PROFESSIONAL VALUES IN A UK HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION – A THEMATIC EVALUATION

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the perceptions of academic staff in one department of a UK university to establish the extent to which professional values are compatible with current pressures. Drawing on contemporary literature, the meanings of professionalism in an HE context are described. An evaluation of the global, national and institutional contexts under which academics operate are presented through literature review and by evaluation of key policy documents in the institution. Together these provide the context of external and internal pressures on academic engagement.

Interviews were conducted to present an understanding of the perceptions of academic staff. These interviews were analysed using thematic analysis by an inductive, data-driven approach which through codification of themes provide a framework for the presentation of the professional values of staff. The final analysis presents a cross-referencing of individual professional values against the espoused values of the institution in which the individuals operate.

The results of the literature reviews demonstrate that academics operate in a culture of social and financial accountability driven by New Public Management policies which have significantly increased the marketization of higher education and promoted the commodification and consumerisation of HE. The evidence further suggests that the institution under consideration operates by utilising predominantly competitive evaluative mechanisms to influence practice that is largely directed to enhancing reputation and marketability as espoused by various university league tables.

The final evaluation suggests significant areas of conflict between professional values and the current pressures on academic engagement and concludes that academic staff have reshaped their values through engagement in increasingly competitive activity that they use to provide personal utility in preference to institutional utility. The results conclude that performativity mechanisms used by the institution to measure departments and individuals have come to be seen as an opportunistic means for the sometimes deceptive demonstration of excellence and competence.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... ii
List of Tables ................................................................................................................ v
Glossary ........................................................................................................................ vi
Motivation .................................................................................................................... 1
Professionalism in higher education .............................................................................. 7
  Introduction ............................................................................................................... 7
  The development of the university ........................................................................... 9
Meanings of professionalism ....................................................................................... 20
  Profession ............................................................................................................... 20
  Professional ........................................................................................................... 23
  Professionalism ...................................................................................................... 24
  Professionalism in HE ............................................................................................ 28
  Professionalization ................................................................................................. 31
  Chapter summary .................................................................................................... 33
External and internal pressures on academic engagement ........................................... 35
  Introduction ........................................................................................................... 35
  The global context .................................................................................................. 35
    Global context summary ....................................................................................... 45
  The national context ............................................................................................... 46
    National context summary .................................................................................... 55
  The institutional context .......................................................................................... 56
    Institutional value as evidenced by policy ......................................................... 58
    Brown University and the culture of performativity ......................................... 60
    Departmental performance monitoring policy ............................................... 65
    Promotions policy ............................................................................................... 70
    Academic regulations .......................................................................................... 75
    Institutional context summary ............................................................................. 78
  Chapter summary .................................................................................................... 80
Methodological Considerations ................................................................................... 82
  Introduction ........................................................................................................... 82
  Ontological and epistemological foundations of research ..................................... 83
Methodological approach .......................................................................................... 97
  Knowledge acquisition through interview ........................................................... 97
  Participant anonymity ............................................................................................ 104
  Sampling ................................................................................................................. 106
  Results analysis method ....................................................................................... 110
  Chapter summary .................................................................................................. 112
Presentation of findings ............................................................................................. 114
  Introduction ........................................................................................................... 114
  Thematic codification ............................................................................................. 116
    Role definition .................................................................................................... 121
    Accountability ...................................................................................................... 133
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of worth</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional vs market values</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of findings</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of findings and conclusions</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role definition and institutional values</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability and institutional values</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of worth and institutional values</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation and institutional values</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance and institutional values</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Script: Reflections and recommendations</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for the HEI</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for personal practice</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections on research practice</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further research</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1 – Semi-structured interview Questions</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2 – Interview Extracts</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2 – Ethical Approval</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Localisation of student population 1908-9 ........................................ 15
Table 2 Five dimensions of professionalism ..................................................... 26
Table 3 Ball's professional and market values ............................................... 57
Table 4 Key for institutional value indicators ............................................... 58
Table 5 Extracts from NSS results 2014 ...................................................... 64
Table 6 Departmental evaluation process KPIs ........................................... 67
Table 7 Grade 9 promotion routes ............................................................... 71
Table 8 Characteristics of grade 9 teaching and learning criteria .................. 72
Table 9 Characteristics of grade 9 research and scholarship criteria .............. 72
Table 10 Characteristics of grade 9 enterprise criteria ................................ 73
Table 11 Characteristics of grade 9 leadership and wider contribution criteria ................................................................. 73
Table 12 Shift towards market values at Brown University ......................... 79
Table 13 Interview questions ........................................................................ 104
Table 14 Interviewee characteristics ............................................................ 110
Table 15 Summary of themes from participant interviews ......................... 121
Table 16 Role definition summary ............................................................... 132
Table 17 Accountability summary ............................................................... 141
Table 18 Development of worth summary ................................................... 147
Table 19 Organisation summary .................................................................. 152
Table 20 Governance summary ..................................................................... 155
Table 21 Summary findings from thematic codification of interviews .......... 159
Table 22 Value cross-reference summary ...................................................... 163
GLOSSARY

**DLHE.** Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education

**FPL.** Fractionally Paid Lecturer

**FDI.** Foreign Direct Investment

**HE.** Higher Education

**HEI.** Higher Education Institution

**KIS.** Key Information Set

**KPI.** Key Performance Indicator

**MNC.** Multi-national Corporation

**NPM.** New Public Management

**NSS.** National Student Survey

**QAA.** Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

**RAE.** Research Assessment Exercise

**REF.** Research Excellence Framework

**SAC.** Student as Creator

**SSR.** Student : Staff Ratio

**TEF.** Teaching Excellence Framework

**WTO.** World Trade Organisation
MOTIVATION

The motivation for this work is based largely on two factors – firstly the professional role of the author of this work and the concerns about academic integrity and pressures on professional values that have been experienced at a personal level over nearly 18 years of employment with the same University; secondly the engagement of the author in the writing of essays that have contributed to study of the Doctorate in Educational Policy of which this thesis forms the final part, the conclusions of which have presented indications about the impact of global, national and institutional pressures upon the author and the seemingly inevitable gradual change of personal practice at the expense of academic integrity as institutional pragmatism has steadily begun to subsume personal values. To help frame the rest of this work, these two motivations are expanded upon in this introduction and the main research question and sub-questions that fall out of the main question will be considered.

The author of this work is currently a Principal Lecturer at a UK University and has worked exclusively at this University since 1998, working in a Science Department which currently comprises approximately 600 undergraduate students, 25 taught postgraduate students, 30 postgraduate researchers, 27 full time academic staff and a handful of visiting Research Fellows and Fractionally Paid Lecturing (FPL) staff. Since 1998 the Department has undergone significant change, moving from what was once predominantly a teaching only department with exclusively undergraduate students into what is now a research-focussed department with a good reputation in all aspects of University engagement that is seen as a prime example of a department that successfully adopts research-informed teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate level whilst increasing its research reputation through successful RAE (and hopefully REF) returns. Initially engaged almost solely as a teaching academic, the author has developed knowledge and skills in the quality
assurance arena, and whilst still a largely teaching focussed academic has increased the number of institutional roles at the University and currently has influential roles both within his Department, his Faculty and across the University in a number of quality assurance roles that also encompass influence in the maintenance and creation of University policies and regulations. Current responsibilities include implementing teaching and learning policy and procedures at the department level as part of the role of Departmental Director of Teaching and Learning and institutional policy forming roles as (amongst others): a member of the University Regulations Oversight Group; member of the Portfolio and Partnerships Approval Group; and as the Faculty Director of Academic Affairs is responsible for ensuring adherence to institutional policy at the Faculty level by seven separate departments (including his own), and as part of that role a member of a handful of strategic level committees that assess, enhance and form institutional policy for academic affairs and quality assurance across the University. In addition to these roles, the author is responsible for the direct management of the Department curriculum and is also engaged as Unit Leader on five study modules at Undergraduate Level, and delivery and supervisory roles at Postgraduate Level on two separate taught MSc programmes. These roles (amongst others) position the author as someone with responsibility for both the formulation and application of academic policies and procedures and give a perspective as both the recipient and generator of policy. It should be noted that the author has only limited engagement in the publishing of academic research, and whilst he has published papers during the eighteen years spent at the University, the author is not considered to be ‘research active’ and is contractually classified as a teaching-focussed academic.

Whilst it has to be acknowledged that the role of the academic has become increasingly fragmented into a plurality of occupational groups (Holroyd 2000) and the mix of duties identified above is probably not unique in a Higher Education (HE) environment, it is likely that the differing roles and duties identified above give the author a useful perspective on engagement with policy forming strategies and procedures whilst concurrently maintaining a
practitioner view of those same policies. This has been engaged with at a time of significant change in the world of academia as the move towards what Rhoades and Slaughter refer to as the “academic capitalism in the new economy” (Rhoades and Slaughter, 2004 p37) which has created, for the author at least, a questioning of the nature of professional integrity as practice and policy react more to markets and the commodification of education (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005) in ways which could be seen as infringing upon the professional values of the individual.

In writing the three essays that have preceded this thesis (Jacques, 2006a; Jacques, 2006b; Jacques, 2011), the author engaged in research and reflection on the changing relationships between both national policy formers and HE institutions, and also between HE institutions and individual academics. Through these essays has run a general theme of uncertainty with regard to the future of the HE sector in the UK, and perhaps more significantly questions have been raised as to the impact of policy and procedural change upon the professional credibility of the academic. Two main conclusions were arrived at in these papers, firstly that changes have forced a gap between what Evans (2008) refers to as the demanded (the specific professional service level demands made of an occupational group) and the enacted (practice as observed by those outside or within the occupational group) professionalism of individuals; and secondly, in line with the warning Delanty (2001) expressed at the turn of the Century that accountability would drive a move towards market values in favour of professional values and monitoring systems as a replacement for professionalism, and that has been reinforced as a concern by others since (Furedi, 2010; Foskett, 2012; Gibbs and Barnett, 2014; Slaughter et al, 2014). The major concern of the author that has been solidified through the process of writing these prior essays, has been that performance measures, both explicitly stated and implicitly applied have influenced a change in personal professional practice whereby quality in all aspects of the academic function is evidenced rather than engaged, and where the quantification of largely market-driven educational performance measures and not the academic values of the
individual are the main drivers for personal process and academic decision making. What remains open to question at the outset of this work is whether the concerns of the author are held purely individually or whether they are shared by other academic staff. This thesis therefore investigates the perceptions of selected professional values of academic members of staff of a single Department in a UK Higher Education Institution, which for the purposes of this thesis will be referred to as Brown University, and seeks to investigate to what extent these values are compatible with the pressures currently impacting on professional engagement in HE.

