

Appendix 5: Case studies

Conventions to protect confidentiality

To protect the confidentiality of the case study departments and institutions, the following conventions have been adopted. In denoting the size of the institution, small means having less than 5,000 FTE students; medium, 5,000-14,999; large, over 15,000. Precise QAA and RAE ratings are not given as these might identify the institution. Instead, QAA scores of 22 and above and RAE scores of 4 and above are described as high, those below as moderate. In adopting this simple convention, we acknowledge that local perceptions of what is a high score vary considerably across the HE sector.

To protect the confidentiality of individual informants where direct quotations are used, staff in permanent promoted posts (senior lecturer and above in pre-1992 HEIs, principal lecturer and above in post-1992 HEIs) are identified as 'senior'. 'Junior' staff comprise those on basic grades, or with fixed-term or hourly-paid contracts. When quoted, individuals are identified by the unit they work in and a number (for example A1.2 signifies case study A, unit 1, interviewee number 2).

The analysis takes account of the very different circumstances of sub-sets of the 'junior' group: unpromoted staff with permanent contracts; fixed-term contract staff (some of whom have fractional contracts); hourly-paid part-time teachers (most of whom are on temporary contracts) and permanent fractional contract staff.

CASE STUDY A

Size: Medium
Type: Pre-1992 university with strong research reputation
Location: Single campus location in large town.

Mission:

It is a research-led university that is utterly committed to the provision of teaching of the highest quality.

Staff development policies:

Teaching certificate available for all staff to take, compulsory for new staff. Mentoring system in place, but staff state that the quality and usefulness of this is questionable.

Academic departments:

Staff interviewed came from two departments. There is a high level of consistency in approach across the HEI except where noted. The main discipline in unit A1 is Biosciences and in A2 is Business and Management. Both units achieved high scores in their latest RAE and QAA assessments.

Sample interviewed:

Five senior staff: two heads of department, two professors, one long service senior lecturer.
Four junior staff: one long service lecturer, two newly appointed lecturers, one hourly-paid teacher (postgraduate student).

ISSUES ARISING, RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Issues that affect academic staff recruitment, retention and promotion

Factors outwith institutions

For one department there was the ever-increasing problem of losing people from within the system, and people not even entering the system due to the significantly higher levels of financial rewards offered by the private sector/industry. For the other department this was not such an issue as competition came only from other HEIs.

The location is attractive to most staff as it is reasonably central in England. However, it is noted that house prices are significantly higher now than a few years ago, which could be a problem for newer members of staff lower down the scale and trying to get a foot on the property ladder.

Several interviewees identified partners and families as playing an important determining factor in choice of area.

Factors within institution

Recruitment

The HEI has a strong reputation that plays a significant part in attracting good quality staff and researchers. This in turn has led to a high quality of student being attracted to the institution.

Recruitment problems arise because, in order to appoint a new member of staff, the head of department has to apply to the Estimates and Grants Committee, an institutional-level group which authorises the recruitment of new people. This can be very constraining and inhibit the head's freedom to recruit new staff. However, once the permission to appoint has been granted the head has in a sense control over the process, as long as the criteria set by the university with regards to procedure are met.

Another significant problem is that the Estimates and Grant Committee has a policy of not automatically funding the recruitment of individuals to replace members of staff that have left. This means, therefore, that if the heads wish to replace an individual they must be able to fund it from their own resources.

Interviewees also felt that the HEI could provide more resources in order that the sciences might attract the 'big names' and their research teams from America.

One of the departments had a shortage of support staff which meant that the lecturers have had to take on many duties themselves. One individual identified that she had had to learn to type since joining the institution due to this shortage.

Turnover

One department had experienced a high turnover over the last two years, with several people moving to other universities for a chair: *'If they had waited a bit longer they would have probably got chairs here'* (A2.1). It was, however, the belief that this was not the only reason for leaving. It often seems that the HEI *'does work you hard, there's a lot of scrutiny over what you are doing as well. The money is pretty good but not fantastic, but you are a fish swimming around where there are some bloody big predators'* (A2.1).

The other department however, did not seem to have this problem. Over the past four or five years it has not lost many staff, approximately 15, but the head believes that: *'People don't leave this place generally, certainly not this department, because they don't like it. They move on because they find that there are better deals elsewhere'* (A1.1). However, in one or two instances the department has lost people which has resulted in research groups collapsing. The head of department feels that this loss was unnecessary but the Research and Grants Committee was not able to offer a chair to keep them.

The view is that the resources within the institution are of a high standard. However, several members of staff in one of the departments believe that there is a shortage, with one noting that the institution *'is a victim of its own success'* (A1.3), and that despite expansion of buildings there is still overcrowding within the laboratories.

Virtually all power and decision-making authority rested with committees and panels at the institutional level, with little freedom, flexibility and autonomy for the heads.

Staff perspective on working at this HEI

Staff within both departments identified that variety was a positive factor about the job. *'I've always been quite attracted by the balance of teaching, research, writing and periodically some major course management or course development. I like the combination. I think I'd be unhappy working full-time on teaching, or certainly unhappy working full-time on research'* (A2.3).

However, many staff believe that there was less variety due to increases in teaching and administration.

Autonomy was mentioned by those in both groups as being of great importance to them, yet there was a general consensus that this was being hampered by increased bureaucracy, red

tape and administration. *I think that with all the best will in the world it's difficult to maintain your enthusiasm and really feel that you are doing as good a job as possible, just because of the increase in workload'* (A1.3).

Freedom was also mentioned as being a positive factor of the job, especially by staff in the science department who, in comparison to employment in the private sector, had control over their own research. However, the downside was that lack of financial gain accompanied this freedom. *'You control your own destiny more, you've got more freedom, but the downside is that you don't get the rewards financially'* (A1.2).

There was a consensus that there was a relatively high level of flexibility for staff. However, both heads of department expressed frustration at the lack of flexibility, freedom and autonomy that the central institution allowed them as 'managers'.

'I think that it is very difficult in a large organisation to have some influence about what's going on, so I do not feel empowered at the moment, I feel disenfranchised, I'm not able to influence the way things have gone' (A2.1).

There was widespread acknowledgement amongst staff from both departments that research was the only real way to progress and be promoted, with the head of department even saying: *'I think it would be almost unheard [here] for someone to be promoted on the basis of teaching alone'* (A2.1). Despite this, many staff valued and enjoyed teaching; However, some of the older staff in one department expressed dislike for increased teaching loads.

Newer members of one department felt that it could do more to help integrate new members of staff. *'Well I think the department has fallen down at virtually every fence to do with its induction of new staff formally, informally, socially and financially'*(A1.4).

All the staff mentioned issues of pay, especially when comparing salaries to those available in industry, but generally it was not the most important issue. As one member of staff put it: *'I don't think when I come into work every morning I'm not being paid very much to do this job, therefore I won't do a good job'* (A1.3). It was however, flagged as a cause for concern with regards to attracting people into academia and retaining them. *'The bright ones realise how crap the career is and how crap the career structure is and they are not prepared to tolerate it...the good people are leaking out of this career at every stage'* (A1.4).

2. How do HEIs encourage effective recruitment, retention and promotion of academic staff?

Recruitment

This HEI has abolished the lecturer A scale, and it is well known that the institution tends to pay its staff more than most universities. As there is no lecturer A scale it has a large amount of flexibility with regards to salary. The head of department, and the chair of the academics committee responsible for that particular individual, determine the salary structure for each individual.

A probationary period of four years is served, unless they have had teaching experience at other universities, in which case they are given time off in lieu. For example if they have taught for two-three years elsewhere then they have a one-two year probationary period.

Within the probationary period all new members of staff must complete the institution's teaching certificate. This is seen as being as an effective approach. *'The probationary period is very good for most people because they are relieved of some of the teaching and they can build up their research activity in this time'* (A1.1).

People on probation are reviewed annually to discuss how they are getting on, and it has been known for the probationary period to be extended if it is felt necessary.

As a research-led institution, it has tried to recruit the best people possible. The institution had a recruitment drive, in 1995/96. A lot of money was spent in attracting 35 top researchers to the university of whom many stayed at the end of the six-year period and were absorbed into the staff. Some did leave as other institutions made better offers.

