting strong researchers, and to a lesser extent those who wish to take management roles, that teaching quality will also be enhanced. Policy initiatives have had a mixed effect. Those policies designed to support teaching have been overshadowed and undermined by policies which have the opposite effect. Other trends in HE, such as the comparative erosion of salaries and conditions, the rise of insecure employment and the lack of penetration of equality of opportunity have made the occupation rather less attractive. In some areas where there are few alternative career opportunities this has had less of a direct impact, but can hardly encourage the motivation and productivity of staff. A key feature of HE is diversity and there is some danger that offering general prescriptions may benefit some areas but create further problems in others. Given this context the study reported here aimed to uncover and scrutinise what is happening on the ground at a level that reflects this diversity.

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Appendix 3: Views of stakeholders

Views of stakeholders

Part of our research consisted of a series of interviews with key stakeholders in the sector. A full list of organisations consulted in this part of the research is listed at the end of this appendix.

A list of stakeholders to be consulted and an interview schedule was drawn up in consultation with HEFCE. Stakeholder organisations were approached via their CEO or equivalent, invited to take part in the research, and to nominate a suitable representative to participate in the interviews. Thus what is reported here are the *perceptions* of representatives of key stakeholder organisations.

A mixture of personal and telephone interviews was used. The interviews were semi-structured. In interviews with stakeholders with a direct interest in teaching quality, a fixed set of questions were covered in all cases, with a varying amount of follow-up questions being asked according to the interviewee's expertise. In the case of organisations with a broadly Equal Opportunities perspective from outside of the sector (CRE, DRC, EOC) interviewees were asked to provide an overview of the sector and then asked more specific questions. Interviewees were asked to speak on behalf of their organisations and we refer to organisations rather than individual interviewees here. All interviews were taped and all participants were sent an annotated version of the interview for verification purposes. They were also invited to add anything further at this point, which some did.

Here we report responses under the headings of the main questions which were asked. However, we wish to emphasise that many of the responses should be seen as overlapping, rather than discrete.

1. *What are the main issues that affect the recruitment of academic staff?*

    The overwhelming response here concerned *pay levels* compared to other professions. We were repeatedly told that academic salaries are currently not competitive. It was also often said that there are particular problems around recruitment in those subject areas where potential recruits at graduate or postgraduate level have an obvious competing sector where they can earn more without having to go through the process of getting a PhD which is now seen as a prerequisite for a lecturing post. Examples of such subjects included Law, Education, and Accountancy. All this is of little surprise as the decline in academic salaries and their comparative worth has been covered in a number of places and have been held to affect recruitment and retention (IRHEPC 1999, CVCP 2000, AUT 2001). There were varying opinions about how this should be remedied, with some recommending that universities be allowed greater flexibility in what they can pay staff, although it was also recognised that there was currently greater flexibility in this area than was often realised. As the Bett Report noted:

    As autonomous employers, HE institutions chose whether or not to adopt the nationally-negotiated arrangements for pay and conditions.

    (IRHEPC 1999: para.41)

At the same time as pay levels had stagnated (while those in other sectors had boomed), it was said that *the conditions of academic life are becoming poorer.* This primarily concerned various types of accountability, most notably the RAE and, to a lesser extent, QAA reviews. It also included the administrative burdens which have been associated with widening participation and increased student numbers, a process taking place at the same time as students were becoming consumers and moving towards demanding consumer rights. Overall, academics face a wide - and widening - range of responsibilities. It was noted that workloads were tolerable as long as other rewards kept pace, but this had not been the case. This is important as the Bett Report noted that:

If pay is significantly below market rates, the intangible attractions of working in higher education will need to be correspondingly greater, or institutions will be unable to fill vacant posts or have to appoint generally poorer quality candidates than they would wish.

(IRHEPC   1999:
para.166)

Indeed previous research has shown that increased workload has helped to lead to a situation where few academics now regard an academic career as an attractive option (Kinman 1998: 21). The AUT told us that there was also evidence that collegiality was breaking down (see also ibid: 20), while HESDA noted that the academic profession had been downgraded by both the public and the Government.

There was also some concern about the *supply of quality applicants.* Once again this was generally felt to be subject-specific with a feeling that the supply of quality applicants might be falling off in some disciplines. We note here that problems of recruiting postgraduates into particular subjects have also been covered elsewhere (IRHEPC 1999: paras.62, 167 and 170; Strategic Market Associates 1999). Potentially this could have an impact on teaching quality, and we were told that this was already happening. One way of coping with this in some disciplines was said to be *via* the recruitment of more international staff, although this was seen as offering only a short-term solution. More information about this may be gleaned following the completion of some research by HEFCE into whether some subjects are facing a worldwide shortage of quality applicants. However, the QAA pointed out that in terms of numbers of applicants, there did not seem to be an overall recruitment problem.

A number of organisations commented on a range of *outstanding Equal Opportunities issues.* We deal with this issue separately below, but would also like to comment here. The EOC said that Bett had spoken of "clear and substantial" evidence of unequal pay and noted that this issue and that of equal value had still to be fully addressed. They also commented that it was important to ensure that recruitment was based on clear job descriptions and person specifications. Recruitment practices should not be indirectly discriminatory. NATFHE claimed that there is still widespread indirect discrimination in the sector and that this was not being treated with any urgency. A previous report by AUT has said that the sector is 'rife with discrimination'. (AUT 1999: 1). The CRE said that performance indicators on racial equality were needed. This was part of a broader call for statistics which could indicate the health of the sector, as current HESA statistics

were not able to do this.

Casualisation of the workforce was cited as a major issue by the trades unions, especially in a climate where job stability was being seen as increasingly important. The use of Fixed-term Contracts (FTCs), which provide only insecure employment and a tenuous career pattern, was condemned. The Bett Report had noted that:

Higher education offers a margin of fixed-term and casual employment which is far from secure.

(IRHEPC 1999: para.180)

NATFHE posed the question of whether the use of FTCs was a financial necessity or part of a deliberate HR strategy. UUK argued that pay was not the main motivator for academics; pursuing one's area of interest might be. This is obviously easier on a more secure contract.

Along with SCOP, NATFHE raised the key issue of *part-time staff*, which the Bett Report said were 33% of the total (IRHEPC 1999: para.212), although other estimates have put this higher. With such figures in mind, NATFHE emphasised that such staff could no longer be regarded as peripheral. Bett also noted that 38% of academic staff in post-1992 institutions were paid by the hour (ibid: para.213). A number of interviewees put forward the view that any initiatives to improve conditions for full-time staff should apply equally to part-time staff.

We would also note that, in line with Bett, interviewees often noted *that the sector is a complex one* where issues varied between and within both subjects and institutions. Subtleties within the system are important and, in this respect, simplistic solutions should be avoided.