This thesis will therefore examine the extent to which academic staff within a Department similarly perceive if there may have been an erosion of professional values and credibility in the academic processes at the enacted level in light of recent changes to educational policy at both local, nation and international level. Changes which appear to have brought about what some commentators from the beginning of the century and earlier identified as a shift towards an educational system no longer based upon the rather abstract social well-being of the nation to the more concretised 'customer focus' whereby UK universities are increasingly focussed upon consumerism (Naidoo, 2003) and where today’s students seek to have a degree rather than to be learners (Molesworth et al, 2009). This, combined with a changing economic environment in HE whereby the introduction of student fees has meant that the student population is more likely to "take costs into consideration in their judgement of how worthwhile was their university experience" (Metcalf, 2005 p108), and to consider universities not as a means for learning but as “a ‘meal ticket’” (Biggs and Tang, 2011 p25) is presenting tensions and challenges for the academic and as far as this work is concerned, the potential impact on professional values is paramount. The main research question is therefore:

- What are the perceptions of academic staff in one department of a UK HE institution as to the extent to which professional values are compatible with current pressures?
As with most research projects this overarching question lends itself not only to decomposition of the research question itself, but also into two sub-questions relating to the means by which the research is undertaken - the first, to establish the extent (the \textit{what} needs to be done) and the second, to consider methodological consideration (the \textit{how} it can be done). Decomposition of the main research question together with consideration of these two sub-questions therefore leads to the following sub research questions:

- What do we mean by HE professional?
- What are the external pressures that impact upon HE professionals?
- What are the internal pressures at Brown University that may impact upon HE professionals?
- What are the most appropriate methods of investigation for this thesis?
- How should academic members to question be selected, and by what means should these questions be asked?
- Are the espoused professional values in Department at Brown University seen to be compatible with the perceived pressures?

Chapter One of the thesis will attempt to answer the question ‘what do we mean by HE professional?’ It will set a context for subsequent investigation, by presenting a brief history of higher education and an evaluation of literature in the field of professionalism that will ground the thesis in current theory and policy and provide a foundation on which to explore the current values of HE professionals in practice.

Chapter Two will provide a critical review of the current internal and external pressures that impact upon academics in the Department and will include an investigation into policy at Brown University. A review of the global pressures
and national policy changes will be presented through a literature review, whilst the institutional pressures will be established through empirical research by evaluation of key policy documents from Brown University. This chapter therefore provides a demonstration of contemporary theory and its application in a local context.

Chapter Three will present a philosophical justification for the approaches to research engaged in this thesis by presenting a consideration of the ontological and epistemological foundations for the research; a justification of the methodological approaches adopted; and present details of the shaping of the methods adopted through a piloting process.

Chapter Four will detail the results of the investigation and provide insight into the identification of professional values expressed by the members of the academic Department.

Chapter Five will contain analysis of the findings, and present a discussion on the extent to which the professional values identified through the research are, or are not compatible with the pressures identified in Chapter Two.

The final chapter of the thesis will present recommendations to Brown University that fall out of the analysis of findings, and also present a reflection on the research processes undertaken in conducting this work and give consideration of where future research in this area might be conducted.
Chapter 1

PROFESSIONALISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction

This thesis presents an investigation into the pressures that are causing changes to academic practice in a UK Higher Education institution (HEI) and the extent to which HE professionals in one particular department in that institution identify tensions between their own values and those values that are evidenced in the practices and policies of the institution in which they operate. Whilst therefore being concerned with perceptions and possible implications of differences between personal and institutional values by attempting to characterise and define those values, it is not the aim here to try to define the means by which values can or have been given meaning. That said, it is useful to present some indications of a working definition for values that will form the basis of this evaluation.

The concept of value, that is ‘values-as-criteria’ that are adopted as standards under which sociological evaluations are made (Williams, 1968), has been defined as “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence” (Rokeach, 1973 p5). Values can provide both an individualistic notion based upon this belief, or just as meaningfully present a picture of institutional values as a social product of shared understandings and beliefs (Arrow, 2012). Personal values are largely developed through familial heritage and through life experiences but also can be thought of in terms of social interactions between institutions and individuals (Schwartz and Bilsky, 1990) and as such it is as meaningful to talk about the values of an academic as it is the values of a university. In practice the guiding principles held by individuals are more likely to be conditioned by a series of values rather than the wholesale application of a single value, and as such the adoption of potentially hierarchical and ordered values are more likely
to be adopted as a value system (Williams, 1968; Vickers, 2013) and variations in individual experiences, cultural engagements, and educational developments are more likely to present individual differences in value systems and potentially also to evidence their stability (Feather, 1975; Lawton and Cowen, 2012). Rokeach concluded his consideration of the nature of value systems by presenting a revised definition of the meaning of values that included the use of values as a standard that guides and determines action; that permits evaluation of attitudes; comparison of self to others and as providers of underpinning ideological foundations of our social interactions (Rokeach, 1973). Values in this context can therefore simultaneously be standards and comparators of both institutions and individuals. Value systems therefore, whilst inherently difficult to articulate and define in isolation are traceable and identifiable in the context of culture, society and its institutions and in personality. It is this conclusion that forms the basis for definitions of values throughout this thesis.

The value sets of educational practitioners still exhibit many of those that bound the historical foundations of universities which are discussed in the following section, but these have not remained unchanged and consistent in their hierarchy of importance. Plato’s *Akademia* was founded upon the moral value of the continual search for truth, on the pursuit of wisdom as a guiding virtue and notions of knowledge for knowledge’ sake. The Humboldt University enshrined the cornerstones of contemporary university values of specialism in research and the notions of academic freedom. Newman’s university embedded within higher education the value of moral sensibility and the liberalisation of intellect together with the key notion of university as a means to deliver social purpose. These values are still understood and meaningful in modern universities, but the extent to which they are seen to be under threat because of a change in the power bases of Universities present one of the foundations for this thesis.
Thus in an attempt to answer the first research question of this thesis – ‘what do we mean by HE professional’ this chapter will address the historic foundations of contemporary HE by presenting a brief summary of the development of the university as an educational institution, and then consider the nature and meaning of professionalism that underpin the professional engagement of academics in a UK HE institution.

The development of the university

The foundations of the modern university derived largely from a previous societal need to train ruling elites, either military, religious or other service-based individuals who are to fulfil the needs of the society and guide and shape current and future societal norms (Himanka, 2012; Duryea and Williams, 2013). Many societies in the ancient world adopted scholastic entities where political, religious, military, cultural doctrines were taught, often alongside mathematics and physical sciences (Kilpatrick, 2014). Examples include the Confucian schools in China, the temple schools of the Aztecs and Buddhist vihāras where the priests of medieval India received instruction (Perkin, 2007). However, the Greek traditions of Plato’s Academy founded largely on the principles of debate and dialecticism are generally recognised as providing the model for the dissemination of knowledge that was to become known as the university (Peterson, 2012; Herman, 2013).

All societies have formed typically self-contained mechanisms for the generation, replication and dissemination of intellectual property and possessed figureheads whose possession of the valued elements of a cultural knowledge singled them out as guides, experts and teachers. However, there is no monopoly of process in passing on knowledge of and to society. As Halsey pointed out, this privilege is “incorporated into all social intuitions: the family, the workplace, the church, the town hall” (Halsey, 1992 p17), and the university is a realization of a single idea – that of “a social institution to ensure the continuity of intellectual work” (ibid), one that largely formed as an almost uniquely European concept. Only in Europe did the university evolve as an
embodiment of an “autonomous, permanent, corporate institution of higher learning” (Perkin, 2007 p159) which has subsequently been adopted as the de facto norm of higher educational ethos.

Where the introduction in 12th Century Europe of the university form we know now differed from the ancient Akademia of Plato was largely in two key areas – both of which have resonance today – firstly in their market driven nature and secondly in the means of their provision of knowledge (Paul, 2005). The Akademia was exclusive and not open to the public but it did not charge fees for engagement with it, whereas the bulk of the 12th Century institutions were market-oriented and students paid lecturers fees (Baltes, 1993; Dikyol, 2012). The foundations of critique and reason in the Akademia had become supplanted by the needs of the guilds system in the first European universities of Bologna, Oxford, Paris and Parma to the extent that the bulk of teaching was largely delivered in the form of masters instructing students as apprentices, suggesting that universities act as providers, not as generators of knowledge (Kerr, 1987; Rothblatt, 2006). Most of the early recognised universities “converged toward the orthodox model of guild organization” (Perkin, 1984 p23) giving them an intrinsic worth to the societies in which they operated “which was the key to their adaptability and longevity” (ibid).

This longevity in the engagement of the European university pervaded, through some highs and lows until the foundation of the University of Berlin in 1810 by Wilhelm von Humboldt (Bahti, 1987; Jiali and Yanqian, 2015). Empowered by King Frederick William III, von Humboldt saw the university as the provider of the moral soul of society, a place where knowledge (Wissenschaft) could be articulated in its purest sense through absolute freedom of teaching (Lehrfreiheit) and freedom of learning (Lernfreiheit) (Sinclair, 2013). It was thus a place where the purpose of higher education was not that things should be learnt but where the skill of learning becomes paramount; where the mind must be exercised not trained and where the educational process of the individual
must be evidenced in a social context by the applicability of knowledge in the world (Bahti, 1987).

Humboldt was the first influential advocate of the Kantian idea of universities founded upon academic freedom and was largely concerned with research and teaching but was keen to establish that the scholarly dichotomy of higher education is not between those two, but instead between school and university, whereby university “treats scholarship always in terms of not yet completely solved problems… while school is concerned essentially with agreed and accepted knowledge” (Elton, 2011 p68). A further key principle in the Humboldtian model lay “in the realisation… that direct interference by outside bodies is counterproductive” (ibid p65) – the first concretised notions as the university as an autonomous institution removed from state and commercial interest. Yet there is an inherent acknowledgement that the university is in effect, granted its autonomy by the same state that it purports to be autonomous from, and in response the university provides the state “with a moral and spiritual basis, becoming in effect a substitute for the Church” (Delanty, 2001 p33). This view epitomised the notions of the Enlightenment ideal of the university where the institution becomes not solely the holder and provider of knowledge, but also becomes an important aspect of the creation and maintenance of national heritage. Earlier incarnations of universities were driven by guilds and cities, whereas the modernist university became firmly associated and allied with the notion of the state.