Retention

Promotion was viewed by both heads as being the key to retention, due to the recent policy adopted by the institution that assumes that if someone is good then they deserve promotion. This resulted in a skewed distribution of staff, with the institution having a disproportionately higher number of people at professorial level than most other universities.

Neither head viewed retention as a problem. However, several of the staff indicated that they did keep an eye out for other positions although they were not actively applying.

Newer staff in one department also indicated that they felt very isolated during the first formative months of employment, and had considered leaving.

Industry was seen as an option by many of the staff, particularly within the science departments, mainly due to the significantly higher financial rewards. However, having found out more about the workings of the private sector, many had decided that they valued the freedom and autonomy that academic jobs provided, especially the longer serving lecturers.

'When you've worked in a British university for as long as I have, the thought of all those constraints and company ethos...if you were imbibed into that in your twenties, fair enough, but for somebody like me it would be quite difficult' (A1).

Promotion

Staff recognised that the way to progress within the university was through research output, with many people indicating that teaching was definitely a secondary criterion for progressing and gaining promotion.

The main criteria identified for progression were research publications, research grant income, teaching and good administration skills, and a good sense of collegiality. However, the emphasis is on research, as the university views itself as a research-led institution.

It is the belief of both heads that the key to retention is the institution's policy of promotion, which enables people to see that they have a reasonable chance of being promoted. However, as the staff and the heads of departments indicated, it is virtually impossible to get to and through the promotion process without support from the head of the individual's group. Individuals can approach the heads of departments themselves, but those who have been put forward by heads of group receive more backing from the head of department.

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

General consensus among all interviewed in both departments was that QAA and RAE assessments are having a detrimental affect on the institution, due to the amount of administration (especially QAA) and the pressure to produce quantity rather than quality when it comes to the RAE. Some members believe that this stress could lead newer people to leave.

Results of the RAE play a large part in the funding received by both of the departments, which ultimately has an impact on performance and progression.

'We are working harder than ever. There has been working calcification, time is of the essence and that is why the quality of what we do is likely to be torn. That's downhill for the work, and I'd much rather everybody produced one piece in four years which the relevant audience, which may be small says, "Bloody good piece". Whereas of course what happens is, as one of my colleagues said, "I've got my four pieces, so now I can take time out and think"' (A2.1).

The RAE is seen to be detrimental to the quality of the actual research and work as the emphasis is on productivity.

In general there is the belief that teaching is a secondary criterion for progressing and achieving promotion. One informant (A2.2) feels that promotion is only possible on the basis of excellent publications, but that teaching may be taken into account if supported by lesser publications.

This is further confirmed by a senior member of staff in A2: *'I think it would be almost unheard of in this institution for someone to be promoted on the basis of teaching alone' (A2.1).*

There was also the view that the HEI creates an individualistic environment where people do not share information with others for fear that they will be promoted before them. *'The competitive individualism that the system tries to encourage goes against the old notion of a community of scholars' (A2.1).*

QAA and quality of feeling

While respondents felt that there is a need to monitor the quality of teaching, they thought that the QAA is not appropriate for this and results in far too much administration.

'I think it's rather akin to the schools inspection system and I think in the universities it's not really appropriate and a waste of time!' (A1.3).

One department does have its own system of student feedback to monitor the quality and performance of the staff's teaching. All information is fed back to the head of department who monitors it and feeds back in turn to the staff. The head also posts the information on the notice board, which enables the students to see that their voice is heard and encourages them to feed back information. It is not just critical information that is fed back but also praise. This was all set up at departmental level.

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

Most individuals had come straight in to higher education via a degree then a PhD. Only two interviewed had been in industry prior to entering academia, one of which was for three years in a research role.

All staff saw research output as a way to progress within their careers, although the emphasis seemed to be on quantity rather than quality since the RAE.

Development opportunities are available but much of the emphasis for career development is on the individual.

Departments do not really try to keep PhD students on board; they may offer a post doctorate but after that no system is in place to keep them.

Sideways development into other subject area was an option in some cases but not many individuals wanted to change subjects.

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

Appointment

Heads argued that there needs to be more freedom and autonomy for the heads of department when it comes to staff appointment and replacing staff that leave. *In order to do what I would like to do I can't do that, I don't have the freedom to be able to do it* (A1.1).

When it comes to appointing new members of staff, the heads make up the interview shortlists for the appointment panels. The panels are made up of people from across the university, which can inhibit who gets appointed if they do not agree with the head of department.

With regards to salary the head has a large amount of flexibility in the level: *'we can actually appoint right across the spectrum from the very bottom end to the very top end of the lecturing scale for anyone coming in'* (A1.1).

A number of measures are taken to try to ensure that the 'right people' are attracted. *'We try to make the position as attractive as possible in terms of putting resources into it from the department and try to create the right environment'* (A1.1). It is, however, felt that the university should put a larger amount of its resources into attracting higher quality candidates for appointment.

The HEI has spent a vast amount of money in creating research fellowships throughout the institution in order to attract the cream of the research crop, so to speak. This has proved beneficial, with many of the fellows being absorbed as lecturing staff after their six-year fellowship.

Retention

Heads indicated that if they had more freedom, flexibility and resources, they would be able to retain those who are currently leaving (the numbers of whom are quite low), as most leave for chairs and higher salaries.

Cost of living was an issue raised by younger newer members of staff who were trying to get their foot on the property ladder, and many older members of staff expressed concern about this.

All staff expressed discontent with the increased levels of administration that was required as part of the role, and the increase in bureaucracy and red tape that has crept into the system.

A mentoring system was in place but not used or set up to its full potential, with many people not quite understanding how the system works.

Promotion

Staff suggested that promotion criteria need to be widened. The emphasis needs to be on all aspects of teaching and not just driven by research outputs and RAE scores. The process should be made much more transparent and proper feedback should be given. An effective appraisal system could help to develop and progress staff further.

All policies

Some staff suggested that processes should be assessed for their ability to deliver equality of opportunity.

Key points

- Many of the staff were aware of the differences between academic salaries and those of industry.
- The HEI relies on its strong reputation to attract and retain staff, along with its abolition of the lecturer A scale which means that pay is often higher than in other universities.
- Distribution of staff is skewed more to the professorial level as there are no limits to the numbers of professorships, although there are of course budget constraints.
- Research is valued much more than teaching when it comes to promotion and progression.
- Heads of departments' hands are tied by the institution with regards to recruitment and appointment of new staff members.
- There is very limited use of hourly-paid part-time staff, with one department having just one hourly-paid staff member.
- Most important factors for staff were autonomy, variety and flexibility. However, many individuals flagged up the problems of increased administration and how these inhibited levels of autonomy and flexibility.
- Individual contributions to the RAE were very influential but the RAE was perceived to promote quantity rather than quality in research.

CASE STUDY B

Size: Medium
Type: Post-1992 university
Location: Small number of sites within medium-sized town

Mission:

Strong orientation towards excellent teaching where national reputation has been gained. Also seeking to raise research profile.

Staff development policies:

There is established system of induction and mentoring for new staff. The HEI provides its own Certificate in Higher Education for staff with less than five years' experience. There is a biennial appraisal system.

Academic departments :

Staff interviewed came from two schools. There is a high level of consistency in approach across the HEI except where noted. The main discipline in unit B1 is Architecture, and in B2, Mathematics and IT. Both achieved moderate scores in the last RAE and high scores in the QAA.

Sample interviewed:

Five senior staff: two deans, one long service research professor, one long service principal lecturer, one newly appointed principal lecturer.

Five junior staff: one long service lecturer, two newly appointed lecturers, two hourly-paid teachers.

ISSUES ARISING, RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Issues that affect academic staff recruitment, retention and promotion

Factors outwith institutions

The local environment has both positive and negative effects on retention and recruitment: the expensive local housing market and attractive area impact upon retention, but so does negative equity, leading to a feeling of being 'trapped'. This can mean that promotion is a bigger issue for some staff in order to maintain their standard of living. It is very difficult for new lecturers at the lower end of the salary scale to enter the housing market.

Department B1 is in an area where salaries in industry/private sector are approximately equal to academic salaries; B2 is in an area where it is possible to earn considerably more in industry. Student numbers generally in department B1 are falling, and new courses are being launched to reflect the changes within the discipline.

The demographic profile of those in discipline B1 is ageing nationally, leading to potential staff shortages in the relatively near future.