2. *What are the main issues that affect academic staff retention?*

The main issue cited here concerned *increasing pressure and bureaucracy/administration combined with deteriorating working conditions.* The RAE and QAA reviews were again cited as a particular concern here. However, it should be seen as part of broader pattern of being expected to perform at a high level across a range of responsibilities. Previous research has noted that:

There is powerful evidence that widespread changes in policy and practice have led to a significant increase in workload and job pressures for many British academic and academic-related staff.

(Kinman 1998: 5)

Here NATFHE noted that while academics were by no means unique in experiencing stress, many were close to the edge in terms of being able to cope with increased demands. A previous survey has reported high levels of stress and discomfort amongst academics and shown that over 40% of them report working over 48 hours (ibid: 2).

The issue of retention was also one which was seen as varying across subjects and HEIs, once again dependent on the amount of external competition within subjects.

A *possible need for evaluation of roles* and rewarding various areas of achievement (not simply research) was cited, although Bett noted the difficulties that this poses (IRHEPC 1999: para.64). This is partly because of the diverse range of pay scales which operate across the sector, although this issue has begun to be addressed in the latest pay deal. SCOP argued that many new staff were interested in teaching in HE and saw this as the way to advance their career. In order to retain these people, HEIs would have to ensure that this was possible. It was also pointed out that sometimes promotions blockages can affect retention, especially as salaries are comparatively low.

There were also comments about *staff needing to be valued*. HESDA stated simply that people need to feel valued and that there are appropriate structures in place to reward good performance. For HEFCE the issue was related to the use of FTCs which could act as a barrier to retention. Conversely, permanent contracts could lead people to believe that they were valued and had a career. HEFCE also argued that the quality of the academic environment and infrastructure and the quality of academic colleagues were also key factors in retention. The BBSRC lamented a lack of clear career paths especially for post-doctoral staff coming to the end of a first or second contract, while NATFHE argued that higher pay and a permanent contract for all new staff across all disciplines was the solution to problems of retention

We would also note here that Bett suggested that there was no overall problem with regard to recruitment and retention (IRHEPC 1999: para.166) and that problems tended to be subject-specific (ibid: para.172). It also noted that the use of FTCs had led to recruitment and retention problems.

3. *What are the main issues that affect the promotion of academic staff*

The main initial response to this question was a perception that *research capability is the main route for academics to get promoted*. This was even more the case if that capability led to the acquisition of external funding. This traditional route to promotion was held to dominate across the sector (and was again said to heavily skewed by the influence of the RAE). A number of respondents lamented this and said that there should be a greater diversity of routes into promotion which allowed individual performance to be judged.

In particular it was said that more emphasis should be placed on teaching in respect of promotion, especially in an era of lifelong learning and the rise of the student as consumer. There was a limited amount of evidence that in some cases teaching capability had led to promotion. The other route for promotion was held to be *via* successful links with the HEI's local community and in particular its business community. Again there was limited evidence that such links could lead to promotion, including personal chairs. UCEA believed that promotions issues were more urgent in the new sector which had expanded quickly with bouts of promotion, after which opportunities tended to be more limited. By contrast opportunities for promotion appeared to be more evenly spread in the older institutions.

The next issue to be raised around promotion was the *procedures* involved. There was a general consensus that promotions procedures should be transparent and

open and that they should conform to good employment practice. The EOC also noted that they should not be indirectly discriminatory. However, such good practices were not held to be widespread. Indeed, one respondent described promotions processes as "shrouded in secrecy". There were also calls for close monitoring of promotions procedures and, subsequently, action if problems were found. The CRE cited judicious use of target setting as one way forward.

This leads into the third factor: *continuing discrimination against women and ethnic minorities*. One respondent said that this was "widespread", while another spoke of a "glass ceiling for women". Indeed, as we were writing this report, the AUT published new data showing an increasing pay gap between men and women across the sector (AUT, press release 17 July 2001). Prior to this Bett had noted that: 'Within all staff groups proportionately fewer women than men are in the higher grades' (IRHEPC 1999: para.50). A report on racial equality had also noted that 'ethnic minorities… (are) more likely to be on fixed-term posts and less likely to be professors, regardless of length of service' (Carter *et al* 1999: 65). The link to procedures across these issues is that routine monitoring which might highlight problems is often not carried out.

Finally, HESDA and UUK called for *more flexibility within payments schemes and career structures*. HESDA pointed out that if discretionary salaries were seen as incentives at professorial level (and above), then there was no logical reason why this should not apply to all grades.

We would also add that the importance of promotions as an issue should not be underestimated. Previous research has suggested that 52% of academics feel that they are unlikely to get promotion (Kinman 1998: 10) and that lack of promotion prospects is also a cause of stress amongst academics (ibid: 3).

4. *How do HEIs encourage effective recruitment of academic staff?*

Once again the main response concerned *having the correct policies and procedures,* ensuring that these were monitored and action taken if problems were found. HESDA noted that what was needed was an institutional strategy for good practice, while HEFCE called for proper data collection systems and target-setting.

Respondents drew particular attention to *the need to train all those involved in recruitment, especially with regard to Equal Opportunities and racial awareness*. This might only be possible if suitable training materials were developed and minimum standards laid down. HEFCE said that HEIs should follow CUCO guidelines and get themselves assessed by the new Equality Challenge Unit. SCOP and the CRE noted that the composition of university governing bodies was also an issue, especially as leadership from the top was essential to combat problem areas. In this respect, HEFCE noted there could be particular problems at more senior levels where the use of headhunters had the potential to lead to accusations that universities were recruiting in their own image.

When asked about *advertising policy*, interviewees said that this should be as wide as possible. Several cited the need to go beyond the *THES* and the Tuesday *Guardian* in order to recruit. This might include advertising in the specialist press, including newspapers aimed at ethnic minorities and other marginalised groups.

The DRC cited *Disability Now* as somewhere it advertised, in addition to the Wednesday *Guardian* which is widely read in the voluntary sector which incorporates large numbers of disabled people. Advertisements should also avoid sending out messages which are indirectly off-putting to some candidates by giving out the message that *"you are not one of us"*. For the CRE, countering this might include specifically welcoming applicants from within particular groups.

The third factor cited here was that *the job and person specification should be fair.* By this, interviewees meant that the person specification should relate to the job in question, rather than to pre-existing models of being "one of us". From a research council's perspective the ESRC said that while it was not its job to interfere in HEIs' employment practices, it could have a role in promoting examples of successful women and ethnic minorities.

NATFHE argued that the real recruitment problem *was short term contracts and low starting salaries* and the AUT said that academic jobs had to be made attractive to potential applicants and the jobs themselves had to ensure a fair balance between the expectations of individuals and the demands of the HEIs. Once again, we would note that the way in which this is skewed by subject and institution.

5. *How do HEIs encourage effective retention of academic staff?*

A range of responses were received here.

The most popular response concerned *better training for management*, so that academics became "managed" in a positive way. Again this was a key finding of Bett which commented on 'the low priority which seems to be given to people-management issues' (IRHEPC 1999: para.57). For our interviewees, better management included setting academics the right objectives, making sure that they know what is required of them and how they can achieve this, and ensuring that appraisal is meaningful. The QAA cited a need to learn from other (unspecified) sectors about training for management.