Humboldtian ideals largely formed the basis for the specialised research-oriented systems of higher education that we see today, and the structural manifestations of professorships and chairs at the University of Berlin had great global influence. Arguably however, the dichotomous nature of the facets of higher education forming into the two disparate arms of teaching and research may have led to value systems in higher education that are skewed “with research being considered significantly more prestigious than teaching” (Elton,
The implications of this for the institution of Brown University will be considered later in this work.

Perhaps the most significant implication of Humboldt’s approach to education as learning for learning’s sake was in the rapid growth of student numbers in Germany from roughly 12,000 in the early 1850s to nearly 6 times that by 1914. The radicalisation of the key principles of higher education had seen the profile of students change dramatically from that previously of those destined predominantly for service of state, clergy and the professions to become increasingly drawn from “the business class and from the new lower middle class of middle-ranking government officials and other white-collar workers and the lesser professions and schoolteachers.” (Perkin, 1984 pp35-36). In contrast the UK universities of Oxford and Cambridge were still typically shaped around an elitist tutorial system primarily functioning as providers of “gentlemen and clerics rather than scholars and technocrats” (Delanty, 2001 p33). It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that English universities slowly adopted a more modernist approach (Bok, 2009).

In the UK the growth of educational expansion was heavily influenced by the work of John Henry Newman. Newman contested that the university must form around a founding idea and the debate he prompted as to what that founding idea should be was presented in a series of lectures and debates given in 1852 which were published that same year as The Idea of the University (Newman, 1996). Akin to Humboldt, Newman contended that university education must be separate and distinct from professional or vocational instruction and that the key tenets of higher education should be of a “particular expansion of outlook, turn of mind, habit of thought, and capacity for social and civic interaction” (Newman, 1996 pxv) but which should take place in an institution that should promote moral decency and social sensitivity, whilst simultaneously founding its teaching upon the principle that specialisation of the teaching is a path that only leads to narrow minds (ibid). Newman believed in a broad, liberal education system which teaches the tenets of reason,
discrimination, comparison and analysis and which shunned narrow specialisation in favour of providing students with a solid grounding in all areas of the curriculum.

Newman’s focus was still on teaching and research as the foundations for the provision and acquisition of knowledge, but research figured less in his model than in that of Humboldt and he held pastoral care and social instruction in much greater stead than had applied in the German tradition – less on the ‘professor’ than on the ‘tutor’. Newman’s liberalism highlighted an educational process in literature, science and philosophy that should prepare students for “life in a fallen human society… through the teachings, faith, and practice of the Roman Catholic Church” (ibid). Perhaps surprisingly Newman proposed that universities should be free of religious influence and interference and he distinguished between the teachings of a Roman Catholic university and the religious dogma of the Roman Catholic Church and contested that the university ideal is not oxymoronic to religious faith, but moreover provides “the excellent ends of liberal education and the still higher ends of true religious faith” (ibid pxvi). Newman argued that the Church is necessary for the integrity of the university since, as Halsey describes, the university “still has the office of intellectual education; but the Church steadies it in the performance of that office” (Halsey, 1992 p25).

This secular, pluralist and inclusive ideal of a university as defined by Newman was not without opposition, specifically from the utilitarianism movement with chief exponents Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill whose work at University College London resulted in the removal of theology from curricula from that institution (Thompson, 1990). Newman’s Idea and its supporters were not concerned with practicality or employability, and as such they have been criticised for maintaining the notions of elitism, for as Halsey notes, “for all their revolutionary implications of the industrial society in which they lived, [they] did not differ essentially from ancient and medieval traditions” (Halsey, 1992 p36). Newman could not have envisaged the levels of participation in the
HE sector of today, but the influence of his vision can still be seen in the modern university – the idea that the university is not and should not solely be a provider of qualifications, it has a greater role than that – the shaping of the individual, the creation of alumni and the influence of the university should go beyond temporal and geographical locations, and the mark of a university education should stay with the graduate all of their lives.

The higher education knowledge systems of the enlightenment tradition that to a large degree continued with liberal modernity lost impetus in the early twentieth century and the age of specialisation. The Humboldtian link of the “essentially moral relationship[s] between teaching and research, education and personality, knowledge and culture” (Delanty, 2001 p52) was broken and the increase in student numbers who engaged in a university education for the advancement of their career saw the introduction of “cognitive spheres (or faculties)” (ibid) as universities responded to what Max Weber saw as two types of social personality and power that became the products of higher education – the traditional and the rational (Weber, 2009a), the former presenting the underlying foundations to the university in the formulation of curricula, the latter in the drive to ensure the enhanced occupational and social authority to the graduate population. Weber characterised this shift away from the thirst for education for education’s sake in favour of an irresistible desire for certification that could ensure a salaried position which might provide the social prestige of being a cultivated man (Weber, 2009a) whilst at the same time evidencing the skills for actually engaging in the role of chosen employment – the expert (Beetham, 2013) - in essence strengthening and legitimising the British Victorian distinction between education and training. With this change of emphasis and structure came an increasing degree of complexity and with that the bureaucratisation of the university and the widening of the gap between the spheres of teaching and research. Together with the identification of what Weber saw as a struggle in adapting education to industrialism between the cultivated man and the expert as embodied in an expanding bureaucratisation of public and private relations of authority combined with a seemingly ever-
increasing importance of expert and specialised knowledge (Weber, 2009a). Weber further noted that the relationship between teacher and student had also rationalised as a knowledge process and had weakened and marginalised the ‘higher’ function of spiritual enlightenment (ibid).

In the UK the reaction of the university sector to the post-industrial demands of higher education was largely manifest, with the possible exception of Oxford and Cambridge, in line with Weber’s characterisations. In 1908/9 the majority of the growing number of students at civic universities were enrolled on single subject courses directed to newer technological and professional occupations such as electrical engineering, scientific civil service, chemistry and teaching and in the main students at these institutions were primarily drawn from the local community (See Table 1 Localisation of student population 1908-9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Student population drawn from a 30 mile catchment area (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leeds</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University College London</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
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Table 1 Localisation of student population 1908-9
(Adapted from Halsey, 1992 p61)
The impact of specialisation in a post-industrialised education system therefore was to see a rapid growth in higher education – growth in the number of students obtaining degrees, and growth in the number of universities. Underpinning this growth in the UK was the governmental recognition of the importance of universities, both in terms of social and economic influence. Of course with growth comes the need for continued funding and investment in the knowledge generation process, and Foskett identifies four key elements in the provision of state support for university growth through the twentieth century:

1. The Universities Grants Committee (formed in 1919) to ensure government funding for universities

2. The adoption of a dual funding model that allowed payment be made both for teaching and research

3. Growth in the number of institutions through the creation of redbrick universities

4. The means to provide student funding through the grants system.

(Foskett, 2011)

The culmination of the educational revolution of the Twentieth Century, prompted by mass society, the opening up of the franchise, the rise of popular culture and new consumption patterns founded on the impact of two World Wars, brought about the decline of elitism and incorporation of a new strata into education – the middle class (Bochel and Daly, 2014). The increased demands on higher education in the 1960s, led largely by pressures from schools who criticised the universities’ requirements for admission saw the government instigate the Robbins Committee in 1963 from which came a new raft of Universities – ‘the plate glass universities’ created with the aim of moving toward mass education. Whilst the recognisable threshold between elite and
mass education of a 15% participation rate in HE was not broken until the mid-
1980’s (Scott, 1995 p5), the foundations of the Robbins report echoed
throughout the latter decades of the twentieth century and the arrival of the
‘post-1992’ universities and the widening participation political agenda saw HE
participation rates escalate to over 35% by the close of the Century (Chowdry
et al, 2013). It may be of significance to note that the institution under
evaluation in this research falls into the post-1992 universities categorisation.

In twenty first century UK the university has become a key element of the
nation’s economic profile (Breton and Lambert, 2003) and continued debate of
the role of HE in economic and social change in government-commissioned
reports such as the Leitch Report (Leitch, 2006) has been overseen by a
perspective that “the key route to expanding higher education effectively and
efficiently is the use of market mechanism” (Foskett, 2011 p26). In terms of
government policy and the role of the state, this shift towards marketization
was evidenced in 2003 when the Higher Education Funding Council for
England (Hefce), the ultimate successor to the Universities Grants Committee,
identified a shift in the nature of provision of higher education to a more market
driven approach by commenting that “students will not only expect to get a
degree and a good job. They will demand suitably qualified teachers who are
effective communicators. They will want the best support in their studies”
(Hefce, 2003).

The power of consumer demand in the educational process is therefore evident
not just in underlying trends, but explicitly enshrined within government policy
documentation that concretises the notions that change should be directed
towards the demands of the consumer. The student as customer has thus
become the focal point for education and this has been followed by institutional
moves to develop significantly customer-driven organisational cultures and
policy implementations (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2010; Hammond et al,
2006).
Some commentators argued that a strengthening of the power of the market has been promulgated and exacerbated by the implementation of the regulations on student top up fees, as Metcalf commented:

“being charged for education (rather than just having to pay for maintenance) may alter attitudes towards higher education, with students assuming the role of a consumer, weighing up value for money [and that] increased costs and the prospect of debt may lead students to consider more critically the quality of the services provided by their university and to take costs into consideration in their judgement of how worthwhile was their university experience.”

(Metcalf, 2005 pp107,108)

Hefce also acknowledged a major shift in the make-up of HE stakeholders in its Strategic Plan for 2003-8. It identified that “today’s students expect more than their predecessors … as graduates contribute more to their tuition costs, they will rightly demand more for their money” (Hefce, 2003). This same message is echoed in their strategic plan for 2006-11 but here there is an increased emphasis on the needs of "a much broader group of stakeholders" (Hefce, 2009 p1) and interestingly a change in terminology as the document regularly refers to 'customers' as opposed to 'students'. The implications of this shift in language has interesting ramifications for the future nature of the academic relationships that mould academic engagement (between student and institution; student and academic; and more pertinently for this thesis between academic and institution). Another shift in policy as identified by this latest strategy document is an implied reduction in the overseeing role previously adopted by Hefce as they "seek to rely on universities' and colleges' own accountability processes so that we can minimise the burden of accountability" (ibid). At the time of finalising this thesis it is interesting to note that rumours abound that institutional reviews by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) “could become a thing of the past” (Grove, 2015) under new proposals under consideration by the newly elected Conservative Government.