Factors within institutions

This is a post-1992 institution which is trying to raise standards and compete with a wide range of other HEIs in the same locality.

Restructuring and merging of departments, which is taking place on cost grounds, is causing anxiety especially where departments have to move to another campus. The institution is also moving to semesters. *'It's like having a new job without having to get a new job'* (B2.1).

RAE pressures are seen as onerous as there has not been a strong tradition of research in the past. Many staff feel poorly equipped in terms of research skills. However, those who have been carrying out research for some time report that resources in the form of teaching relief and other support are readily available.

The fact that teaching is not seen as valuable in terms of promotion is a major source of dissatisfaction.

Department B2, where it is possible to earn considerably more in industry, is severely understaffed, leading to additional teaching pressures on the remaining staff as well as increased administrative responsibilities.

Staff perspectives on working in this institution

There is concern about the perceived need to be competent in all aspects of teaching, research and administration, instead of developing more individual specialisations.

Main sources of job satisfaction are: autonomy and independence; control of work; teaching; working in a pleasant environment; supportive colleagues; contact with students, and seeing individuals achieve a degree. *'On the research side I haven't found any excitement'* (B2.1).

'I am definitely not here for the money because I couldn't survive on the money' (B1.1). *'I could be £5-10,000 better off if I were in industry and I would have a company car ... probably private health insurance and things like that.'* (B2.3).

Main sources of job dissatisfaction include increased workloads, long working days and the 'loss' of the summer vacation for research/leave *'... like most people here I don't take my full leave entitlement'* (B2.2).

Differing opinions were expressed about whether teaching is valued within the departments/schools, but overall it is felt that teaching is not valued by the institution as a whole. Schools are under pressure to achieve good QAA scores but teaching is not valued otherwise.

2. How do HEIs encourage effective recruitment, retention and promotion of academic staff?

Recruitment

Departments have devolved budgets which means that there is some leeway with salaries, but they have to be negotiated with the HR department in line with the job description.

The head of department talks to colleagues in other institutions to encourage them to apply but feels that the local housing market is a major factor in preventing people from applying. The poor quality of applicants is a concern.

Retention

The head of department in B2 tries to promote younger people in order to increase their salary and prevent them from leaving.

Good relationships within the departments are seen as a major factor in staff retention.

Promotion

Promotion is not possible on the basis of good teaching alone, only as a result of taking on additional administrative responsibilities or being a strong researcher, but there is not a strong research culture within the institution. *'All principal lecturers have to name some administrative responsibility; if you're not particularly interested in admin, there's no promotion'* (B1.3).

Promotion on the basis of taking on administrative responsibility is open to abuse in that staff agree to take on additional responsibility in order to achieve promotion but once it is awarded tend not to carry these duties out fully.

In department B1, three members of staff at principal lecturer (PL) level are approaching retirement within the coming academic year and are not being replaced at this level. A staff member who is also within five years of retirement will transfer to another department within the same institution (where there are vacant PL positions) if a PL in B1 is not awarded. The justification is to boost final salary for pension purposes.

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

ILT membership is not seen as a positive step. *'A lot of people are going to make careers out of being ILT-type people and the rest of us are going to have to carry on doing the teaching'* (B2.2).

The bureaucracy of the institution centre is seen as diverting resources away from teaching.

The promotion system is seen by staff as being open and consistent

Temporary promotions on the basis of some administrative responsibility are becoming more common: they are seen as a means of earning extra money albeit for the short term.

The position of head of department is not seen as desirable: *'Nowadays it's a mug's game – it's badly paid, the responsibility is horrendous and the amount of work is enormous'* (B1.2).

The QAA, the Transparency Review and the RAE are seen as valid, but only as individual initiatives; it is the combination that is seen as unreasonable in terms of workload.

Part-time staff are viewed as mixed blessings. On the one hand they carry out class teaching but on the other they require organising, managing and do not take up any administrative roles. Turnover among them tends to be high, creating additional costs of induction and training.

Student assessments of teaching are flawed as students can be 'manipulated' into providing favourable feedback.

There is a mixed response to mentoring schemes with much of the success being dependent upon the individual personal relationship between mentor and mentee.

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

The part-time teaching route can lead to full-time employment.

As mentioned earlier, ILT membership is not viewed in a positive light. Promotion tends to be on the basis of additional administrative responsibility. However, those who have achieved this tend not to fulfil the roles that they are supposed to, as they report not having the time to carry them out fully.

The contract research system is seen as extremely negative in terms of developing an academic career as well as being a very insecure career in itself.

Promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer is automatic (this is a post-1992 institution).

Promotion in department B1 has been on a personal basis for a considerable length of time, with no promotions in one particular unit for 20 years.

A PhD is now seen as a necessary qualification to obtaining a first lecturing post or for progression.

Consultancy is necessary as a means of financial survival but it detracts from the true academic role and thus hinders progression. However, for the disciplines of both departments it is considered necessary in order to keep in touch and up to date with what is happening in the subject area.

There is the possibility of a sideways career move into teaching research and teaching practice which is not tied to a particular department but is run by the institution centre.

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

Deans suggested that greater discretion is required for departments in setting salaries and benefits.

Staff noted that, apart from introductory training for new members of staff, there is very little in the way of staff development. ILT membership has to be paid by the individual.

New members of staff must do a teaching qualification.

There was strong support for a sabbatical in order to return to the 'real world', to carry out consultancy, and to keep in touch with recent developments.

Staff were critical that when higher-level staff leave they are replaced with staff at much lower levels on cost grounds. However, there is no promotion to maintain proportions across all grades.

Key points

- Local housing market influences recruitment and retention (attractive area but high cost of living).
- Some difficulties in recruiting but little concern about retention.
- Uncertainty created by ongoing programme of restructuring and rationalisation – felt by staff to create both insecurity and poorer prospects for promotion.
- Perception among staff that teaching is undervalued and unrecognised.
- Criteria for promotion based on level of responsibility, and size of administrative tasks rather than merit or expertise. However, have to be an all-rounder in order to cover the

lecturing role. Strong researchers can also be promoted but this is rare as the culture is not supportive of research.

- Heavy use of hourly-paid staff - problems in retention in this group.
- Some staff are keen to maintain links with external world, eg industry and professional practice/consultancy. However, opportunities are limited by onerous workloads.

Policy recommendations applicable to whole sector

Sabbaticals in order to refresh industry or professional experience.

CASE STUDY C

Size: Medium
Type: Pre-1992 university with elite research reputation
Location: Single site in inner city

Mission:

‘To be world class’. This HEI has a very high reputation for research and recruits top quality students in an international context.

Staff development policies:

Training courses for part-time staff. Appraisal system (triennial). Mentoring – for new lecturing staff, but comments that application is patchy. Career development is a matter for individual responsibility.

Academic departments:

Staff interviewed came from two departments. There is a high level of consistency in approach across the HEI except where noted. Both departments were in the disciplinary area of Social Studies. Unit C1 achieved high scores in the last RAE and QAA, unit C2 achieved a high score in the RAE and a moderate score in the QAA.

Sample interviewed:

Five senior staff: two heads of department, one newly appointed professor, one long-service reader, one newly appointed senior lecturer.

Five junior staff: one long service lecturer, two newly appointed lecturers, two hourly-paid teachers (both postgraduate students).

ISSUES ARISING, RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Issues that affect academic staff recruitment, retention and promotion

Factors outwith institution

Both departments were recruiting in international labour markets and demanded candidates of outstanding quality based on a narrow range of criteria concerning research reputation and pedigree (thus previous experience was acceptable only from a very narrow range of HEIs). For one discipline there was a great scarcity of such candidates due to the competition offered by lucrative posts in the private sector. For the other area the difficulty was not so acute as the competition was confined to that with rival HEIs.

Recruits often had a previous connection with the HEI (eg first or second degree). A good source of candidates was Europeans (including from the UK) who wanted to return after studying/working in America.

Location in the inner city is attractive to some candidates but presents substantial difficulties in securing accommodation, securing quality education for children, and commuting to work – thus is ‘double-edged’.

The HEI found it very difficult to recruit good administrative staff (due to labour market competition). This weakened the support infrastructure and led to academic staff carrying a greater administrative burden.