This was related to a second factor, that of *promoting staff development and training* more generally. For HESDA this would involve an annual review of academics' developmental needs, which might act as part of the promotions process. SCOP argued that proper staff development would also help academics in coping with the various demands placed upon them (eg via time management courses), although NATFHE suggested that reducing workload and bureaucracy would also aid retention. Once again we would note that Bett had also pointed to 'the relatively low priority apparently given to staff training and development in many institutions' (ibid: para.319) and its call for 'greater investment of time and resources in the training and development of *all* groups of staff' (ibid: para.320, emphasis in original).

This is also related to a more general point made about *making the academic job more attractive*. Interviewees cited several ways of doing this. It was pointed out that most academics are loyal to their subject area rather than to the particular HEI which employs them. Thus to stay within an HEI or academia more generally, academics have to believe that they can make progress within their subject area.

This means achieving the right balance between individual expectation and institutional demands. It also means providing support for academics such as supporting conference attendance and sabbaticals in order to enable academics to pursue areas of interest. Once again, NATFHE pressed us to note the particular importance of these issues to part-time staff.

For SCOP, CRE and ILTHE, retention was linked to promotions, in that if people felt that promotions procedures were fair and recognised a number of ways for people for people to progress (rather than simply via research) then they would stay. Similarly, UUK cited the ability to increase one's salary as an important part of retention.

This was again part of a more general desire to *offer incentives to stay*. For HEFCE this included offering competitive salaries and paying the best people more, although it was also noted that issues around the attractiveness of an academic career go beyond the issue of pay to incorporate the other issues cited above. For the trades unions incentives meant offering people permanent contracts, while CRE cited the need to *listen* to what staff were saying about issues such as racial equality and then act upon it. UCEA noted that if an HEI really wanted an individual to stay, then it would use whatever means it could to ensure this.

The DRC raised the issue *of retaining academic staff who have become disabled*. It noted that one of the distinguishing characteristic features of disability when compared to gender and race issues was that individuals can *become* disabled. Indeed becoming disabled is more common than being born disabled. It is also more likely to happen to older people. For the DRC the important thing was to ensure HEIs start from the assumption that newly disabled staff will be staying, not leaving. Then it became a matter of what the HEI had to do to meet the new needs of the individual.

6. *How do HEIs encourage effective promotion of academic staff?*

Responses here centred on *the need for good practice*. This should ensure that HEIs have open and transparent policies which are clear to all staff and work in practice as well as on paper. For UUK this was best achieved by having personnel professionals present during promotions procedures. It meant having an awareness amongst senior management about what best practice is, then operating best practice, monitoring its effects and acting if necessary to remedy any failings.

A vital part of this *was giving appropriate feedback to unsuccessful candidates*. This was especially important in relation to any staff development needs which might have been recognised during an unsuccessful promotions application. For AUT it also meant having an appeals system which gave a fair chance of appeals being successful. NATFHE cited the NHS as particularly good at providing information for unsuccessful promotions candidates, including the identification of any CPD needs. UUK and HEFCE recommended that HEIs follow CUCO guidelines on promotion.

There was again a call for *more flexibility in promotions* so that it is not, *de facto* if not *de jure*, reliant on research. Such flexibility needed to be made clear to all staff and NATFHE argued that staff need to feel that they genuinely have career

choices. ILTHE cited the OU's gathering of information on what made a good teacher - which could then be used in promotion applications - as an example of good practice.

7. ***What are the relationships between maintaining and improving standards within HEIs and the progression of their academic staff?***

Opinion was divided over whether there was a direct link. A slight majority thought that if staff were treated well then RAE and QAA results would improve, with a knock-on effect on student attainment. However, this was generally based on intuition rather than hard evidence. For example, SCOP noted that if students knew what they were entitled to and that staff knew about this, then this would lead to a sense of shared endeavour and improved attainment. But AUT said that there was no evidence of a link and pointed out that student attainment appeared to be going up at a time when academic staff were increasingly getting heavier workloads, being underpaid and subject to widespread use of FTCs. For NATFHE the link was more of a negative one, in that treating staff badly led to worse QAA and RAE scores. While very supportive of part-time staff, NATFHE's own work had suggested that 'there can be serious grounds for concern over the quality of teaching and learning delivered by some part-time staff' (Chitnis and Williams, 1999: 3). Conversely it also noted that many good TQA reports include references to the fact that *all* staff, including part-timers, were included within good practice (ibid: 4). UCEA noted that many HEIs now put pressure on PhD supervisors to ensure that candidates completed in time in order to meet funding requirements.

We also asked if there was *a tendency for staff who got promoted to do less teaching*, and it was generally agreed that this was the case. However, this was seen as somewhat inevitable in that promotion might lead to a more varied range of responsibilities and a lessening of teaching load. This was especially true in the new sector where promotion often meant promotion into a different role.

Interviewees were also asked about *the use of postgraduates and other part-time staff in teaching undergraduates*, especially in the first and second years of undergraduate courses. It was generally agreed that this was widespread. However, interviewees generally felt that this had not had any negative effect on quality (although NATFHE disputes this, see ibid). SCOP and UCEA pointed to a much wider use of part-time staff in specialist HE colleges – for example Art Schools - where such people were often practising professionals. In such cases, this might lead to an *enhancement* of quality as students learned form practitioners. HEEON also pointed to a range of different cultures across the disciplines which affected how student attainment was treated.

We would also note that the fact that a class is being taught by a postgraduate does not automatically mean a decline in the standard of teaching. Many postgraduates will be at the cutting edge of their subjects and able to communicate this to their students. We were also told that the fact that an academic is an outstanding researcher does not necessarily mean that they will also be a wonderful teacher. There is no necessary link. Indeed, the QAA pointed out that the title of "lecturer" was anomalous in a situation where research was dominant.

In this respect ILTHE, perhaps not surprisingly, pointed out that HEIs and staff

could show their commitment to professional standards and developing their practice *via* CPD and ILTHE membership including taking part in ILTHE-sponsored CPD activities. There was general support for CPD, although this did not always imply support for ILTHE as it is presently structured.

8. ***What are the routes available for academic staff to develop their careers?***

The overwhelming response here was that *the traditional model of career progression is* still dominant, including within the post-1992 sector. In essence this model is one where two routes are possible: (i) become a "research star" - a particularly attractive route in the age of the academic transfer market - or (ii) become a manager. Once again, there was little evidence of concentration on teaching being an attractive career route. But there was some evidence that a successful career could be built on the back of successful links with industry. UCEA also noted that career routes were likely to vary across disciplines.

Once choices were made - generally at the mid point of an academic's career - it was suggested that the pre-92 university sector was more flexible in terms of offering the chance to return to teaching after undertaking a management role. In part this is a reflection that many junior/middle management posts in the old sector - eg Head of Department or Dean - are fixed-term and/or elected.