The removal of explicit oversight of quality in HE may be the latest in a series of policy changes that evidence that reforms in education have largely been directed towards installing relations of competition as the main mechanism for
increasing productivity, accountability and control (Olssen and Peters, 2005). Combined with the increased emphasis on University league tables and the recent policy adoptions which require HEIs to provide comparable market information on such educational performance factors as contact hours, employment characteristics, success rates and assessment strategies, (which will be discussed further in the National Context section of Chapter 2 of this work) Universities have become engaged in increasingly competitive activity.

These statements may present areas for concern for some since what underlies these assertions is that the activities of HE are likely to be directed towards meeting the needs of a ‘client’ not as personified by the traditional, somewhat abstract ‘social well-being of the nation’, but as the more concretised ‘customer focus’ whereby “market mechanisms such as league tables have been deployed to exert pressure on universities to comply with consumer demand” (Naidoo, 2003). The nature of education in the post-compulsory sector then is likely to experience a shift in the focus of accountability, from what once was seen as an obligation to provide the nation with suitably educated ‘useful’ graduates to an obligation to meet the more immediate demands of the student body – in essence to give students what they want, rather than what they need. Current Government policy suggests that this may be mitigated to some degree by changing the funding weights applied to certain subject areas (the impact of emphasising the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) agenda is as yet unclear), and there are many who are forecasting a demise in subject areas where immediate and tangible improvements in employment prospects are not clearly evidenced (Ferrall, 2011; Carnevale et al, 2012; Abel et al, 2014).

Further consideration of the implications of the advent of a market driven HE sector, the impact of globalisation and the marketization of higher education prevalent through the Twenty First Century will provide the foundations for the considerations in Chapter Two of this work of the external drivers affecting professionalism of current HE academics. However, before this can be
considered it is necessary to consider what is meant by professionalism and this will form the foundation of discussions for the next section.

Meanings of professionalism
This thesis is attempting to investigate the professional values of practicing academics, and to contrast those values against the pressures that currently enact upon them. Therefore, it is worth acknowledging the significant importance to the investigations in this thesis of the notions of professionalism, and in particular the meaning of professionalism within the context of academic engagement, and ultimately use these notions as a comparative mechanism for investigation of what professionalism means specifically to an academic within a department of Brown University. Perhaps at the outset it is worth creating some internal logic of definitions for this thesis such that names and terminologies can be consistently applied through this work, and for this section the key terms needing definition are profession, professional, professionalization and professionalism, and each will be discussed in turn.

Profession
Sociological researchers suggest that the professions traditionally formed around a shared collegial organisation based on shared identity and purpose that were exemplified as moral occupational communities (Durkheim, 1957) whose theoretical focus were based upon notions of trust (Evett, 2003) and the guarantee of competencies that are in essence self-regulating (Macdonald, 1995). In generalising the nature of professions it has been suggested that they have a common set of attributes in that they typically:

- require specific knowledge obtained through formal education;
- have requirements for entry into the profession;
- demand appropriate occupational skills and the means to keep them current;
• have a certification process to establish a fitness to practice;

• acknowledge a set of behavioural norms;

• offer occupational autonomy;

• provide a notion of calling;

• and are typically staffed by employees with connectedness to an association.

(Wilensky, 1964; Hall, 1968; Cullen, 1978)

For some, in defining the professions the only requirement is to present a generalised concept of them, for example the occupations of expert labour (Crompton, 1990); the occupations of the middle classes (Dingwall, 1999); or occupational control of the working environment (Freidson, 1994); but Hanlon suggests that the nature of professions is a shifting rather than concrete phenomenon that is “defined and redefined through continuous struggle between different occupational groups” (Hanlon, 1998 p45) and in light of his definition presents a list of the occupations the term encompasses: “doctors, academics, teachers, accountants, lawyers, engineers, civil servants” (ibid) but interestingly ends this list with “etc.”.

Evetts presents, in paraphrase (of Olgiati et al, 1998), a list to define the professions as those “involved in birth, survival, physical and emotional health, dispute resolution and law-based social order, finance and credit information, educational attainment and socialization, physical constructs and the built environment, military engagement, peace-keeping and security, entertainment and leisure, religion and our negotiations with the next world” (Evetts, 2003 p396).
Classically the professions were defined in functional terms, but were also associated with a social service ethos (Marshall, 1939) and both the support of, and agents for, change in social order and social norms (Parsons, 1939). However revisionists from the 1970's onwards (Collins, 1979; Larson and Larson, 1979) rejected the notion that the societal impact of professions can distinguish them from other expert occupations and presented the view that “by introducing unnecessary service monopolies into the labor [sic] market, they exacerbate occupational hierarchies and socioeconomic inequities” (Sciulli, 2005 p917). Whether one accepts that the professions are defined by specific list or categorisation of occupational groupings, what is generally accepted is that those roles designated as worthy of the epithet professions are essentially knowledge-based; afford workers within them with a considerable degree of autonomy and exclusivity; and which typically follow a period of tertiary education, vocational-based training and a degree of experience.

Freidson (2001) presented the notion that professions are exemplified by their requirement for specialist knowledge, not because this knowledge is secret or removed from the realms of other areas of work, but because it takes time and effort to acquire it. He identified the professions as “a set of institutions which permit the members of an occupation to make a living while controlling their own work” (Friedson, 2001 p17). He further distinguished the type of knowledge that exists within the purview of experts within the professions by identifying it as knowledge that “cannot be standardized, rationalized, or as Abbot puts it, “commodified”.” (ibid).

Hughes also highlighted the joint concepts of licence and mandate as significant characteristics of the modern professions (Hughes, 1958) by noting that by entering the profession one is legitimised in one’s expertise by licence or entitlement to engage in the type of work characterised by the profession, and of course by omission, those without licence, those not in possession of the requisite skills and qualifications are in effect excluded from engagement in that same work. Hughes’ notion of mandate further grants the professional the
right to define and characterise how others in the profession should, or must act. In this context not only do the professions “presume to tell the rest of their society what is good and right for it, but also they determine the ways of thinking about problems which fall in their domain” (Dingwall and Lewis, 1983 p5) and through the connected requirements of professional engagement promulgate these ways as indications of normative practice.

The professions therefore are typically self-regulating and self-evaluating in terms of practice within the bounds of the profession in question; trusted, and as a consequence well rewarded through authority, status or monetary reward; and possessing a homogeneity of values and viewpoints that both define and ultimately judge the culture within the profession (Johnson, 1972).

**Professional**

The definition of *professional* is relatively straightforward – professionals are those that practice their trade within a profession. If there is some contention as to the usefulness of the epithet *profession* to a specific set of occupational groups that are the *professions* as discussed above, it is probably the case that it is equally problematic to attempt to present definitions of who the professionals are.

If the historical characterisations of the professions of Cullen, Hall and Wilensky presented earlier still hold currency, then the professional in this context is recognised as being knowledgeable and their professional identity should be intrinsic within this knowledge. Additionally the function of the professional is, by societal recognition of their significance and import, identified as providing socially beneficial services that are often presented as altruistic or in some cases enshrined within the service orientation of the profession (Marshall, 1963). The natural predisposition of the professional in this context therefore is to engage through common educational experiences (that are dictated by the need to acquire the same licence as others to practice in the profession), common vocational experience (engendered by the
specialised occupational frameworks surrounding the profession), common perspectives on the means and mechanisms of engaging with clients (often through restricted access), and the engagement with professional associations (which can be manifest at international, national and/or local level) in common practices that reproduce throughout the profession in question through the requirement of the professional to ensure connectedness to their profession.

Whilst this definition of the professional still holds true, it is worth pointing out that by the end of the twentieth century the currency of the professional had been diminished by a lack of consensus relating to the actual meaning of the word professional (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996) and the application of multiple definitions of the word professionalism which are dependent upon the nature of the audience (Fox, 1992). For the purposes of this thesis however considerations of the perceived legitimacy or worth of the role of the professional are not of significant import.

Professionalism

The meaning of professionalism is notoriously contentious in sociological terms, as Freidson notes a vast amount of debate surrounding professionalism “is clouded by unstated assumptions and inconsistent and incomplete usages” (Freidson, 1994 p169), and consideration of that meaning will form the main discussion of the first part of this section. Subsequently this section will present consideration of professionalism with particular reference to practitioners in HE.

Eraut identifies a particular definition of professionalism by pointing out that “most accounts of the ideology of professionalism follow the functionalist models developed by Goode (1969), Merton (1960) and Parsons (1968) which accord primacy of place to the professional knowledge base” (Eraut, 1994 p1), and embedded trust within professionals who hold a normative set of values within their occupational engagement. This characterisation of the central normative values and practices of professionalism was popularised through the
work of Parsons in the 1950s (Parsons, 2013) who argued that professionalism, the capitalist economy and the rational-legal social order proposed by Weber (2009b) were interrelated and engaged as stabilising and balancing mechanisms in the maintenance of a fragile normative social order.

From the discussions above concerning the nature of the professions it is easy to see how many definitions of professionalism have been based upon the functional or occupational value definitions of the professions. Evetts refers to this in terms of categorising professionalism as organizational professionalism: professionalism based upon the standardisation of procedures and practices, largely through managerial control, which demand such measurement as target setting and performance reviews that drive accountability through managerialism (Evetts, 2013); but also offers an alternative idealised form of professionalism: occupational professionalism. Occupational professionalism is a discourse-driven construction founded upon collegial authority and based upon “autonomy and discretionary judgement and assessment by practitioners in complex cases” (ibid p787) where the development of strong occupational culture is embedded within codes of professional conduct, ethics and practice norms that are predominantly self-regulated. Professionalism in this context drives the practice of professionals in normative processes where the assumption is that they are generally optimistic about the positive contributions they make to society through the means of their own professional engagement (Evetts, 2003).