There was a major difficulty in retaining staff after the first four or five years. Some wish to return to their own or their partner’s country of origin. Pension and health benefits are

considered comparatively poor, and affordability issues became sharper for those with children.

The level of remuneration is affected by the outside market. *'It's certainly one of the factors that remuneration of professors is influenced by outside offers'* (C1.1).

Factors within institution

The HEI has a strong reputation that attracts staff from a wide range of countries.

The reputation of the HEI attracted students of a very high quality – staff commented that this facilitated their teaching roles and made teaching more enjoyable. This also created the opportunity to run summer schools, which generated considerable income to reward staff who participated in these schools.

Research criteria were paramount in all selection decisions. Academic staff were recruited on the basis that they had the potential to become professors.

There was a great reluctance by the HEI to utilise the internal labour market, eg from the stock of their own postgraduates and researchers. A strong contributory factor in this was the importance of a strong publishing record in the selection criteria, something which could only be gained with several years post-qualification (PhD) experience. However, many staff seemed to return to this HEI at a later point in their careers, emphasising the importance of the network.

Occupying a single site is advantageous for keeping the staff community close-knit but has created challenges in providing good facilities. Thus although recent investment had produced some excellent new facilities some staff resented their own *'shoddy facilities'*.

Turnover among junior staff was greatly exacerbated by two factors. The 'major review' which took place at the end of the probationary period presented *'a major hurdle'*, and some staff preferred to take up alternative posts elsewhere rather than undergo this. Indeed the longer than average probationary period before the offer of an established post was a disincentive to recruitment. The other factor was the impersonal culture.

The style and approach of academic managers was important. In one department the style was supportive and the incumbent head took the job seriously and sought to operate a democratic approach. In the other, senior staff sought to avoid the role of head at all costs which had led to major problems.

Virtually all power and decision making authority rested with the professoriate in the HEI. There was a sense that they selected staff to their agenda and in their own image. This group were virtually all white and male, and the HEI had a poor reputation for equal opportunities.

Staff perspective on working at this HEI

There were three interconnected reasons why staff had chosen to become and remain academics. These were:

- *Autonomy: 'You were your own master from day one in a way that you wouldn't get in any other job'* (C1.1). There had been some erosion of this but it was still considerable from a comparative perspective. This was particularly noted by those who had taken up temporary secondments or had previously worked in other sectors.

- Variety: The ability to choose one's own research topics and approach was supported by variety in teaching too. *'You have amazing flexibility in terms of what you teach and how you teach it'* (C2.4).
- Flexibility: Staff were permitted to come into the premises when and how often they wished. This mitigated against disadvantages of the location, eg by avoiding rush hours.

Most staff were very enthusiastic about their own discipline and the opportunity to pursue a vocational interest.

The positive aspects of the academic job were diminished by a number of factors. There had been work intensification, particularly for junior staff. Thus although all staff worked very hard, senior staff had more autonomy. Thus: *'I seem to work all the time and I enjoy what I do, almost all of it'* linked to *'I enjoy teaching because I don't get too much of it'*(C2.1). The main increase in workload had come in teaching and associated activity. *'Teaching is something that people take very seriously and they see it as worthwhile and rewarding in its own right, but there is too much of it ...because there are too many students.'* (C1.1). It was the most recently recruited staff at lecturing level who, aided by hourly-paid staff, undertook all the undergraduate teaching, where the numbers had increased.

Despite the dominance of research in this HEI, especially in criteria for recognition of contribution and career advancement, staff did seem to value teaching. The increase in class size made lecturing more difficult and unsatisfying for students and staff.

Staff complained vociferously about the degree of bureaucratic control over teaching administration. They felt there was too much *'huff and puff'* (C1.2) about exams, and it was very difficult to introduce new courses and modules.

Younger staff noted a major generational gap between themselves and older, more senior staff. They felt they had no time to 'sit and think' and were on a 'different wavelength' from the professoriate. This reason, allied to strongly individualistic behaviour, created a culture which was both impersonal and soulless.

Pay was not perceived as of direct importance in its own right but purchasing power was. *'I find the salaries appropriate; what I find impossible is the housing costs are crazy'*(C1.3). , Some staff were less affected by this concern with accommodation costs: those with high-earning partners, other sources of income or who had lived in London for a long time.

Hourly-paid staff

The use of hourly-paid staff was so widespread that this merits a sharper focus. *'More recently ...particularly with younger members of staff, they seem to be more keen to farm out their teaching'* (C2.5). Virtually all undergraduate seminars and many lectures were undertaken by hourly-paid staff or temporary lecturers. This group is drawn from PhD students, both full and part-time.

There was a range of contractual types and *'all sorts of funny statuses'* (C2.3). Recently there had been a change in title from 'part-time' to 'occasional', with the comment that that was to avoid the part-time regulations legislation.

There seemed to be an expectation that all PhD students should teach. New PhD students did not seem to object, but some more experienced students of this group felt exploited. *'Part-time teachers do an awful lot of work, a lot of which simply isn't remunerated'* (C2.5). This role was not very lucrative for students, *'as a source of income you couldn't rely on part-time teaching here'* (C2.5).

These teachers felt isolated from lecturing colleagues and excluded from departmental meetings, *'the part-time teachers don't have contact with the department as a whole'* (C2.5). Some lecturing staff offered more support but this was the exception rather than the rule.

Some completing postgraduates were offered temporary lectureships (one-year contracts) which were salaried positions. However, a recent move had been to limit these to 50% pro rata. This was a deliberate anti-retention policy.

2. How do HEIs encourage effective recruitment, retention and promotion of academic staff?

Recruitment

The HEI utilises fairly standard practices in recruitment, although the Appointments Board is made up of the professoriate, and personnel professionals have a fairly minor role in selection decisions. As yet, there is no obligation for members of panels to have equal opportunities training. The attraction of the HEI's reputation ensured high quality fields. But one department found great difficulty in filling vacancies despite this. This department also used international conferences to locate strong candidates from abroad and conduct a preliminary interview there. In the most recent round of junior appointments, it had to make some 15 offers before they got two acceptances. At a senior level of appointment this department found it much easier to use a 'poaching' approach. Thus two professors had recently been head-hunted via the informal network.

The HEI had a policy of permitting a market supplement of 30% on top of salary. Even so the department with the scarcity due to competition from other sectors still found it hard to recruit. It could offer the top of the scale plus the supplement but then found it was under pressure from that individual to be promoted at a very early stage. The department also sought to offer a better overall package by promising access to other income sources (eg beyond contract teaching) and reliefs from teaching and administration. The other department was under less competitive pressure and did not offer such incentives. For professorial appointments there was more flexibility as salaries were individually negotiable.

Retention

Retention difficulties with junior, unpromoted staff were widespread throughout the HEI. Around a third of staff left within the first four years. The response to the perception that the probation period was too long and too onerous had been to reduce the period from five to four years: *'People had left because they could not face what they had to go through'* (C2.3). There appeared to be no attempt to address the other major reasons for turnover such as poor management, a less than supportive culture, insufficient salary level and bureaucracy. Although some staff complained of being overburdened, the maximum amount of teaching in terms of contact hours was supposed to be 120 hours per year, which is low compared with other HEIs.

There was a sense from the centre that was not echoed at departmental level, that the supply of new recruits was plentiful. Promotion is used as a retention policy. Those who are offered a post elsewhere are likely to receive a counter offer of promotion from the HEI.

Retention is much less of an issue for staff with longer service. Indeed even staff who have been bypassed for promotion seem very reluctant to leave. Comments such as, *'it's a pretty good deal here'* (C1.4), and *'there are a lot worse places to be, I'm sure'* (C2.3) exemplified the belief that being a lecturer here was as good as more senior posts elsewhere.

Promotion

All staff below the level of professor are appointed on the probationary scheme. In rare cases the major review at the end of this could be accelerated. Evidence about the quality of teaching is presented at this major review but only has a very minor influence on the decision to offer a permanent appointment.

Promotion is almost impossible without the support of departmental professors. For unsuccessful candidates it is a *'gruelling experience'* (C2.3). The key criterion is research excellence. Recently introduced is an 'out of phase' scheme to respond to staff receiving job offers from elsewhere.

The review and promotion system is perceived as opaque: *'There really isn't any kind of transparency and of course, therefore there isn't much faith in the system because people don't know how these decisions are made'* (C2.4).