Again there were calls for the recognition for teaching as a way to progress a career. HESDA asked where was the equivalent to reader for teaching specialists. The QAA argued that teaching was slowly being recognised as a route for promotion but others were more sceptical about this. We were also given examples of those who had gained personal chairs and has then insisted in continuing to teach 1st year undergraduate classes, but these tended to be cited because of their rarity.

There were also calls for more movement in and out of sector. This partly related to re-thinking what it is to be an academic which featured elsewhere in research. However, it was pointed out that the increasing requirement for new academics to have a PhD (and therefore a research record) before gaining a lectureship militated against this. SCOP suggested that exploring the idea of fellowships might facilitate more movement. However, UUK and HEFCE pointed out the wide range of work which academics already do alongside their academic work such as consultancies and links with industry. Thus this was not simply a case of either/or, as many academics retained a foot in both camps. Thus again, there is a need to recognise the diversity of practice across institutions and subject areas.

For the QAA staff development is the issue. HEIs need to make sure that it is provided and that staff see the worth of it in terms of their career development.

9. ***What areas of best practice can be identified in relation to staff appointment, retention and promotion?***

This question again produce a diverse range of responses and a lack of overall consensus, seemingly reflecting a paucity of good examples in staffing practices Only one interviewee suggested HEIs which were examples of good practice, mentioning the Universities of Warwick, Leeds and Manchester. The AUT cited a paucity of good data here.

More generally there were some calls for *more training* especially for management, longstanding staff and PhD supervisors. This was allied to calls for more institutional planning, especially at this related to the assurance of quality. Here the roles of key people such as Personnel Directors was cited as being particularly important.

In part this reflects a point made by a number of interviewees about the *ownership* of policies and initiatives. UCEA noted that those HEIs which operated best practice were those who had made genuine attempts to tackle the relevant issue and would thus be aware, for example, of whether recruitment problems were institutional or departmental. It was generally felt that moves for change had to come from within HEIs and to be owned by senior management. On the other hand, the importance of *national initiatives* such as Athena, CUCO and the Equality Challenge Unit was also cited and seen as being useful.

It was again pointed out to us by SCOP and NATFHE that any training and staff development opportunities must be *made available to part-time staff* as well. Part-time staff need to be recruited properly, trained, developed, given the opportunity for promotion and to have careers.

10. How can strategies be developed in higher education to support depth and breadth of career opportunities for academic staff across the sector?

The primary response reflected a need to *take career planning more seriously.* Key people in this included Heads of Department and Deans who need to see developing staff careers as part of their role. Planning also includes succession planning partly in order to counter the demographic time bomb.

Interviewees also cited a need for more *ongoing CPD and (skills-specific) training*. Once again this was seen as particularly needed at management level. HEFCE told us that managerialism - in the sense of the art of managing - had to be taken more seriously within HEIs.

Interviewees returned to the issue of a *need for greater flexibility* in the sense of allowing a greater amount of movement in and out of the sector at various times during a career. It could incorporate greater use of practitioners coming in as necessary. (This may also help to counter the demographic time bomb). But greater flexibility also included links and interaction with local community and business (which UUK described as the "third leg" of academe, after teaching and research). This might involve rethinking what it is to be an academic. UCEA noted that as employment practice was changing in other sectors, so it would have to change in HE. It cited the example of career breaks as a practice which was becoming increasingly used outside HE (with some analogies to the sabbatical system) but was rare in HE.

We were also offered a number of *outside examples* of large organisations which had to balance the desires and aspirations of large numbers of creative people with the needs of the organisations. The best organisations balanced demands on staff with support for them and amongst those who were said to be good at this were ICI, Unilever, the NHS and the Civil Service. The latter's practice of secondments

was cited as a good example of flexibility and the NHS was quoted as somewhere which encouraged cross-disciplinary working. The CRE cited local government and Home Office as examples of best practice in matters of racial equality.

However, the AUT also said that the continued use of fixed-term contracts militated against a deeper, wider, range of career opportunities. It also noted that whereas other sectors were becoming more flexible in their working practices, higher education appears to be becoming more rigid in terms of its bureaucracies and hierarchies.

11. *What recommendations would your organisation make to develop the national capacity of HE staff?*

Once again there was a diverse range of opinions amongst our interviewees.

One key area was that of various approaches to *staff development*. For interviewees this broad heading included proper induction procedures (so that new staff know what it is expected of them), better training (including support for senior management), ongoing CPD and other examples of professionalism, clearer career paths (especially for Contract Research Staff) and a better appraisal system. For HESDA it would also incorporate a standard minimum requirement for entry into the profession in the form of a licence to practice, while ILTHE said that supporting its role would lead help to build national capacity.

Once again there were calls for *more movement in and out of the sector* in terms of more flexible career paths.

The BBSRC said that HEIs needed to be aware of their wider *obligations to society*. Implicitly this might include AUT's call to cherish and develop the creativity, innovation and diversity that should be at the heart of the sector. This was especially so in terms of the Equal Opportunities agenda and ensuring diversity within the composition of the academic workforce. It might also include SCOP's call for peer observation of teaching.

12. *What might be the cost implications of such recommendations?*

Some of our interviewees had done work on the *actual costs* of making progress. NATFHE estimated in May 2000 that ending of sex discrimination in UK HEIs would cost just over £188M (NATFHE 2000:1), a figure also used by AUT (1994: 4). More recently AUT has calculated that across the UK 'an £300 million annually would be needed to meet equal pay obligations', a figure based on the Bett Report saying that it would be 2.5% of total expenditure (AUT 2001: 14). Both trades unions pointed out that new money is coming into the sector and, while some of this will need to be spent on developing new management and HR systems, it must also be used to reward staff.

Outside of the unions most interviewees referred to *other cost issues*. It was pointed out to us that while initially there might be high costs in putting new systems in place, these would fall once the systems were up and running. It was noted that there are also time costs associated with CPD. Certainly it was felt that there was a need to invest at a time of widening participation and a growing diversity amongst the student population which meant that staff had to be aware

of a much greater range of issues. Provided that investment in staff development led to greater retention of staff, then some costs will be countered by savings achieved via less staff turnover. HEEON said that any funding from HEFCE in this area should be dependent on proper reporting back, not simply on the original bid.

There were also issues around *management culture*. One research council suggested that within HE there has been too much short-termism whereas in the private sector major companies plan long term. UUK called for more money to be spent on the development needs of management, as this was an area within which the sector performed badly when compared to other sectors.

We probed interviewees about the *costs of **not** doing something*. Several examples were cited here: having people in posts who don't know what they are doing; a failure to train leading to poorer performance at a time when there is a need to keep the "customers" (students) happy or risk being sued; doing nothing will mean carrying on with current wastage; not doing something on Equal Opportunities could lead to equal value cases being brought to industrial tribunals; doing nothing will lead to lower morale and a fall in UK's international position; not demonstrating VfM will lead to political fall out. Perhaps above all, the point was made that properly trained people with relevant qualifications feel better about their job.