The demands on the professional of these normative processes can be identified through manifestations of what Hall (1968) and Snizek (1972) suggested could be grouped into five dimensions that are summarised (in Hampton et al, 2009) and presented here in Table 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional organisation as referent</td>
<td>Acceptance and use of standards and values beholden to the profession. Commitment to developing membership connectedness through attending meetings, reading professional journals and developing a professional consciousness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in public service</td>
<td>Acceptance and promotion of the professional occupation as a benefit to society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in self-regulation</td>
<td>Understanding that the barriers to entry to the profession is desirable and practical and this empowers the professionals to best judge the work of fellow professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A calling to the profession</td>
<td>A dedication to professional practice that is founded primarily on personal satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>The desire, and crucially the ability, to engage in occupational practice independent of regular managerial intervention.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Five dimensions of professionalism

However the notion that there is, or should be a generally accepted delineation and definition of what constitutes professionalism is coming into question from some quarters, with some arguing that professionalism can be applied to mean not only occupational classification, but also notions of professional virtue; as idealistic conceptions and to see these in normative terms – requiring therefore the acceptance of the need to establish and work with “plural conceptions of professionalism that encompass these elements” (Gerwitz et al, 2009 pp 3,4). Gerwitz et al suggest that we should not be thinking in terms of professionalism
solely as the concern of standards, ethics and of doing one’s job well, or of professionalism as legitimising discourse to reproduce identity, but instead consider professionalism as both of these things. Indeed, various representations of professionalism exist that include those presented above with the addition of others that support a multi-dimensional definition – professionalism as: a normative values system; a form of occupational control; a socially constructed dynamic entity; the basis of relationships between professionals; the foundations of specific identity; the application of knowledge to particular problem sets and both the determinant and basis of status and power (Ozga et al, 1995; Troman, 1996; Freidson, 2001; Nixon, 2001; Noordegraaf, 2007; Gerwitz et al, 2009; Evans, 2011; Evetts, 2013).

Freidson set professionalism next to the logic of the market and bureaucracy of managerialism as the third organising principle of the division of labour. This “third logic” grants professionalism the right to be sheltered from the tensions of the market and from the reasons and manipulations of state bureaucracy, arguing that the ideology of specialised knowledge; professionally controlled training and competences; and work that affords enlightenment without which we would be culturally impoverished, demand an idealised view that those who exhibit professionalism should be “independent of those who empower them legally and provide them with their living…[in order that they may] judge the demands of employers or patrons and the laws of the state, and to criticize or refuse to obey them” (Freidson, 2001 pp220-221). In this context professionalism relies upon specialisation, independence and autonomy as key foundations and requires the construction of boundaries of a field of practice which can be defined from within the profession. If one views professionalism from this perspective then, Freidson argues, professional monopoly is essential since professionalism “directly opposes the logic of competition in a free market [and that] freedom of judgment or discretion in performing work is intrinsic to professionalism, which directly contradicts the managerial notion that efficiency is gained by minimising discretion” (ibid p.3).
Evans conceptualisation of professionalism (Evans, 2008) centred not solely on the tenets of professionalism as occupational value, and professionalism as ideology as proposed by Evetts (2006), but more in line with the pluralistic approaches identified above together with a qualitatively neutral stance that implies that professionalism is descriptive of a sense of being that is evidenced in practice: “work practice that is consistent with commonly-held consensual delineations of a specific profession or occupation and that both contributes to and reflects perceptions of the profession’s or occupation’s purpose and status and the specific nature, range and levels of service provided by, and expertise prevalent within, the profession or occupation, as well as the general ethical code underpinning this practice” (Evans, 2008 p29). It is this definition of professionalism as a sense of being, together with Freidson’s ‘third logic’ that professionalism typically stands counter to the market and bureaucracy, which informs and underpins the investigations in this thesis.

Professionalism in HE

The quest for clarity of meaning of terminologies in this literature review must now turn to establishing an understanding of professionalism in a higher educational context. It is relatively easy to consider the applicability of the five dimensions presented in Table 2 above in the context of what might be termed classical academic professionalism, and previous research in this field has presented indications that these dimensions are largely applicable (Bledstein, 1976; Carr, 1992; Glazer, 2008), but contemporary views on the meaning of professionalism in an educational context are less easy to summarise. Much of the current research into the impact of policy on educational practice, professionalism and values is focussed primarily upon the compulsory education sector and this thesis will attempt to establish if the contemporary HE sector is following the trends identified in the compulsory education sector at the turn of the century, whereby teacher de-professionalism had been the consequence of government and institutional pressures that “resulted in a weakening of an extended notion of the role of the professional” (Bottery and Wright, 2000 p1), and where over the latter half of the last century the
perception of the teaching professional changed from a role with a high degree of trust and autonomy with high levels of discretion and accountability founded primarily on peer-based and value driven evaluation to “one which today is predominantly low-trust, involves extensive external quantitative accountability, and grants only limited professional discretion” (Bottery, 2006 p107).

Previous research into academic professionalism has suggested that the changes in the HE landscape discussed in The development of the university section earlier, and evidenced by Bottery above in the compulsory education sector have forced a re-evaluation of the meaning of academic professionalism (Nixon, 2001; Evans, 2011; Kolsaker, 2014). Whilst Kolsaker (2008) cited the key characteristics of the academic professionalism as “shared values, altruistic concern for students, educational expertise, high level of autonomy, generation of new knowledge, application of logic, use of evidence, conceptual and theoretical rigour and the disinterested pursuit of truth” (Kolsaker, 2008 p516), there are some that have suggested that changes to the academic landscape have resulted in the subordination of educational and social justice as the foundations of a values-based professionalism (Hacker and Dreifus, 2010). Instead HE professionalism has shifted to a more focussed engagement that is far less concerned with the holistic and more likely to be in the form of a ‘narrow professionality’ akin to that first proposed by Hoyle (1974) whereby the concerns of academic professionals are primarily focused upon the success of one’s own school, department or classroom; and where the influence of the market promotes a brand of professionalism based upon evidencing skills in managing markets, competition and income generation that “we might call ‘market or entrepreneurial professionality’” (Ball, 2006 p92) that result from the need for HEIs to become more business-like (Christensen and Eyring, 2011).

The demand for a more business-focussed professionalism in HE was a natural extension to the “call for greater accountability and efficiency in service delivery” (Leitch, 2006 p581) of public services. For the HE sector in the UK
this increase in accountability and requirement for efficiency has occurred alongside rapid expansion in the sector, and “changing ideologies about the most appropriate ways of providing public services … following several years of economic failure followed by the election of a strong right of centre government” (Filippakou and Williams, 2014 p71) which have seen an increase in calls for professional services to be provided to a higher standard and with a higher degree of efficiency which would be delivered through market competition and privatisation (Nicholls, 2014; Nazarko and Šaparauskas, 2014; Hazelkorn, 2015). Some argue that this approach serves as an attack on professionalism, and if one accepts Freidson’s definition of professionalism as the ‘third logic’ then it is easy to see how such policy adoptions have contributed to professional institutions becoming “more vulnerable to market and bureaucratic forces and less able to resist their pressure toward the maximization of profit and the minimization of discretion” (Freidson, 2001 p220).

In the education sector the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) has been identified as the keystone in England for “the introduction of the cultures and practices of new public management (NPM)” (Smith and O'Leary, 2013 p244) that has turned HE institutions into “producers of ‘market information’ and [made them] accountable to students and funding bodies” (ibid). Universities operate increasingly with “commercialisation, consumerism and performativity [as] the cornerstones of [their] economically oriented future” (Kolsaker, 2014 p129) and have seemingly embraced “NPM strategies, axioms and practices more traditionally associated with the corporate world” (ibid). NPM is underpinned by an ideological assumption that organisations function in ways that not only can be controlled, but should be controlled (Hoyle and Wallace, 2005) and is, in many cases supported by managerial positivism which “equates to the purposeful production and representation of data that deliberately excises inconvenient truths better to serve the interests of individuals and institutions” (Smith and O'Leary, 2013 p246).
There are even indications that policy makers in HE institutions have responded by creating market-like competition through NPM strategies that encourage HE professionals to spend relatively little time on the human capital of students and increasingly shift the focus of activity towards the generation of funds from external sources (Slaughter and Cantwell, 2012; Taylor et al, 2013; Slaughter et al, 2015) in what some see as the development of a new form of academic capitalism (Slaughter et al, 2014).

Consideration of the academic reaction to managerial positivism and this trend to new academic capitalism at Brown University will form a major component of the Analysis of findings chapter of this thesis, but for now the quest for a complete definition of terminologies used to underpin this research must be concluded with consideration of the fourth aspect of professionalism – professionalization.

Professionalization

The strength and persistence of professions as an occupational form has seen a considerable degree of expansion with an array of occupations claiming profession status (Lyotard, 1984; Perkin, 1990). In part this is as a consequence of what some see as the potential for increased justification in the worth of the work done in the professions, and as a consequence a justification for the high salary and status rewards through the monopoly control of work (Larson and Larson, 1979); and in part as a consequence of the changing nature of the knowledge-based economies (Malhotra et al, 2006). This professionalization of occupations beyond that of the more classical professions discussed above was evidenced through “increasing specialization and transferability of skill, the proliferation of objective standards of work, the spread of tenure arrangements, licensing, or certification, and the growth of service occupations” (Wilensky, 1964 p137).

Some see these new forms of professions being related to advancements in technology and the information age (Frenkel et al, 1995; Baillie Smith and
Jenkins, 2011) and identify that higher education had a major part to play since various occupational groups “began insisting that their practitioners receive theoretical training that included a degree from a recognized institution” (Cohen, 2007 p168). The more traditional identifications of those occupations that are contained within the professions may therefore be becoming outdated and are increasingly open to question - “as service and knowledge-based work expand… professional occupational groups [are] becoming less distinct and more like other organizational employees” (Evetts, 2006 p527). Similarly, as a consequence of the advent of knowledge-based economies and the blurring of the functional systems of the workplace Stichweh suggests that occupations within the perceived notions of a profession are rapidly decreasing in importance as work specialisation creates myriad types of functionaries within a profession that highlight differences, rather than similarities of role, in essence “the mono-occupational functional system, represented internally and externally by a profession which is also responsible for its own self-monitoring, is a thing of the past” (Stichweh, 2000 p37).