One reason staff are uninformed about such procedures is that the staff handbook is now exclusively on the intranet, and *'hard to locate'* (C2.3).

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

As research is so dominant in this HEI, a lot of emphasis has been put on the RAE, *'well, the RAE provides the major performance management'* (C2.1). Although institutional management did not seem *'to have been too vicious'* (C2.3) in responding to the RAE, with only a few staff reclassified as senior teaching fellows and taken off the main academic scale, there were some consequences:

- On policy: *'This department is an archetypal example of what you do if you go for RAE – you recruit me instead of recruiting a young blood and it's not healthy'* (C2.4). [In order to improve our grade] *'luminaries have been appointed...who attend two days a year...bypassed appointment procedures....head of department never even consulted about who to be appointed'* (C2.3).
- On research dissemination: *'My book counts the case as a bloody article...this is just dumb!'* (C2.4); *'quantity not quality'* (C1.2).

However, the RAE was seen to lead to rewarding outcomes whereas the QAA did not. *'Relatively less work in RAE [than QAA] and it is something we should be doing any way; [teaching quality visits] are particularly onerous'* (C1.2).

A formal system of student evaluation has been present in the HEI for some time. Awards were given to staff who got the best results but they are not very prestigious. Hourly-paid staff got good evaluations, by and large. Most senior staff paid little attention to evaluation and it had negligible impact on progression. Heads might respond to a very poor evaluation. To ease administrative burdens, forms were now completed online and the response rate among students was much less.

Innovation or research into teaching were not valued. Accreditation of teaching and the ILT were considered to be irrelevant to this HEI.

The personal tutor system had now virtually withered away. Junior staff saw pastoral care as a burden that they had insufficient time and training to deal with.

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

Few staff seemed to take a planned route; opportunity and serendipity played a greater role.

The only way to receive tangible recognition of contribution at this HEI was to produce research outputs. The best way to do this was to focus on a specialist research area and maximise reputation. Staff *'found it difficult to break away from this'* (C2.3) and those who sought to explore new areas found it be a *'career mistake'* (C2.3).

The definition of valuable research was narrowly defined to academic outputs. There was little interface between university and practitioners, *'it's really kind of frowned upon'* (C2.4).

Development and career management were considered the responsibility of the individual. This was accepted by management and most staff; *'the difficulty here is that academics just don't seem to care about anybody else other than themselves'* (C2.4). Appraisal was occasional and not found to be very useful by junior staff. The mentoring system was also only seen to be beneficial on the rare occasion where the relationship was good. Senior staff did not seem to understand the needs of junior staff. Junior staff resented the fact that senior staff emphasised research then allocated most of the teaching and administration to them.

Research stars were fast-tracked for promotion. Successful applications for external posts gained powerful leverage. Others had the choice of leaving or maintaining a junior faculty position with associated benefits and disadvantages.

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

Informants focussed on how the institutions might improve practice.

Appointment

Some staff commented that there was an overly narrow set of criteria for selection. This seems to be predicated by the assumption that only staff with qualifications and/or experience from a very select set of HEIs possess the necessary attributes to work at this HEI. They suggested that needs to be broadened.

Enhanced salaries are available, and there is considerable flexibility in reward. In the view of junior staff, the extended 'trial' period in operation may offer a source of labour to take the greatest teaching loads and act as a 'buffer' for the professoriate. But for the junior staff this leads to insecurity, job dissatisfaction and resentment and may cause them to leave before the trial period is concluded.

Retention

There was a strong belief that the specific problem of the costs of living in London needs to be addressed. This could involve the provision of subsidies for accommodation in some form (a very popular suggestion for recently appointed staff).

Staff would value a more inclusive approach to departmental management, a more collegial culture and fewer bureaucratic hurdles.

One head of department commented that there needs to be explicit recognition that a blend of staff are required, not just 'research stars'. Even a recently appointed research star said that such staff are a poor role model to junior staff and students. The head suggested that tangible recognition is required for those who contribute to activities other than RAE-based research.

Junior staff argued that development policies and the culture need to be overhauled so that those with responsibility actually deliver. A 360-degree approach to appraisal was suggested.

Promotion

There were comments that the criteria that are currently applied need to be widened. The process should be made much more transparent and proper feedback should be given. Those that had been successful in promotions remained silent on these issues.

All policies

Junior staff proposed that processes should be assessed in their ability to deliver equality of opportunity. The experienced part-time tutor was very critical of arrangements and practices covering part-time teaching, and suggested that the whole issue of part-time teaching staff needs to be addressed urgently.

Key points

- Location in the inner city sharpened reward issues.
- HEI relies on elite reputation to attract and retain staff.
- Research dominates all selection decisions.
- Retention problems for new and junior staff.
- Heavy use of hourly-paid teachers (postgraduates).
- Only recruiting stars entails not meeting everyone's aspirations and creates a poor blend of staff to address all the roles.
- Most important factors for staff were autonomy, variety and flexibility. This HEI delivered that quite well.

CASE STUDY D

Size: Large
Type: Post-1992 university, 'a university of applied learning'
Location: Urban

Mission:

Stresses teaching and research of value to society; equal opportunities; the employment, enrolment and empowerment of staff and students from the whole community.

Staff development policies:

A staff development manager works with departments to support development and to provide appropriate in-house training. Attendance at conferences is encouraged and supported; registration for higher degrees is encouraged and supported. Several departments have become 'Investors in People'. There is an appraisal system which serves to identify further personal training needs. Part-time members of staff can 'choose' whether to present themselves for appraisal. Part-timers are given a continuing professional development (CPD) interview when they first take up a contract.

Academic departments:

Staff were interviewed from D1 a diversified technology department, and D2 a modern language centre outside the faculty structure, reporting directly to a member of the executive. D1 achieved a moderate RAE score and some members of staff have received in-house recognition for the high quality of their teaching. D2 is trying to develop a research base and has yet to be assessed for teaching quality.

Sample interviewed:

Six senior staff: two heads of department, one reader, three principal lecturers.
Two junior staff: one lecturer, one hourly-paid part-timer.

ISSUES ARISING, RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. *Issues that affect academic staff recruitment, retention and promotion*

Factors outwith the institution

The HEI serves a post-industrial, multi-cultural, regenerated city. Property prices are medium range. There is easy access to surrounding countryside.

There is a very small pool of suitably trained and experienced applicants for posts teaching innovative technology courses in the diversified unit D1. Additionally, there are many employment opportunities available to these applicants. D2 finds it difficult to identify part-time lecturers in some lesser taught languages.

Factors within the institution

A no-redundancy clause, negotiated with the academic staff union, has affected the ability of both departments to make appointments. The diversified D1 has carried staff for whom it can no longer provide a full timetable for the past six years. These staff are not willing to undertake retraining, although it is available to them.

Despite the explicit equal opportunities policy within the mission statement, and large local ethnic minority populations, both heads of department claimed difficulties in making

appointments from the whole community. In neither department had any of the academic or support staff declared disabilities.

Internal communication is of a high standard. There are several internal news magazines and yearly faculty reports. Statistical information is regularly produced.

2. How does the HEI encourage effective recruitment, retention and promotion of academic staff?

Recruitment

Staff vacancies are posted on the web. Telephone and televisual links are used to interview overseas candidates.

With relation to salaries, there is limited flexibility in making new appointments.

D1 is able to employ lecturers, who have employment experience outside HE, at salaries above starting points on the scale. However, the department is not able to join the research transfer market: promises cannot be made to attract identified external candidates.

D2 has *'complete control over the budget we get. If we haven't got enough money, we need to generate more income.'* Because of the high proportion of hourly-paid lecturers and the number taking on *'more teaching contact than if they were in a full-time job'* (550 hours), staffing costs are high. The appointment of additional full time lecturers has waited on the development of courses intended to attract full-time students.

D2 has criteria to determine which applicants should be placed on its part-time staff register. These hourly-paid lecturers are largely invisible within the HEI.

Retention

Working conditions are generally good. Some, even senior, staff share tutorial accommodation, but these rooms are not crowded and they are well equipped. The campuses are pleasant. Dining facilities and coffee outlets are shared with students; there is a wide choice. Administrative staff support is adequate.

Full-time staff have a contract which defines the balance between expected teaching, research and other tasks. The hours allotted for research are roughly a quarter of those for teaching; they are most commonly taken as a block.