There was a general (if not universal) perception that will for *change has to come from within HEIs themselves,* but that HEFCE could help to provide incentives and direction. This relates to a previous point, made by the DRC amongst others, about the need for HEIs to *claim ownership* of the processes.

13. Any Further Comments?

This question produced calls HESDA and the BBSRC for (i) a *national body to take overall responsibility for staff development and careers* (BBSRC) and (ii) *a sector-wide Workforce Development Plan* (HESDA). When joined with AUT's point that employers have to make sure that balance between institutional and individual need is met, this suggests that there is some willingness to consider how best to develop staff capacity in a measured way. AUT emphasised its commitment to some form of accreditation of professionalism, although it is not happy with ILTHE as it is presently constructed.

Interviewees also spoke of the need to *tackle the demographic time bomb.* This was again something which Bett alluded to, citing Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Engineering as potential problem areas (IRHEPC 1999: para.172). Kinman (1998: 21) has also cited the fact that the average age of academics is 45. AUT pointed out that there is some urgency about this time bomb issue as the supply chain of academics starts a long way back, so *today's* graduates have to be convinced that an academic career is worthwhile. UCEA also noted a need not to concentrate on academics *per se* as the line between academic and academic-related is becoming increasingly hazy at a time when, for example, technicians were increasingly getting involved in the provision of on-line learning.

Others pointed to unresolved *Equal Opportunities* issues which we deal with below.

Finally, HEFCE pointed out here and elsewhere that a lot is right with the sector, a point noted elsewhere by AUT which notes that: 'With 1% of the world's population, we undertake 5% of the word's research, produce 8% of the publications, and receive 9% of the citations' (AUT 2001: 3) The question remains how to sustain this in light of the issues highlighted here.

14. Unresolved Equal Opportunities issues

'Best Practice'

A successful equal opportunities policy helps to improve working relations within an institution, to improve its standing as a fair employer within the local community and therefore to improve its abilities to attract both staff and students from a wider pool of applicants. The benefits are of ethical and financial significance.

(CUCO 1996).

We wish to draw particular attention here to issues of Equal Opportunities which were cited throughout the research. While we were not commissioned specifically to look at this issue, we were asked to identify best practice. The fact that of 15 organisations interviewed, four (CRE, DRC, EOC and HEEON) had direct interests in this area and two others (AUT and NATFHE) major interests in it, will have affected the frequency with which such issues occurred. We also note that the EOC told us that is hard to spread best practice across a sector made up of autonomous institutions. Nevertheless, it is clear that concern was much more widespread than this immediate constituency. We would note here that many of the issues raised are not unique to HE, but also that the interviews provided evidence of a widespread sense of frustration at the lack of progress in this area.

Perhaps the major disappointment was that none of the Equal Opportunities organisations cited HE as an example of best practice. On the contrary, HE was frequently described as lagging behind other organisations in the private and public sector. For example, the DRC noted that there is a low level of awareness of the disability rights agenda within HE and that not one HEI is a trailblazer in this area. Instead DRC pointed to certain retailers and financial institutions which have made much more positive moves to accommodate the needs of disabled staff. For example, of 361 members of the Employers' Forum on Disability, only six are HEIs. This can be seen as part of a more general malaise and both CRE and EOC were able to cite examples of HEIs losing industrial tribunal cases on Equal Opportunities issues. The EOC spoke of getting many enquiries from within HE. During *none* of the interviews did we find interviewees claiming the HE was at the cutting edge of practice. This is to be lamented when, as the DRC noted, HEIs and their staff still do much to shape the UK's intellectual climate, including our understanding of Equal Opportunities issues.

We would also note that regardless of any moral claim, interviewees cited changes to the Race Relations Act, which became enforceable by law in 2001, and the introduction of Part IV of the Disability Discrimination Act (i.e. SENDA), due to come into effect in 2002, as potentially hazardous for HE. As one interviewee put it, the law is always there as a last resort and, ultimately, Equal Opportunities issues are non-negotiable.

Audit

A number of issues recurred, some of which have already been mentioned. The first relates to the *need for accurate base line data.* The DRC was unaware of *any* HE figures about its area of responsibility and the CRE argued that there was a lack of information about retention in the sector from an Equal Opportunities perspective.

Along with many calls for open and transparent recruitment and promotions procedures, our interviewees also noted a need for *close monitoring* of statistics about race, gender and disability. However, this is of little use with *action on problem areas*. NATFHE noted that HEIs had to first accept that Equal Opportunities was a problem, then do something about and, moreover, be seen to do something about it. A previous report on ethnicity and employment in HE noted that: 'Even where the critical elements of policy are present, such as ethnic monitoring of job applications, most institutions do not use these statistics in the context of policy making' (Carter *et al* 1999: 65).

It was apparent, However, that where discrimination existed it tended to be indirect, rather than direct. Thus the CRE argued that where informal networks existed, then this had the potential to lead to indirect discrimination, although HE was far from unique in this. (For example, if chats in pubs led to promotions, then this was likely to indirectly discriminate against Muslim women). But it was also noted that the EOC had successfully brought a case against one HEI which discriminated against a woman by awarding a permanent post to a less well qualified male colleague because the female lecturer was expected to have time off to have a child and this in turn was expected to affect her department's RAE score (EOC press release 13 April 2000).

There is previous evidence that women are paid less in all grades in HE including at professorial level (AUT 1999: 8). Women are more subject to casualised employment than men in all subject areas (ibid: 53, 56 and 102). The DRC told us that casualisation is also likely to have a disproportionate effect on disabled applicants, as those who feel that they might face discrimination are less likely to apply for insecure jobs which increases the likelihood of having to go through (possibly discriminatory) recruitment processes frequently. There is also evidence that whereas 34% of white academic staff are on FTCs, the figure for non-whites is 49% (Carter *et al* 1999: 19). Furthermore:

'Three quarters of all institutions said that they routinely monitor job applications by ethnicity but only 30 per cent said that any policy decisions had ever been made on the basis of ethnic statistics. Monitoring of other aspects of employment was not common: only 26 per cent of respondents monitor internal promotions and only11 per cent monitor the grievance and disciplinary procedure. Only 5 per cent of our sample said they had a positive action plan for ethnic minorities'. (ibid: 34)

Lack of political will

We would also note that there seems to be a certain amount of political will about tackling the Equal Opportunities issue, as reflected in the Secretary of State's letter to HEFCE of 23 November 2000 which dealt this issue in general, but with a

particular emphasis on racial equality. We note the setting up by HEFCE of the Equality Challenge Unit as one manifestation of the importance of the issue. However, NATFHE lamented that it saw few moves within HEIs to accommodate the Equal Opportunities. It cited the example of family friendly policies, which were a government aspiration, but which had where little progress had been made within Higher Education. It wants HEIs to work in partnership with unions, as employers in other sectors do, but also called on HEFCE to tell HEIs that funding will be withdrawn if Equal Opportunities in higher education is not tackled with sufficient vigour

Once again we were told by interviewees of the need for HEIs' to take *ownership* of these issues and of the need for HEIs' to develop their own good practice which could serve as role model for the rest of the sector. In this sense, HEIs could learn from each other.