In an educational context this is supported by others who argue that de-professionalization is the natural consequence of “the stratification of higher education [which] has led to increased and deepening divisions of labour, within which academic workers have become increasingly isolated, whilst also becoming increasingly accountable” (Nixon et al, 2001 p227).

Increased professionalization therefore changes the perception of the professions such that they are no longer the primacy of sociologically empowered traditionalised functionaries, instead they become the provision of any occupational grouping where workers go through “a rite of passage that they must endure” (Fein, 2014 p202) as a demonstration that they have become self-motivated experts upon whom performance of service to a given standard can be relied upon with a minimum of external supervision. The significance of the notion of the traditional professions could potentially therefore be in decline as the ‘professionalization of everyone’ (Wilensky, 1964) diminishes the
exclusivity of the epithet and the pursuit of legitimisation through professionalization leads to credentialism (Illich, 1971; Collins, 1979) whereby an increasing reliance on academic qualifications becomes the main driver for hiring and promotion opportunities in an ever broader sphere of occupations.

In an HE context this increase in credentialism, combined in the UK at least with the increased significance of league tables in an increasingly competitive market, has forced universities to concentrate on the utility of the educational process and has led to what many see as an inevitable process of grade inflation such that the outputs from the process of higher education at a particular institution are seen as more marketable as those from the competitor set (Jewell et al, 2013; Pattison et al, 2013; Popov and Bernhardt, 2013). How this is manifest at Brown University will form part of the discussions in the External and internal pressures on academic engagement chapter of this work.

Chapter summary
This chapter has presented a discourse on the development of the University from its historical foundations in the Akademia of Plato through the key impacts of Von Humboldt and Newman and ultimately through the impact of the globalization of society, huge expansion in the number of HE students, and the advent of occupation-based market-driven societal needs to the contemporary universities we see today. Universities now operate in a culture of social and financial accountability that not only drives a reassessment of traditional modes of governance, but also, largely through the advent of NPM as a means to encourage efficiency, has directed a significant increase in the marketization of the higher education process and the commodification and consumerisation of the outputs of that process. The market elements of producer competition and consumer demand have become the key drivers for change in contemporary HE activity and government engagement in education has largely become subsumed by the activities of free market economics.
The chapter has also presented key definitions pertaining to the meaning of professionalism and considered how the more traditional foundations of HE professionalism based around belief in public service, self-regulation, occupational autonomy and a calling to the profession have largely been subsumed by a pluralised form of professionalism that is simultaneously narrow and organisationally focussed on the one hand and concerned with the drive to increase personal academic capital through the provision of evidence to support managerially positivistic targets on the other, but which could be seen as a form of de-professionalization of the HE academic akin to that previously seen by educators in the compulsory sector. This has prompted consideration of the tensions between professional values as espoused in the more traditional soul of professionalism and the mechanisms of the market and of bureaucracy.

How the changes in the development of the university and the shift away from traditional HE professionalism have created pressures upon academic engagement will form the basis of discussions in the next chapter of this work.
Chapter 2

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL PRESSURES ON ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Introduction
The previous chapter identified key aspects of academic professionalism and hinted that the perceived decline in the professional status of teachers in the compulsory education sector is now impacting upon the professional status of HE education staff. This chapter will present a response to the second and third sub-questions in this thesis – what are the current external and internal pressures that may impact upon HE professionals.

The structure of this chapter is predicated on the top-down hierarchy of global, national and institutional foundations of influence which come to bear upon individual activity. In essence the premise here is that the individual is engaged in practice that is bounded by notions of self and professionalism that are influenced by interactions with the institutional structures and hierarchies in which the individual operates. Similarly, the institution is bound by policy and practice of the nation state in which it operates, and ultimately the nation state operates and must respond to the influences of an increasingly globalised sphere of activity. To that extent this section will identify the key external (global and national) drivers that create pressures for the institution, and the key internal (institutional) drivers that subsequently create pressures for the individual academic.

The global context
It is difficult these days to start any discussion on educational professionals without mentioning the global context. To some degree it seems oxymoronic to talk of global education contexts given the interactions between teacher and learner have so traditionally been enshrined in face-to-face engagement, and whilst this is mitigated to some degree when considering higher education,
where international recruitment is commonplace, it is nonetheless at first glance hard to imagine how education policy in the Far East, for example, impacts upon the UK education system. This however fails to acknowledge the impact of globalisation as a social force (Neubauer, 2008; Hershock et al, 2008; Stromquist and Monkman, 2014; Pieterse, 2015) and further neglects the reaction of governments to global economic forces which in turn affect the means by which education is funded (Deem, 2001; Altbach, 2013; Gibb et al, 2013) and the “wave of privatization and increasing presence of market dynamics in social exchanges” (Schugurensky, 2012 p293) that have changed HE in recent times. Similarly, there are those that identify the transformational impacts of globalisation that have, through ideological and political processes, brought about an increase in the reach and power of markets and a growing significance in neoliberalist policy adoption in many countries of the world (McLaren and Farahmandpur, 2004; Rizvi and Lingard, 2009). Discussing the global context of education policy therefore is redundant without some indication of the societal and economic foundations of globalisation.

William McNeill suggests that “the year 1500 marks an important turning point in world history … the European discoveries made the oceans of the earth into highways for their commerce” (1979 p786). Indeed the arrival of Columbus in the new world in 1492 is regarded by many historians as a big bang event (Busch and Juska, 1997; Bonoli, 2000). However, some economists suggest that there is little evidence to support the view that the opening up of trade routes across the world at this time did instantiate globalisation (O'Rourke and Williamson, 2000; Armstrong, 2013). It is argued that at this time trade was based purely on import and export demand of the key trading nations and that this is not globalisation. Alex MacGillivray presents a fascinating collection of suggested dates for the start of globalisation – 1600-1800 as proto-globalisation; 1870-1913 as M. de Vogüé’s era when the word global was first popularised through writings in Harper magazine; 1968 as the start of TV globalisation; and the 1990’s as the start of Internet globalisation (MacGillivray, 2006 pp15-16). True economic globalisation – one definition of which identifies the closer
integration of the countries of the world as a result of lowering of transportation and communication costs, along with the removal of artificial, man-made barriers to trade (Stiglitz, 2003) – actually started, it is argued, in the 1820s (O’Rourke and Williamson, 2000).

The advancement of technology in the 20th and 21st centuries has of course provided the means for much of this global trading integration to be engaged with faster – making the shipment of goods to and from anywhere in the world a matter of days as opposed to the weeks and often months of the 19th century. Further, national boundaries now have little or no influence upon financial transactions, indeed there are suggestions that the development of ‘transnationalized’ financial markets are beginning to constrain policy makers and potentially reduce the policy capacity of nation states (Holton, 2011; Bruszt and Holzhacker, 2014). A significant number of financial activities, once the purview of the local banking systems, now take place instantaneously and with complete confidence in millions of living rooms every day. The net result of this is that it is now just as likely that technically able individuals (those with the means and skills to trade online) will buy goods direct from a market stall holder in Hong Kong as they are to buy from a local store. Similarly trans-global businesses and multi-national corporations (MNCs) are learning to maximise the potential for profit by minimising the taxation burden by careful selection of the main base for operations in what is ostensibly a global mix of either territorially or residentially based taxation systems struggling to cope with the potential for tax harmonization (Osterloh and Heinemann, 2013; Dietsch and Rixen, 2014).

It is probably not surprising therefore that nations now recognise global trading as a reality, and multi-nation trading organisations (World Trade Organisation (WTO), North American Free Trade Area, European Union) direct and (to some degree through the workings of the International Monetary Fund) dictate national policy on trade and the economy. Indeed, the inclusion of China into the WTO and with increased political pressure to remove trade tariffs and
quotas, China is fast becoming the one of the world’s most significant manufacturing bases. This may signify a shift in world financial power, or perhaps more likely, present further indications that globalisation of world trading markets is nearer now than it has ever been.

Some argue that the normative influences of the European models of economic organisation have seen a meshing of previous national practices into a more homogenised transnational approach to the formation of state structures (Manners, 2013) and that globalisation has intensified “worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away” (Giddens, 1990 p64). These social changes, together with increases in foreign direct investments (FDI) have had significant impact on nation-states as they become unable to hold influence over economic policy-making and to maintain claims to national sovereignty and thus become answerable to new global governance that operates above nation-states (Kiely, 2005). MNC activity has opened up the domestic economies of the world by adding international economic pressures that were previously embedded only in shallow interdependencies through trade exchanges in relatively closed economies, but which now operate through ‘deep integration’ into national economic practice, meaning that existing economic policies at state level are increasingly open to question (Hirst et al, 2009).

In response, governments have largely adopted competitive solutions to global economic pressures in the form of neoliberal engagements which concentrate predominantly on the activities of the market. The political landscape from the 1990s onwards saw the bulk of the nations of the world adopt neoliberal policies, as it was seen that “what the successful countries all share(d) (was) a move towards the market economy, one in which private property rights, free enterprise and competition increasingly took the place of state ownership, planning and protection” (Wolf, 2004 p144). In this market approach, economic practices offer a liberation of “individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private
property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2005 p2). Neoliberalism thus presents the conceptualisation of the market as the external regulator of the state as opposed to the previous view of the state as the regulator of the market (Lemke, 2001).

It may seem natural to assume that the growth in adoption of neoliberalist policy could be attributed to the right-sided political leanings of Thatcher, Regan and Bush, but as the continuation of them by the UK governments of Blair and Brown, and the US administrations of Clinton and Obama have shown, ideological differences have not deterred continuation of such approaches. Neoliberalism has become “the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in and understand the world” (Harvey, 2005 p3).

The political globalising influence of neoliberalism has therefore had significant impact on national policy implementation through a succession of differently ideologically motivated governments. This is particularly evident in that the underpinning ideological principle that instils importance within the market as the most effective and efficient means of delivering public services has directed market-like control mechanisms of many public sector industries where what was once seen as the provision of a service for public benefit and common good has been “supplanted by the ideology of privatization” (Blum and Ullman, 2012 p372).