'There is no difficulty in retaining staff, rather the reverse. Higher education might be improved if there was more mobility' (D2).

There is a reported high level of dissatisfaction amongst the casual part-timers, who remain unsure of their hours from term to term. They face insecurity about their level of income, which may fluctuate even within one year. There is a perception that fractional contracts are only given *'if your face fits'*. Nevertheless, the part-time staff, the majority of whom are women, vary very little.

Promotion

The HEI has planned an academic work force where 35% are at principal lecturer level. Aiming for this staffing profile, it has an annual round of promotions. The heads of departments D1 and D2 both commented on how the prospect of promotions motivated staff. The criteria for promotion are distributed to all academic staff each year.

In the academic year 2000-2001, promotions to principal lecturer were targeted to recognise excellence in learning, teaching and assessment.

The generic job description for principal lecturer emphasises flexibility. Where departmental heads see flexibility as their most urgent need for the future, as in D2, they may not sufficiently refine the job description. This has left one recently promoted PL unsure of his particular strengths and future role within the department.

Promotion to professor is also offered annually. The criteria for such an award are circulated to eligible staff, and list excellence in management, entrepreneurial activity and research. In practice, the committee considering applications is perceived as biased towards research.

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

External funding intended to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is having a positive effect. Promotions have been linked directly to teaching and learning, and internal recognition and prizes awarded to excellent teachers.

D2 is leading in the national development of a system of tandem observation to refine teaching skills, and is developing benchmarks for language teaching.

To an extent, the RAE is driving staff development in both departments, but this development does not involve all staff.

The head of D1 would like to appoint a reader, but regards this as impossible if he is unable to make 'promises' to external candidates.

In defining nine new appointments, projected to be made over the next three years, the head of D2 sees research capability as a priority.

Part-time staff tend to view progression as an appointment to a full-time post.

In D2, the manager of part-time staff sees a narrow line between involving staff and exploiting them. *'Part-timers must not believe that participation outside the classroom will lead to a full-time or fractional contract.'*

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

Career development is seen as possible within the HEI. Promotion to professor is linked to research activity. Promotion to principal lecturer most usually depends on managerial activity, but in 2001 was linked to teaching.

The diversification of course provision, particularly where this is achieved through collaboration with other institutions, provides opportunities for staff development.

Personal appraisal interviews were seen as an opportunity to review career achievements and plan career development. The success of the appraisal process depends on the competence of the interviewer.

Access to quality staff development and appraisal may be of increased importance to staff without tenure. Hourly-paid staff receive no allowances (time, pay) for these activities.

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

Senior departmental staff are involved in appointments. Criteria for appointments are negotiated internally and circulated to all candidates. Faculties have an overview of staffing.

The staff unions are fully recognised and involved in negotiations to safeguard the interests of staff.

CPD appears to be a reality for those members of full-time staff who choose to take advantage of in-house opportunities.

Promotion processes are open and transparent.

Key points

- The university is achieving its objective: to enrol and empower students from the whole community. It is not employing academic staff from the whole community.
- Teaching is valued and (in 2000-2001) can lead to promotion.
- Both departments surveyed were engaged in the diversification of provision.
- Staff recruitment and retention is only a problem in rapidly developing areas (creative technology).
- Hourly-paid staff face uncertainty about fluctuations in hours, and levels of earning, and receive no remuneration for staff development
- The HEI is trying to develop a research base but development is hampered by no-redundancy clause.

CASE STUDY E

Size: Large
Type: Pre-1992 university
Location: Urban

Mission:

Emphasises its role in the development of higher education; a research strength in both core disciplines and rarer subjects; claims that its teaching is supported by the latest technologies and a strong research base; offers a wide choice of interdisciplinary degrees.

Staff development policies:

All staff are required to take part in continuing professional development (CPD). Two main units support staff development: the Staff and Departmental Development Unit and the Flexible Learning Development Unit. Attendance at conferences is expected and supported, and research sabbaticals are available. There is an appraisal system, and membership of ILT is supported and encouraged. However, access to in-house staff development is not open to the hourly-paid, those on fixed-term contracts, and those jointly appointed to the NHS teaching hospital.

Academic departments:

Staff were interviewed from two departments. E1 is located within the Faculty of Arts and achieved a high RAE score. Newly appointed junior staff are required to complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education and are given a time allowance to facilitate this, otherwise the improvement of teaching is not a priority. Most teaching is undertaken by junior staff and postgraduate students. E2 is in a school of medicine and has yet to develop a research base; it has prioritised research development and the improvement of a poor teaching QAA score.

Sample interviewed:

Six senior staff: four professors, including a departmental chair and a director of unit; two senior lecturers .

Four junior staff: two lecturers; a researcher; and a PhD student who was an hourly-paid lecturer.

ISSUES ARISING, RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Issues that affect academic staff recruitment, retention and promotion

Factors outwith institutions The HEI is at the centre of a thriving, culturally diverse city. The decline in industry has been offset by growth in the service sector. There is easy access to neighbouring semi-rural towns and countryside. A wide range of property is available.

Thus far, department E1 has not experienced difficulty attracting suitable applicants for posts. If anything there appears to be an overproduction of postgraduates capable of contributing to the work of E1.

There is a small pool of medical education specialists, not all of them doctors.

Factors within the institution

Both departments are facing pressures from the institution to balance their budget.

The results of a merger with a smaller department and entry into the research transfer market have left E1 top heavy and financially non-viable. E2 has been in deficit for many years but is now struggling to remove this debt.

There is no explicit commitment to equality of opportunity within the HEI mission statement. E1 is dominated by white males. There are only two (6%) women in the department. *'Female and, to an even greater extent, ethnic minority applicants are rare'* (E1). The perpetuation of a culture is evident in the university education of staff: 41% from Oxford, 28% from London and 12% from Cambridge; 81% of the staff from three HEIs.

Within E2 the pattern of staffing is so different (80% women) as to suggest that medical education may be coming to be seen as a woman's job.

In neither department had any of the academic or support staff declared disabilities.

Staffing is largely devolved to departments. This appears to foster a continuity of culture, with appointments being made of candidates who conform to a departmental image. The identification of known candidates for key posts, prior to interview, appears to be common in both departments.

In E1, the criteria for appointment to a junior post now include a publication record. This has driven up the age of first appointees.

Within E1, the three-year rotation of departmental chair has not led to cohesive departmental development. The present holder of the chair has completed the Northern Universities HE management course and regularly attends in-house updating courses. The next chair of the department may not have any management qualification.

Internal communication is of variable quality.

2. How does the HEI encourage effective recruitment, retention and promotion of academic staff?

Recruitment

Staff vacancies are posted on the web.

The HEI devolves responsibility for budget and staffing to departmental level. Chairs of departments are heads of resource centres, budget managers, and have authority under the central powers of the university for staffing.

With relation to salaries, considerable flexibility is reported in making senior appointments.

In E1, the professors may all be paid at differing rates. Three, if not four, of the appointees were recruited to aid departmental development by strengthening the research base. They were identified, invited to apply for a particular post and, after a move had been agreed, they were able to negotiate the terms of that move directly with the pro vice-chancellor for staffing.

E2 has seen the need to increase the level of appointment of the director of the medical education unit in order to attract candidates of sufficient calibre.

At the same time that E1 was actively seeking to appoint known researchers to personal chairs, rolling fixed-term contracts were used for junior appointments to avoid long-term financial commitment. One junior member of staff in E1 had accepted three consecutive fixed contracts on the repeated promise of permanent employment.

Retention

Working conditions vary from building to building. E1 academic staff enjoy individual tutorial rooms in two connected buildings. They are well equipped and of a reasonable size. E2 staff are mostly accommodated in a 1960s block, several sharing crowded rooms with no natural light. There is still a separate staff building housing the senior common rooms. The campus is within easy reach of the city centre. Administrative staff support is adequate.

In the past, staffing has been stable, with only the natural progression of people leaving or retiring and the making of new appointments. Senior staff have been able to avoid teaching to concentrate on research, leading to departmental lack of interest in students, and teaching as an undervalued activity.

In E1, the situation has been changed, not through any change of heart. Research remains the perquisite of senior staff; students are still an interruption. RAE transfers and a merger with a smaller department have resulted in financial difficulties, making early retirements and restructuring (redundancies) imperative.