Although we note that Bett recognised a problem in that different pay structures made it hard to ensure equal pay for work of equal value (IRHEPC 1999, para.109), it is at least disappointing to note that two years later AUT is able to provide evidence that things are getting worse. We would also agree with the DRC who told us that much of the remedial action which is needed "is not rocket science". Indeed, as the DRC noted, higher education is a place where the understanding of Equal Opportunities issues has been developed and is continually being researched. In such a situation it is a little ironic that HEI's own Equal Opportunities' polices were so frequently criticised.

There have been numerous recommendations about what to do here, including those of various stakeholders interviewed as part of this research (Carter *et al* 1999:70-71, EOC nd, NATFHE 2000 53-58). The CRE pointed out that as routes into academe were significantly different for ethnic minorities when compared to the white majority, so would be routes into academic life, something which bears further consideration. The EOC said the HEIs should carry out pay reviews in line with its Code of Practice in order to see if they were vulnerable to equal pay cases. NATFHE suggested annual figures on ethnicity and gender and the resources used to tackle these issues should be placed on HEIs' websites. AUT noted that best practice would include the power to block appointments on Equal Opportunities grounds, so that policies in this area were not simply lip service. In this area SCOP noted that some of the specialist colleges had more women in senior positions, possibly reflecting a bias towards subjects which have traditionally attracted more women.

We would endorse a guide produced by the CRE, EOC and CVCP which stated that HEIs should ask themselves where they are, where they are going, what action is need and how they will know when success has been achieved (Powney *et al* 1997). Perhaps then we will see the trailblazers that one of our interviewees hoped for.

15. Summary

The main points to recur in key stakeholders interviews can be broken down into a number of overlapping factors which recurred throughout the research. These are as follows:

- A general feeling that academics are an underpaid and over-burdened profession and that the things which once made the profession attractive - individual autonomy and the chance to pursue one's own interest - are continually being eroded by increasing workload and bureaucratic burdens.

- Many calls for more staff development and training as partial remedy to the above and for more CPD across the board. Training was frequently, although not exclusively, expressed as a particular need for senior management.

- Calls for the art of management to be more highly developed

- The need for more flexibility in promotions and recruitment - including more promotions via teaching (or other non-research activity) and the recruitment of a more varied workforce. Much talk of HEIs recruiting and promoting in their own image.

- A range of unresolved *Equal Opportunities issues* including evidence of widespread racial and sexual discrimination. These issues will become even more acute following amendments to the Race Relations Act and the Disability Discrimination Act next year. To this we would add the potential of the forthcoming European Directive on fixed-term contracts to impact upon employment practice within HEIs.

- The EOC viewed the Bett Report as the key document and noted that current Government policy is shaping this agenda.

- This in turn relates to the need for open and transparent recruitment and promotions policies which are understood by staff, involve appropriate Equal Opportunities and other training for those involved (and no training should = no involvement), be monitored, and be acted on if problems are found.

- Problems are likely to be exacerbated by continued use of Fixed-term Contracts (FTCs).

- There are particular issues concerning part-time staff who form around a third of the academic workforce. They should have the same training and staff development opportunities as full time staff. This is especially so for those with under 25% of a full-time contract who do not appear in HESA statistics at this time.

- Calls for more flexibility in career paths and in movement in and out of sector.

16. Concluding comments

The interviews which were carried in this part of the research inevitably produced a diverse range of responses. To an extent those responses reflect the orientations of the organisations from which interviewees were drawn. In a highly diverse sector, with a range of different stakeholders, unanimity on key issues is not to be expected. Thus while our interviewees shared some common ground on what the key issues are, there was a great deal of diversity about what should be done.

In part this is a reflection of the *inherent tensions* which are at the heart of the issues which we were asked to address. For example, there may be tensions between the desire to have flexibility in appointments and promotions procedures and the desire to tackle Equal Opportunities issues. There may be tensions between widening participation and achieving (and maintaining) research excellence. There are tensions between academic freedom (which may rely on allowing individuals

the free time to be creative) and calls for better management of academics. Perhaps above all there is a tension between wanting to improve a sector which is performing well by international standards and not wanting to further burden a sector which has gone through a constant stream of changes over the past ten or so years. The danger of initiative fatigue is all too apparent and the resistance which the sector is capable of has recently been illustrated by events around quality assurance.

It is clear that HEIs , and therefore their staff, are under pressure to perform in all sorts of ways – to widen access, to be excellent in research, to maintain teaching quality, to commercialise, to be innovative with new technology, to tackle Equal Opportunities and so on and so forth. In the context of a diverse sector, it is little surprise that some HEIs prioritise some areas over others. The issue for HEFCE may be to ensure that HEIs know what *its* priorities are and how they will be rewarded for responding to those priorities. This implies that the priorities be clear and, as far as possible, complimentary. To an extent, the diversity of responses apparent in this part of the research reflects competing agendas. The implicit hope is that HEFCE can give policy steers which address the tensions and set priorities.

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18. List on organisations interviewed

Association of University Teachers (AUT)
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)
Disability Rights Commission (DRC)
Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)
Higher Education Equal Opportunities Network (HEEON)
Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
Higher Education Staff Development Association (HESDA)
Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE)
National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE)
Quality Association Agency (QAA)
Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP)
Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA)
Universities UK (UUK).

Appendix 4: HEFCE survey of human resource managers in HEIs

1. Introduction

Evidence is presented in this Appendix from the survey of Heads of Personnel in higher education institutions (HEIs) in England (the questionnaire is in Appendix 1). This survey was carried out largely via email invitation to participate and then web-based survey. The survey returns contain a range of quantitative data and qualitative comments from respondents about:

- staffing policies and procedures in place in HEIs
- reviewing policies and procedures
- recruitment, retention and promotion.

Each of these is presented below. First however, we look at the profile of the respondents.

2. The respondents

All HEIs (132) listed as receiving funds from HEFCE were invited to take part in the survey of Heads of Personnel. These included 17 schools and institutes of the University of London which are funded separately by HEFCE.

Of the 132 HEIs, 35 (or 27%) sent in returns. Although this is a lower response than hoped for, in general terms there is a reasonable representation across the returns by geographical spread, by size of institution and by type of institution and subject areas.

Institutional profile

Looking at the number of students (FTEs), there are 17 HEIs spread across the category of fewer than 10,000 students, 14 between 10,000 and 20,000 students, two in the largest range over 20,000 and two HEIs for which figures are unknown. In terms of staff numbers the spread is across all ranges. Many respondents gave figures which included only academics, or excluded hourly-paid so the figures are less clear for any breakdown at this level. In terms of type of HEIs, again there is an even spread of returns with 16 of the 'old' or pre '92 types and 17 of the 'new' or post-92 type. A further two are small college-based college institutions.