It does not necessarily follow however that the widespread growth in neoliberal policy adoption will result in political globalisation. Indeed some suggest that there is a cultural backlash against corporate globalisation (Berezin, 2015) and that the impact of globalisation on the notion of nation-state is not necessarily one that should be seen as a process that will inevitably lead to global cultural homogeneity. In fact Axtmann argues that ‘globalization does not result in the demise of the state… [it] underlines the importance of the modern state as the dominant form of political organization’ (Axtmann, 1996 p115). Pieterse supports this suggestion that the world is likely to be organised ‘plurilaterally’ as
a consequence of the diversity that globalisation offers in terms of organisational structures, in that technological and communication advancements have simultaneously offered a wider range of modes of organisation: transnational, international, macro-regional, national, micro-regional, municipal, and local (Pieterse, 2015).

The impact on education should not be underestimated. WTO identified at the turn of the century that HE contributed in excess of $200 billion per year when considered as a globally traded service (Breton and Lambert, 2003) and its worth is likely to increase (Joshi, 2011; Stromquist and Monkman, 2014). What then is the impact on educational policy at the global level? If plurarity is the watchword for global organisation, then should it not also apply to the global educational context, and therefore in the HE context? Can the model be superimposed upon universities? Do they now exist as transnational, international, macro-regional, national, micro-regional, municipal and local entities dependent upon the particular market in which they operate, and are therefore led and staffed by academics with a similarly multi-faceted raft of professional engagements? This is supported by comments from the World Bank which promotes the view that the benefits of a higher education to the student are now globally higher than the benefits to the public (Psacharopoulos, 1994), which combined with the prevalence of ‘learn now, pay later’ schemes across the globe that now fund HE, it has been suggested that universities have almost been forced to operate in practice more akin to entrepreneurism and demanded a shift in required skill sets for university leaders (Foskett, 2010).

The development of academic capitalism discussed earlier may be seen as a natural response to these entrepreneurial shifts in university leadership, but it is likely that the drivers for personal identification of academic capital are perhaps more likely to be grounded in a more localised university reality than to have been founded within the more expansive global arguments presented here.

Some would suggest that at least some of these epithets are applicable in some cases – some UK Universities still consider themselves to be largely Regional
Universities, specialising in providing the courses that the regional organisations require, with the local region providing the bulk of their recruitment and the impact of their research enacting at a regional level (Smith and Bagchi-Sen, 2012; Cowan and Zinovyeva, 2013). These regional institutions are not generally ones that operate exclusively within their region however, and many courses at such institutions are promoted as national and potentially international recruiters.

Similarly, it is not difficult to imagine Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard or Yale as international organisations since their ‘market pool’ of potential student recruitment is global. However, despite the increase in distance learning in the HE sector, it is still the case that most HE institutions require attendance at a specific location – these Ivy League institutions therefore must operate at a local level for a global market. However, increases in international student mobility has significantly increased in recent years and “increasingly universities are beginning to offer programmes specifically designed to recruit, and often retain, international students” (Nielsen, 2011).

It may be argued that plurarity is not a term that can be applied to activities within the HE sector as a whole, but is more fitting when applied to individual institutions. Universities therefore engage in multiple activities at the global, national, regional and local levels consecutively. The plurality of operation is therefore institutionalised and to some degree at least we have educational homogeneity across the HE sector as individual HEIs engage in similarly pluralistic ways.

That is not to suggest that globalisation is not a driving force for change in the HE sector. Levin suggests that the 1990’s saw an internationalization of educational policy, with a dominance of economic rationales for change being a dominant factor (Levin, 2004). This is supported by Bottery and Wright who comment that economic issues have “the most profound effects upon policies of governments around the world at the present time, including, unsurprisingly,
those in the United Kingdom” (2000 p16). These effects are mediated through a political decision making process that answers to the economic pressures of multi-national trading organisations and the increase in power of what Bottery and Wright refer to as trans-national companies (TNCs) – organisations whose scope and influence is so large that they lie outside of the normal boundaries of state and state control, but who have considerable influence over state government legislature in that they can choose where to locate their business operations on a global framework. Indeed Slaughter suggests that university presidents and chancellors have largely become entrenched in the corporatization of higher education to the degree that they act, and are often to referred to as CEOs who have become “committed to the success of the global capitalism that so increased their financial capacity” (Slaughter, 2001 p22).

How much this influence directs educational practices toward a more differentiated market remains to be seen. It is possible that differentiation between more research (and typically entrepreneurial) HEIs and those that are more teaching focussed is a natural consequence (Raposo and Do Paço, 2011; Gibb et al, 2013). Similarly at a more local level the financial utility of individual departments could present pressures to perform in financial terms that, if not met, could see the internal make-up of HEIs see a significant shift as ‘non-performing’ departments are phased out for financial rather than pedagogic reasons. What seems clear however is that global financial drivers are likely to have a significant influence on educational policy and the questions of how education is funded at the national level and implemented at the institution level.

The difficulties in educational funding are also impacted by changes to global demographics. Advancements in medical science and social well-being in the Western world are making vast changes to the overall demographics of the world – the global life expectancy figures published by the World Health Organisation was 64 in 1990 and had risen to 71 by 2013 (World Health Organisation, 2015). With most countries in the world having some sort of
pensions system, and many also having to find funds to support the medical
treatment of this ageing population, the financial implications of providing for
an ageing population are a pressing item on most government agendas (McMorrow and Roeger, 2012). Other commentators on social welfare adopt
a more pessimistic tone, referring to the demographic time bomb which has
caused a crisis of confidence of global systems to support social welfare and
corporate governance (Bonoli, 2000; Vettori, 2012); and much debate
continues “to make decisions about the tension between long-term resources
and expenditures and hence the value of social security benefits” (Clark, 2003
pp2-3).

Demographic problems are not just limited to the older end of the scale, there
are also considerable pressures on governments’ ability to pay for social welfare
from unemployment in post-financial crisis world. With continued
technological advancements the number of workers needed to produce goods
and services is significantly reduced (David and Dorn, 2013). Unemployment
not only requires an increase in benefits, but the number of people contributing
to the public purse that pays for benefits also is reduced. The financial
implications of social well-being from pensions and unemployment, when
combined with the added costs of funding national health requirements have
presented the governments of the world with seemingly insurmountable
financial difficulties. It is not surprising then that the early part of the 21st
century has seen policy shifts to try to address these issues through austerity
measures to stem the growth in public sector deficits across the globe (Zezza,
2012; Robbins and Lapsley, 2014). The significant impact of these policy shifts
for the HE sector in the UK has been a drastic cut in government funding for
education and the passing of the costs of HE to the student through higher
tuition fees and the private sector through more stringent public funding for
research (Nightingale and O’Neil, 2012; Brown, 2013).

The final element of global context to be considered here is concerned with the
global availability of HE provision as a consequence of the relative reduction
of the size of the world. As technology to support transport and communication advances, so the public awareness of the possibilities of removing geographical constraints on their own social and therefore educational possibilities increase the potential for student migration (Brooks and Waters, 2011). Hence, what might once be considered an impossible choice of university for a student in China for example, is now an option that can be considered. Added to this, the information available to potential students about course availability and curriculum content at universities across the globe is just a click away, so potential students can make informed decisions about their choice of institution without the requirement of long trips prior to making the decision.

Linguistic globalisation also enhances the possibilities for universities to exploit previously untapped markets. The pervasive communication language looks likely to be English (or at least a new form of global English) for the foreseeable future (Crystal, 2012), and many potential students who could take (and understand) degree courses in the Western world are no longer constrained by their natural tongue as most speak a form of English already. Foreign students are therefore becoming more common place in the UK HE sector with the proportion of international students in UK HE rising from 10% in 2002 to over 15% by 2009 (Choudaha and Chang, 2012). The accompanying widening of the ‘competition net’ means that UK institutions not only compete for student numbers with home institutions, but are also competing with international institutions as well. This has seen a rapid increase in the internationalisation of students at UK HEIs and in particular has seen significant increase in students from the Far East studying the UK. For example, the number of Chinese students in the UK increased from roughly 6,000 in 2000 to more than 20,000 in 2009 (Iannelli and Huang, 2014).

The impact of the increase in information regarding the provision of curriculum in the UK has undoubtedly impacted on international recruitment, and broadened knowledge about the potential study locations for international
students, as a personal example of engagement with UK HEIs will attest. At a 2005 Education fair in four cities in China (Beijing, Shanghai, Chongquin, Shenzen) attended by the author of this work, the most commonly asked question was a variation of “I know where your university ranks in the UK league tables, but where does your department rank?” What started as a government measure to give home students a benchmark by which universities could be measured has now become a yardstick for the student population of the world to do exactly the same.

The second most asked question at the China recruitment fairs related to cost benefit analysis of the relative merits of paying for a UK education or a (at that time) cheaper Australian one – in essence “what extra prospects do you think I will have if I graduate from your university as opposed to an Australian university”? The global worth in employment potential of having a UK degree it seems is now being accurately measured by foreign students. They now have the means to forecast their employability prospects, and weigh them against the costs of their studies – and if an Australian degree is seen to be of similar standard to a UK or US degree then the potential for global competition is enhanced.

Global context summary

This section has identified that HEIs are increasingly operating in a market that is both globally aware and which is increasingly financially motivated. Global approaches to mitigate financial instability together with the political influence of neoliberal policy adoptions; changes to global demography; linguistic globalization and technological advancements in the provision and demand for information have seen governments react in similar ways and the impact on world-wide HE provision has been significant increases in calls for accountability both in terms of quality of teaching and research provision. HEIs have responded by becoming increasingly globally focussed and market-driven, and now look to international markets both to increase revenue from students through internationally motivated recruitment strategies, and to
provide increased market potential for the research that they undertake – increasingly through collaborative projects that typically cross national boundaries and involve participation from a range of multi-national private companies.

**The national context**

If we accept the notion suggested in the previous section that nation states are currently engaged in mitigating, and possibly capitalising on the effects of globalisation of trade and finance it could therefore follow that the role of governments is to mediate global pressures and form coherent strategies to manage the national economy. Political commentators note that the increase in global pressures actually present similar issues to all nations, and within a national context it is therefore ‘not surprising if the manifestations of different political parties around the world begin to look remarkably similar’ (Bottery and Wright, 2000 p17). One might expect therefore that economic policies across the world would be similar and changes in them would be rare and that irrespective of which political party holds office in any particular country, there would be stability of policy since each party would be presented with a limited set of options to deliver solutions to the same set of problems (Peters et al, 2011; Serricchio et al, 2013) and the advent of neoliberal politics and subsequent growth in NPM strategies for managing the pressures on the nation purse as discussed in the previous chapter are still prevalent. The financial pressures on economies, in part driven by global economics and changes in global demography, also have driven governments to seek the means to make the most of the nation purse and to maximise the stock of skills and qualifications by increasing levels of participation in post-compulsory education which saw participation rates “increase from 45% in 1998 to 70% in 1993 and has remained at roughly that level ever since” (Ball, 2008 p158).