In the institution, medical education was marginalised. Change has come about mainly because of the publication of government policies in 'Tomorrow's Doctors' and a poor teaching quality assessment.

E2 was created to give a steer to the development of education courses and the supervision of students. The department has also accepted that the attitudes of medical staff generally must change. The money which follows students is supporting research, therefore *'teaching has to be valued'*. It may be that a teaching transfer market is opening as medical education becomes more valued. There is movement between HEIs. The first head of E2 was not a doctor and was appointed as senior lecturer. The present head, a doctor, is professor and honorary consultant. E2 wishes to enter the RAE, and is developing pedagogical research. The department is in the grips of change and is an exciting place to work. The professor would like to see *'a continuing planned movement of staff rather than an inertia resulting from staff stagnation'*.

In E1, another apparent side-effect of the RAE has been the lowering of the age at which senior lectureships are made.

Dissatisfaction is found amongst junior and hourly-paid staff. Junior staff see their chances of promotion blocked as their teaching workload increases and the time available for research diminishes. One lecturer had been excluded from the RAE because of the slow progress of his research; he felt that this has blighted his career prospects. Hourly-paid lecturers see little chance of a permanent appointment. Freedom from family ties and a willingness to be mobile are crucial. Despite this, there is no apparent movement outside academia.

Promotion

One of the major changes, at this and other universities, during the past nine or ten years has been the establishment and expansion of the gift of the personal chair. There has also been a degree of recruiting at top level in order to strengthen departments for the RAE.

The introduction of research quality assessment revealed and promoted 'a thriving research transfer market'. Senior lecturers and professors are tempted to move institutions by the offer

of a personal chair – moving to a higher status university, or one perceived to have greater financial stability, or where the level of student applications is consistently high, or the subject library extensive. Once a move has been agreed, the pro vice-chancellor for staffing would conduct the negotiation of a salary.

The introduction of personal chairs has speeded up the process of internal promotion, with senior lectureships being awarded to younger candidates. However, junior appointments are shifting to an older age range as, increasingly, a publication record is expected.

The criteria for promotion to senior lecturer are circulated to members of staff each year. They are described as: excellence in two out of three of teaching, research and administration. Promotions are considered by a central committee. The process is not transparent. In application the criteria appear to have different weightings, favouring research. Measures intended to increase the recognition of good teaching will be in place during 2001-2002.

3. What are the relationships between maintaining and improving standards within the HEI and the progression of their academic staff?

The HEI sees the value of ILT. All academic staff are encouraged to take up membership and presently, ILT fees are paid by the institution.

A poor QAA score is driving curriculum, departmental and staff development in E2.

The effects of the RAE on the research transfer market are detailed above. These effects have mainly benefited senior staff, although it is suggested that promotion to senior lecturer is now at an earlier age. Two members of E1 staff, a professor and a lecturer, claimed that the RAE has resulted in shallower and less wide-ranging research; both claimed the pressure was to publish more often rather than to produce quality research.

The RAE may foster significant development of research and researchers in medical pedagogy. There is anxiety that the research will not be adjudged, by the RAE, on the same basis as medical research.

4. What are the routes for academic staff to develop their careers?

There is evidence, from both departments, that academics are deliberately changing their research interests to areas in which there is perceived to be a shortage of activity: increasing their publication prospects and accelerating their continuing career development.

Postgraduates wishing to enter academia see the need to be mobile as paramount.

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

The heads of both departments mentioned the excellence of the Staff and Departmental Development Unit (SDDU) which provides in-house training for a large academic, administrative and technical staff, *'from porters to professors'*. Information about courses is posted on the web. Courses span teaching, research, management and leadership, personal and departmental development. In addition to a full-time staff of 15, SDDU 'buys in' trainers and lecturers from other institutions. Books, periodicals, research papers, computer-based learning materials and other audiovisual materials are available to staff on loan. SDDU offers

both a postgraduate certificate in learning and teaching in higher education, recognised by ILT, and a postgraduate diploma, but does not provide courses in IT.

The Flexible Learning Development Unit (FLDU) has been established to fill a perceived gap. The FLDU has drawn academic staff on secondment from across the institution. It helps colleagues who are introducing technology-supported teaching and learning.

Key points

- The university protects an elitist status. Research is still the only route to promotion in the older departments
- Changes of attitude to increase the value of teaching and respect for students are slow to take effect
- Although promotion criteria are published and circulated, research is believed to have a higher weighting than teaching and administration
- The institution invests in staff and departmental development
- Responses to a poor QAA score are driving curriculum development in E2
- Medical education may be an area in which a shortage of well-qualified staff is revealed.

CASE STUDY F

Size: Medium

Type: 20th century teacher education foundation, diversified and merged

Location: Small town with several outlying sites, one 400 miles away

Mission:

Stress on teaching, valuing diversity and meeting local educational needs, which is echoed in staff interviews. Teaching, rather than research, is the traditional priority here.

Staff development policies:

Appraisal system in place but patchily implemented for all full-time and some part-time staff. Internal staff development programme; some funding for external development opportunities. Also some evidence of difficulty in managing a developmental culture across multiple sites.

Academic departments:

Staff interviewed came from two departments in different faculties. The first was a fast-growing multidisciplinary department which had achieved a high QAA score, but was not making a departmental RAE submission. The second, concerned with teacher education, has nearly a quarter of staff on hourly-based or proportional contracts. It did not make a departmental RAE submission.

Sample interviewed:

Five senior staff: one dean; 2 heads of department; one research professor; one principal lecturer.

Six junior staff: two senior lecturers (one permanent, the other on temporary secondment); one lecturer; one research associate; one research and teaching assistant; and one hourly-paid part-time visiting lecturer.

ISSUES ARISING, RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Issues that affect academic staff recruitment, retention and promotion

Factors outwith institutions

There are national shortages of suitable candidates, particularly in the multidisciplinary department subject area, which is expanding in many competitor institutions. Increased salaries for schoolteachers also make moving into HE less attractive. The attractive local environment aids recruitment and retention, and also attracts many retiring lecturers who are available to teach part-time. The availability of such willing part-timers who are not totally dependent on the pay to live may help to release established staff for research and other non-teaching activities, but has implications for the careers of aspiring full-time staff. Another environmental factor is the lack of ethnic diversity in the locality, which is reflected in staff and student applicants and populations.

Delays in getting funding for staff create problems for departments developing new courses. For expansion and innovation, development funding is needed in advance of the arrival of the students.

Factors within institutions

The geographical spread of this multi-site institution provides a '*challenge for communication*'. Although a few interviewees note benefits in having a variety of different subcultures and feel that growth has provided new opportunities, others dislike the travel and

would even resign if asked to teach on a distant campus. Moreover, the management information system is not equally efficient for all sites, so some academic staff can feel isolated, unsupported, and ignorant of potential staff development and promotion opportunities.

In one department, staff felt that a recent good QAA rating would help attract staff and students. RAE pressures affect only a small minority of staff here. Some expressed frustration about lack of time and opportunity for research, and queried the degree of commitment to developing research; while others remained sceptical of its value in an HEI which sees itself as primarily a teaching institution. Some research-active staff deplored the lack of experienced researchers amongst senior staff and said they might move in search of what one termed '*a proper research culture*'.

The HEI has seen considerable growth and change, and anxiety about restructuring emerged in several interviews. While structural changes may create promotion possibilities for some staff, clearly they also unsettle others and exacerbate communication problems, described by one interviewee as '*consultation without listening*'.

Reward systems issues

Declared sources of job satisfaction include: direct contact with students, working with supportive colleagues, an open 'apolitical' culture, relative autonomy for departments, for courses and for individual staff, and good or improving facilities. Satisfaction depends on staff knowing that they are appreciated by the 'institution' as well as by immediate colleagues.

Managers noted that some flexibility is possible in deciding the point on the scale for appointment of new staff. Appointment low on the scale is difficult, when staff with professional experience are required. Even so, financial reward may attract some back from HE into professional practice. Some frustration was expressed about lack of opportunities to motivate staff through temporary responsibility payments.