3. HEI Policies and Procedures

The survey sought to map out the human resource policies and procedures within HEIs as they applied to permanent staff, fixed-term/part-time staff and hourly-paid staff who teach. Although the picture only represents a small number, it has yielded an invaluable overview of institutional policies and procedures.

We asked institutions to indicate which human resource policies and procedures they had in place. In Table 1, while many of the policies listed might be expected to appear as routine human resources procedures, it is interesting to note that the level of applicability of these policies to 'permanent', 'part-time/fixed-term' and 'hourly' paid staff is the most illuminating aspect of the data. It should be remembered that of course we are dealing with a small number of responses and

that there is considerable variation in the way HEIs describe and count their staff.

Table 1: Policies and procedures in HEIs (Survey Q1)
    N=32

Human resources policies and procedures	% Permanent Staff	% Part-time/ fixed-term contract	% Hourly paid
Annual Review of Teaching Staff	71	71	14
Career Guidance	43	40	20
CPD Programmes	74	71	40
Disability	86	83	77
Equal Opportunities	100	97	89
Equal Pay	60	57	49
Harassment	94	91	86
Investors in People (IIP)	31	31	31
Induction	100	94	46
Leave of Absence/Study Leave	94	83	9
Mentoring	71	69	26
Probation	97	89	26
Promotion of Teaching Staff	86	80	14
Recruitment and Selection	94	91	57
Redundancy	80	69	46
Sabbaticals	74	57	3
Staff Appraisal	91	89	26
Staff Development	94	91	57
Staff Handbook	74	74	49

The patterns and trends are interesting. Looking horizontally across the table the applicability of policies across type of staff can be compared with the range of institutional policies. For example, we see that equal opportunities policies are well spread across the respondent institutions but that coverage is not complete when we look at hourly-paid staff. Equal pay policies are in place in 60% of our respondent institutions. Induction is guaranteed if you are a permanent member of staff but would only be available to hourly-paid in 46 per cent of the respondent HEIs. Study leave is available for permanent staff in 94 per cent of respondent institutions but for hourly-paid in only 9 per cent and this drops to 3 per cent for sabbaticals for hourly-paid staff.

Over a quarter of institutions had no CPD, annual review or mentoring schemes in place and IIP has low coverage in institutions. More than half the institutions did not offer staff a career guidance scheme.

4. Reviewing policy within institutions
Another important aspect of human resources policies is how often institutions review their policies and procedures. From respondent institutions (35), there is a

mixed picture of progress emerging in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of HEIs reviewing policies and procedures (Survey Q15)
N=35

Policies	Within last 2 years	Currently under review	No response
Equal opportunities	17	12	6
Promotion of teaching staff	20	7	8
Recruitment and selection	17	9	9
Staff appraisal	20	13	2
Staff development	25	7	3

Most respondent institutions had 'reviewed in the last 2 years' or 'were reviewing' staff development and overall there was ongoing policy review of important areas such as equal opportunities. The nine institutions who did not respond to the recruitment and selection section may not be representative of any wider sample of HEIs.

Institutions were asked also whether they carried out an annual audit of teaching staff (Q16) and only just over a third (34%) indicated they did, 18 (51%) did not and 6 did not respond.

One specific area which has an ongoing effect on Human Resources departments is the changing legal framework within which they operate. Institutions were asked to indicate if they were aware of recent or forthcoming legislative changes (Q17) and if they had implemented any legal requirements.

Table 3: Status of Human Resource policies in relation to recent legislative change (Survey Q17)
N=35

Legislation	% Aware	% Implementing	% Both	% No response
Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)	46	40	11	3
SEN Disability Discrimination Act (2001)	49	34	14	3
Human Rights Act (1998)	63	28	6	3
EU directives on part-time working (2000)	23	51	20	6
EU directives on fixed-term working (2002)	68	17	9	6

We have a fairly positive picture (Table 3) of institutional progress towards awareness and implementation of legislative changes which mostly reflect the required timescales. However, for the directive on part-time working, 33 out of 35 respondent institutions (71%) were implementing that policy compared to 18

(51%) implementing the new race relations legislation and 17 (40%) implementing the recent amendments to the disability legislation. Again the sample is fairly small and may not represent the wider picture across all HEIs.

5. *Recruitment, retention and promotion*

Although there are many overlaps between the impact of recruitment, retention and promotion policies on academic life and staff who teach, we shall look at each in turn. First, however, we give some background information on turnover of staff from the survey responses.

Turnover

Institutions were asked to give an indication of the turnover rate of all teaching staff. Most institutions attempted to provide some indicative figures for 2000-2001 although any comparative exercise would be difficult to undertake. The rate ranged from a small college quoting 25 per cent to an average sized institution of 700 staff and 7100 students having 3 per cent with many variations in between.

Most institutions gave examples of departments which were experiencing higher than average turnover. Those most frequently mentioned included (in descending order of occurrence):

_ Computing and computer science
_ Law
_ Accountancy and finance
_ Business, business management and information systems
_ Engineering (including electrical)
_ Education.

Other departments which were cited as having high turnover included medicine and veterinary departments, health studies and specific subjects such as mathematics and geography.

Institutions also highlighted areas where there were problems in recruiting staff. These tended to mirror the same departments for which there was high turnover. So again we find computing and IT, finance and accountancy being noted. Some institutions are experiencing specific problems in recruiting certain types of staff, eg fixed-term staff in biological science and in engineering. Smaller institutions reported difficulties in recruiting specialist staff. For some it was difficult to find health care staff with an HE background. There was also the acknowledgement by one institution that it was becoming more difficult to recruit staff across all subject areas.

Recruitment

Respondents identified a range of factors which support recruitment of staff who teach (Q2). Some opted not to complete this section (14 out of 35) but non-response does not imply a lack of policies or procedures because the information is available from the quantitative evidence in Table 1. Those who did comment highlighted policies in their institutions which support recruitment. Examples are:

- equal opportunities policies (including disability)
- Investors in People status
- incentives such as generous removal expenses and start-up packages
- single long term lecturer scales.

Salary issues were the most recurring themes among respondents as inhibitor to recruitment but they also listed a diverse range of barriers to the recruitment of high quality academic staff including (Q3):

- location factors such as being London based or high costs of living/housing in some areas
- over-emphasis on research
- adverse salary differentials (against market rate and other professions, eg teaching, health, ICT, business)
- competition from other HEIs ('RAE recruitment wars') and non-university employers especially in some subject areas
- perceived reputation of institution
- low salary levels
- shortage of staff in certain disciplines
- heavy work load if staff are aiming to achieve high levels in both teaching and research
- promotions criteria (dominance of research; quota system).