Teaching is the key activity here and research is a minority interest. Some staff, with research experience gained elsewhere, expressed regret about limited opportunities to do research. Even funding, without release from teaching and administrative duties, did not suffice because '*however, much you get paid, you only have 24 hours in a day*'. Readership procedures do exist for research-active staff, and a few readers have been appointed. Some staff noted that there is no equivalent for '*people who are ambitious in terms of their teaching*'. Suggestions include a readership equivalent for good teachers, and sabbatical opportunities for improving teaching, as well as research.

2. How do HEIs encourage effective recruitment, retention and promotion of academic staff?

Recruitment

Well-documented, thorough and transparent procedures are used for recruiting and interviewing full-time staff, but staff on secondment or temporary contracts may have less rigorous procedures. Part-timers are treated differently: they are generally recruited by departments, not through central personnel procedures, and may not be interviewed formally. Only the payroll section can know how many there are in all.

Recruiting highly paid teachers and nurses to HE is becoming harder. We found at least one example of a lecturer who had returned to work in schools because of the pay differential. In another instance, recruitment of a senior professional at a salary comparable with earnings in

practice resulted ultimately in substantial salary increases for HE colleagues in equivalent posts.

Retention

The pleasant campuses have a relatively low staff turnover. Facilities and adequate administrative support appear to affect how people see their workload. The general environment does facilitate recruitment on some campuses, and there is some evidence that it also aids retention. Some staff said they felt particularly comfortable with the ethos of the college or commented on the attractive facilities.

The quality of management at departmental level was seen as very important. In one department in particular, many interviewees stressed the positive value of the management style of the head of department in motivating them to stay and contribute to the department's growth.

In a predominantly teaching institution, it was acknowledged that opportunities for research may encourage retention. Having an organisational climate appropriate to the institution's priorities helps – but even staff in an institution prioritising teaching may have research aspirations too. Employment of research and teaching assistants has potential to stimulate research culture and free teaching staff to undertake research, while also allowing research and teaching assistants to launch their academic careers, but this may not be a quick or easy solution. Heads of department acknowledged a high profile researcher was probably also necessary.

There was some positive comment about the staff development programme, which may encourage retention; and mentoring schemes are established in some departments, even for part-timers, if they have substantial contact with students. Some part-timers may also have access to staff development. Difficulties in funding external staff development opportunities were, however, acknowledged at all levels.

Promotion

Despite the emphasis in the mission statement, promotion opportunities are not available purely on the basis of good teaching, although some senior and junior staff commented on the need for this. Generally, promotion links the member of staff to a particular administrative responsibility, and this can limit flexibility for the individual if they subsequently wish to relinquish this. There are promotion opportunities in taking on the extra roles and responsibilities resulting from expansion of the institution. Both managers and staff found the notion of rotation of responsibilities attractive – rather than permanent, personal promotion, staff would receive reward for temporary responsibility.

This institution has considerable variety of staff – researchers as well as teaching practitioners who have come to academic careers after work experience, and may return to practice. Promotion opportunities for those who wish to stay in research, rather than move into teaching, are limited. Those who had worked elsewhere were probably more aware of the differences in culture and research facilities. Moving from a teaching culture to a research culture is a complex enterprise and may be inhibited by the institution's lack of awareness of the different needs of researchers – working conditions, equipment, support for development, budgets. *'Changing culture is a long haul.'*

Career opportunities are limited where skills are being developed that seem unhelpful for other jobs – eg a track record in course development is not useful for academic promotion, but could be for administrative promotion.

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

The impact of the QAA, particularly in terms of focus on learning outcomes and planning, was generally seen as positive. Nevertheless, in a recent QAA assessment, efforts had been made at departmental level to limit the disruptive impact on teaching, by ensuring that most of the preparation was handled by a small team. While a good QAA score is seen as useful, graduate employment statistics are also valued as confirmation of quality of teaching.

Research in this setting is seen as desirable, rather than essential: the RAE is not a driving force. Although hourly-paid staff and research and teaching assistants are used to release some full-time staff for research, there is no evidence here of detrimental impact on teaching quality.

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

Promotion for teaching staff is achieved primarily through taking on administrative responsibility. Expansion and mergers have also helped some develop their careers, although others feel promotion prospects were damaged by the influx of new staff.

Alternative routes to career development are less well represented. Research and teaching assistants have opportunities to develop in either direction: these posts are designed as '*a good half-way house for them to find out whether they could teach*'. Some have already moved to lectureships, from which they may seek eventual promotion to reader. One interviewee perceived a lack of flexibility in coping with people with non-standard experience, who have not been in HE all their lives, commenting: '*If you have a good idea in your 20s, they give you the job; if you are in your 30s, they give somebody else the job; if you are in your 40s plus, they tend to sack you for it.*' Opportunities for career development for part-timers and hourly-paid staff are severely limited.

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

Appointment

The system of interviewing, and involvement of departmental staff in short-listing, interviewing and commenting on candidate's presentations is thorough, although many temporary and part-time staff by-pass this system. Nevertheless, some part-time staff may access induction and development, and a mentoring scheme.

Retention

The value of good departmental management, listening to and involving staff in decisions, was mentioned by several as a factor in retention and motivation. The staff development programme and appraisal system attracted some positive comment, although there is a need to ensure equality of opportunity for staff on all campuses, and to have sufficient funds in place to allow needs to be met. Senior management support for ILT membership was expressed, although some staff showed less enthusiasm. Best practice is perhaps ensuring that all staff members have appropriate development opportunities: for some this may be developing their teaching; for others, opportunities to research. Some funds have been allocated to departments for sabbatical opportunities: it is too soon to evaluate, but good practice may emerge.

Promotion

As with appointment, good practice in promotion requires well-documented, transparent procedures. Expansion of the institution provides opportunities for sideways moves, but may also constrain career advancement, and reluctance to teach on other campuses may even lead

some staff to leave the institution. Opportunities to take on administrative responsibilities are plentiful, and as administration is the principal route to promotion in this institution, junior staff may take this on as a stepping-stone to promotion. Rapid expansion may have repercussions: managers need to cherish staff, reduce isolation, ensure that new staff members and those in new campuses and outlying organisations feel part of the institution.

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

The most frequently cited need was to find ways of rewarding good teaching, rather than linking promotion to administrative roles. '*HEFCE could look at people who are ambitious in terms of their teaching*' – this might be a question of promoted posts, or a readership equivalent procedure for demonstrating excellence, which might be rewarded, but for a limited period. Other requests were for ways of using sabbatical time to develop or refresh teaching approaches, rather than undertaking research.

Any strategy must take account of the diversity of career aspirations of staff. In an institution without a strong research tradition, appointment of research staff needs to be followed through with support and development, if these people are to be retained and a genuine research culture developed.

Although treatment of part-time staff was acknowledged to have improved in recent years, there is still scope to improve their access to staff development and career development opportunities. With tight budgets delegated to heads of departments, they are under great pressure to use hourly-paid staff to free permanent staff for further course development or research, or to cover the gaps before funding becomes available to staff new courses. Perhaps there is a need for tighter control, at institutional or even central governmental level, to prevent abuse. An interviewee who has experience of such practice did not blame heads of department for succumbing to pressure, but declared, '*I think the whole system is set up in a way that is prejudicial to certain people's opportunities*'. Certainly the role of the head of department, who may be responsible both for balancing the books and for developing staff, is pivotal. Institutions may need to provide high quality staff development in both areas, and to consider checks and balances to ensure that both responsibilities receive appropriate attention.

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

Establishing a readership-equivalent scheme for excellent teachers would have associated costs, but some of this might be recouped by involving such 'readers' in developing colleagues' teaching. Unlike administrative promotion, this would not be permanent, although potentially renewable. Appointing research staff needs to be followed up by support, with both facilities and opportunities for professional development. If administrative promotion leads to acquisition of responsibilities for career development of junior colleagues, there will be cost implications for retraining promoted staff to meet these new responsibilities. There may also be a financial cost associated with legal liabilities if part-time workers are not treated equally and are doing equivalent work.

8. *Overview*

No substantial differences in approach between the two departments were discovered, although the positive impact of good departmental management emerged as a much stronger theme in the interviews in one department. Both departments have considerable input to the recruitment of full-time staff, and considerable autonomy in appointing to less secure positions. In both there was some tension between teaching and research, although the issues here were very different from those in traditional research-oriented universities. Both

departments demonstrated the difficulties of development in a multi-site organisation, as well as the positive impact of expansion.