Some institutions gave examples of initiatives which address recruitment issues such as (Q4):

- staff development opportunities
- support for non-teaching staff with necessary skills and interest/enthusiasm to become lecturers

Retention

The survey sought to identify which measures HEIs had in place to encourage staff retention (Q5a). Table 4 provides a summary of the responses. Again there is variation overall between different types of measure. Few offer retraining or performance-related pay, for example, but most provide CPD, equal opportunities action plans and staff appraisal. One institution felt they had no retention problems. Less measurable but tangible influences such as positive institutional ethos and supportive management were selected as important for retention.

Table 4: Measures in place to encourage staff retention (survey Q5a)
(N=35)

Retention measures	% of respondent institutions which selected this category
Continuing professional development	86
Equal opportunities strategies/ action plans	86
Fast track promotion	43
Leave of absence	80
Mentoring	66
Performance related pay	37
Performance review	46
Positive institutional ethos	60
Redeployment	46
Regrading	60
Retraining	34
Secondments	43
Staff appraisal	89
Staff development opportunities	91
Supportive management structure	74

To this list some institutions added other more specific factors which aided retention (Q5b):

- the ethos of the institution being more important than any specific policy or initiative
- team working
- work/life balance policies.

And they also mentioned the effect of particular initiatives on retention such as:

- merit based bonus payments
- a local teaching fellowship scheme
- generous sabbaticals and externally funded research leave
- 'in-house' job evaluation scheme for use in all academic staff promotion
- re-structuring the use of principal lecturer grades to reduce 'bottleneck' at top of senior lecturer grade
- converting fixed-term contracts to permanent contracts which is improving staff quality
- encouragement of membership of Institute of Learning and Teaching (ILT).

In some cases HEIs saw retention initiatives directly linked to promotion policy with one institution citing its academic promotion procedure – giving equal weight to teaching and research – as a factor which supported staff retention. Other factors which respondent institutions thought aided retention included:

- promotions to Senior lecturer now considered 3 times a year in place of an annual review
- promotion on merit without a fixed quota
- fast track promotion procedures
- providing incentive schemes which encourage teaching staff to additional income by a local Research Incentive Scheme.

There was a mixed response when asked about any particular initiatives which sought to retain part-time teaching staff, hourly-paid, and those on fixed-term contracts (Q7). For some, these staff had the same opportunities for staff development and promotion as permanent staff. For others, new legislation will overtake any local initiatives to change the over-use of fixed-term contracts and some HEIs are already reviewing them. In some HEIs, turnover was low for these categories of staff so no initiatives are in place for retention. As noted above, regular review of staff composition and the translation of people from fixed-term to permanent contract were viewed as examples of good practice.

When asked about factors which inhibit retention of staff who teach (Q6), respondent institutions provided expansive comments within which there were recurring themes. For some it was external factors over which institutions had little control:

- the high cost of London housing and commuting
- the low level of the London allowance
- cost of living in certain areas of the country
- salary— low levels; differentials with competitor sectors; inflexibility within national pay structures.

Within institutions, there were also factors which had a bearing on retention of staff:

- heavy teaching loads
- increasingly onerous quality assurance regimes
- fixed-term contracts
- budgetary constraints
- for 'staff who only teach' a strong research ethos can inhibit retention
- lack of performance review systems.

Promotion

We have seen from the narrative above that there are issues arising about promotion. In 86 per cent of respondent institutions, promotion policies apply to permanent staff, in 80 per cent for fixed-term/part-time staff but only in 14 per cent of respondent institutions for hourly-paid (see Table 1), although it should be noted that most institutions are reviewing or have reviewed policy on promotion of staff (See Table 2). We have seen also that policies to support retention are directly linked to promotion issues.

Further information is available from the survey returns about promotion issues. Institutions were asked (Q11) specifically to indicate if there were promotion policies at institutional or departmental level which related to fixed-term and/or hourly-paid to which 51 per cent of HEI respondents said yes, and 49 per cent no. When asked if they had published criteria (Q12) for promotion of teaching staff, most (86%) said 'yes', 11 per cent said 'no' and 3 per cent did not respond. A further question on the flexibility of promotions criteria (Q13) elicited the following information:

Table 5: Flexibility of promotions criteria (Survey Q13)
      (N-35)

How flexible?	%
Flexible	14
Somewhat flexible	40
Fixed	31
No response	14

When asked how universally these criteria applied across departments/units (Q14), a total of 31 out of the 35 responses (89%) indicated that they applied across **all** departments.

The qualitative evidence provides illumination for many of these statistics.

Institutions were asked to identify policies and practices which support the promotion of high quality academic staff who teach (Q8). Some are listed below:

- conduct quality assessment of teaching skills of promotion candidates
- transparent and objective criteria for promotion
- 'in-house' job evaluation
- single lecturer scale
- rewards such as distinction awards, sabbaticals and leave of absence
- fast track procedures
- recognising responsibility – fixed-term posts of responsibility; increased allowances for extra responsibility
- separate salary scales for heads of study centres and academic managers
- appraisal and counselling.

The qualitative data also reveal HEI views on what factors act as barriers to promotion for academic staff (Q9). These include:

- the perceived emphasis on research
- restrictions on number of promotions – cost control/budgets limits number (but provide quality assurance)
- age structure in some departments
- teaching loads can inhibit staff development and therefore weaken promotion case
- low staff turnover limits career development opportunities
- lack of clarity about senior academic roles
- poor people management skills and practices
- salary scales are narrow (more grades would reward different levels of contribution more accurately).

One institution noted that there were no barriers to promotion as all staff were expected to carry out research and teaching.
There were some examples given of particular initiatives related to promotion (Q10) although there was some overlap here between this responses and earlier comments on policies in individual institutions. For some, it was:

- providing additional increments to reward outstanding teaching and administration
- having academic promotions scheme and performance appraisal schemes
- creating new opportunities – eg teaching fellowships; introducing senior lectureships
- recognising staff's career breaks and non-standard careers.

6. General issues

Finally, institutions were asked at the end of the survey to describe what three factors they would suggest to improve the appointment, retention and promotion of academic staff (Q18). The headlines from this qualitative data are given under some key headings:

Financial

- higher salaries – enhancement of basic pay via national pay awards; revised salary structure (as Bett Report); funding for increased salaries across the board as well as targeted via HR strategy initiatives
- performance related pay
- national subsidised mortgage scheme
- increased London allowance
- one pension scheme across 'old' and 'new' HEIs.

Managerial

- lively imaginative and effective departmental leaders
- greater people management skills at all levels of academic management
- review contract arrangements in post '92 institutions
- cease fixed-term contracts
- use of flexible contracts for joint appointments with other sectors.

Recruitment

- tailor selection process to specific roles, eg using systematic assessment.

Staff development

- opportunity to diversify and develop in early years
- identify needs and plan for CPD at early stage
- clearer and faster career structures
- funding for enhanced training and development.

Retention

- regulate and reduce workloads
- implement a retention allowance
- reduce administrative burden
- improvement in the non-cash elements of remuneration packages.

Assessment

- lighter touch assessment and quality assurance
- decrease in external monitoring.