Paradoxically, however we have not seen a globalisation of political mantra as countries adopt alternate means to deal with global economic frailties although most countries “position themselves within an existing state-centric, liberal, and
capitalist order … shaped by their historical trajectory … and the developmental, societal, and geopolitical context of their emergence” (Hurrell, 2013 p93). Similarly we in the UK have not experienced any great period of bureaucratic stability despite seeing only two changes in government ideology since Margaret Thatcher gained power in 1979 with the arrivals of the Blair Labour Government in 1997 and the Cameron and Clegg coalition government in 2010.

The recent historical approach to maintaining control of educational expenditure in the UK seems to have concentrated on efficiency measures whereby “education policy is now almost entirely subsumed within an overall strategy of public services reform” (Ball, 2008 p101). The devolution of fiscal responsibility, combined with a seemingly never-ending series of measures to monitor and measure performance has provided the basis for UK government policy since the end of the last century whereby “those working in public services are having to manage not just budgets and people in the pursuit of greater efficiency, but the tensions and dilemmas of rapid and unpredictable change” (Clarke and Newman, 1997 px). As discussed previously, UK HEIs are changing practice in response to the key drivers of producer competition and consumer demand whereby the logic of the market has become the main agent for advancements in effectiveness and efficiency.

The Thatcherite means to improve efficiency was to promote a policy of privatisation of education, such that market forces drive the character and standards of educational provision since public will will inevitably be reflected in the nature of the education provision. This standpoint is crystallised in a statement by Hargreaves and Reynolds in the late eighties “if the state cannot efficiently regulate the educational system, it is believed, then the market place will” (1989 p3). The social implications of this statement for the HE sector are that university education, without grant maintenance, becomes a privilege and not a right. The culmination of consideration of the funding implications for HE in the UK led to Prime Minister John Major commissioning an inquiry in
1996 by Sir Ron Dearing to evaluate the impact of HE funding for the next twenty years. The Dearing Report, published in July 1997 made a total of 93 recommendations, the most fundamental of which was to require undergraduate students to make a contribution of 25% of the cost of their education at university (Dearing, 1997).

Many commentators assumed that the newly elected Labour Government that came to power in 1997 might have been expected to take a different approach to funding higher education. However, the Blair and Brown governments were generally regarded as promoting ‘central’ rather than ‘left’ policies (Shaw, 2012). The global pressures on finance still applied, thus the financial implications of enabling education for all meant that the government still had to acknowledge the potential for financial advantage that could be seen to derive from market driven education policies. The then Secretary of State for Education and Employment David Blunkett announced the introduction of tuition fees in September 1998, whilst simultaneously abolishing the maintenance grant in favour of a means tested student loans system. Initially the maximum universities could charge students in top-up tuition fees was set at £1,000 per year but this rose in line with inflation on an annual basis and, with the introduction of the Higher Education Act 2004 (HM Government UK, 2004) was subsequently raised in January 2004 to £3,000.

In part driven by the desire to improve quality and choice in HE for potential students, the capping of the annual fee at £3,000 did not result in an economically competitive market since there was almost no variation in fee levels across the sector, and the expected competition which the Government believed was necessary to improve quality and choice, did not operate in the way it anticipated (Chester and Bekhradnia, 2008). The Russell Group which represents the top 20 universities in the UK identified that there was “growing consensus that without increased investment, there is a real danger that the success of our world-leading universities will not be sustained” (Piatt, 2009). The Government response was to commission a review of the mechanisms for
funding universities in England by John Browne. Announced by then Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills Peter Mandelson, the review would encompass the goal of widening participation in higher education, whilst establishing processes to provide changes to, or possible alternatives for tuition fees and would be published after the 2010 General Election.

The arrival of the coalition Government of Cameron and Clegg in 2010 brought with it an agreement that coalition policy on HE would await the publication of the Browne Review before formulating their HE policy – a move seen by some political commentators as a holding ploy since the Liberal Democrats had stood with a manifesto that pledged that if brought to power they would “scrap unfair university tuition fees for all students taking their first degree… phase fees out over six years… without cutting university income [and] immediately scrap fees for final year students” (Liberal Democrats, 2010). On its publication in October 2010 Browne’s report identified 6 key guiding principles:

1. More investment should be available for higher education

2. Student choice should be increased

3. Everyone who has the potential should be able to benefit from higher education

4. No one should have to pay until they start to work

5. When payments are made they should be affordable

6. Part time students should be treated the same as full time students for the costs of learning

(Browne et al, 2010)
The report concluded that the cap that universities could charge for tuition should be removed and that students should pay nothing ‘up front’ for their university education, instead making payments when their subsequent earnings were above £21,000 per annum, and that interest rates charged for the provision of student loans should be “the low rate that Government itself pays on borrowing money” (ibid p6). The report also made recommendations on support for living costs, additional support for low income families, and on expiry dates by which remaining loan balances are written off.

Despite their manifesto promise the Liberal Democrats in their coalition role ultimately succeeded only in modifying the recommendations of the report and as a consequence rather than a total removal of the fees cap as Browne had recommended, the cap was raised to £9,000 per year. The other significant change to the recommendations of the Browne report prior to its implementation was a small adjustment to the interest rates payable on student loans such that a more progressive rate applied dependent upon the earnings level of the graduates.

The £9,000 fee cap has been in force since the commencement of the academic year 2012/13 but already there are concerns that the accompanying cut in government funding for universities has presented a funding regime to individual universities that may not be sustainable in the long term, with luminaries such as Andrew Hamilton, vice-chancellor of Oxford University calling for undergraduate fees to be more closely related to the true cost of a degree, estimated at Oxford to be closer to £16,000 per year prompting Sir Christopher Snowden, vice-chancellor of the University of Surrey and president of Universities UK to comment that he was not an advocate of major fee jumps, stating that £16,000 figure presented an unlikely scenario in the near future but that “on aggregate the £9,000 was perhaps a reasonable starting point, but it really needs to have a sensible indexing linked to it.” (Burns, 2013).
Largely as a consequence of these changes to university funding, the education sector has increasingly been driven to adopt a more commercially oriented rhetoric where the language of business has become the norm. From as early as 2009 the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) strategic plan for example regularly refers to ‘customers’ rather than ‘students’ (Hefce, 2009), perhaps given the changes to student funding in the HE sector it is not surprising that there has been a shift in the attitudes towards higher education “with students assuming the role of a consumer, weighing up value for money” (Metcalf, 2005 p108) and the public education sector is seen as becoming increasingly commoditised (Ball, 2012; Goldstein, 2014). With governmental changes in policy for education in general resulting in a high degree of quantitative evaluation of the provision of education, it is probably understandable that universities, once seen as the custodians of knowledge and to some extent crucial social institutions, have in effect repositioned themselves to the extent that they have moved from “sequestered ivory towers to the vagaries of the marketplace” (Onsman, 2008 p77) and where the modern university functions in a way that demands practices that are increasingly akin to the activities of business corporations to the extent that ‘modern’ “means using the market model” (Collini, 2012 p161).

The impact of the shift towards consumerism and the adoption of a market model from the beginning of the century has brought with it significant pressure for universities to justify their position with an educational market and to give “formal and public accounts of themselves” (Milliken and Colohan, 2004). The introduction of university league tables in October 1992 saw the first evidence in the UK of market-focused means to provide explicit rankings. The rankings however, have been criticised since there is perceived statistical inaccuracy and questionable measures chosen to represent academic quality (Hou et al, 2012; Rauhvargers, 2013; Broecke, 2015; O’Connell, 2015). With a number of different league tables currently being published, the importance of league positions cannot be underestimated, and whilst rankings are not explicitly stated as replacements for academic quality assurance procedures,
there does appear to be a shift in focus as universities have “shifted their attention from quantity growth to quality consolidation in the enforcement of catch-up strategies” (Lo, 2014 p120) to better influence league placings and thus improve the market position of the institution.

The introduction of the UNISTATS website in 2007 which presented potential students with subject-based course information for universities was clear evidence of the shift in HE drivers towards accountability and to assist students in making informed choices in their selection of HEI. Indeed the “processes of audit and inspection are an important quasi-market mechanism used by government [which is] primarily concerned with ensuring quality and value for money” (Foskett, 2011 p33) but which also “enables comparative judgements to be made about institutions and programmes” (ibid). This has been concretised and formalised for the key university revenue stream of student recruitment since September 2012 with the introduction of Key Information Sets (KIS) data which presents a unified view of audited information gathered by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) on 17 aspects of full-time and part-time courses which all UK universities must present on their websites. The aim of the KIS data is to “create a central source of comparable statistics to enable “robust” comparisons between courses and institutions” (Complete University Guide, 2014 p1).

The KIS data includes information relating to student satisfaction (in the form of extracts from the National Student Survey (NSS)); graduate employability prospects (from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey); financial data for fees and estimated cost of living expenses (provided in the form of audited reports from each institution); and information pertaining to learning and teaching activities such as course contact hours, assessment types, study patterns and forms of delivery.

In addition to the revenue provision from student recruitment, the second key revenue stream for most UK universities comes in the form of research
income. Like teaching, the UK Government shapes the market in research through allocation of funding for research “administered under a ‘dual support’ system” (HEFCE, 2013a) whereby specific research projects and programmes are funded through the UK Research Councils, and through block funding to support infrastructures for research through mainstream Quality Research (QR) funding processes that distribute the majority of funds for research. For 2014-15 the funds distributed in QR funding amounts to £1.6 billion (ibid) and the allocation mechanism is based upon assessments of the quality and volume of research done at individual institutions orchestrated previously through the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and from 2015 onwards through the Research Excellence Framework (REF). Two other factors are utilised in the allocation of research funds – the relative costs of research, in part by assessment of the difference in costs of engaging in laboratory-based research as opposed to the cheaper library-based research; and perhaps most significantly “any government policy priorities for particular subjects” (HEFCE, 2013b).

Increasingly universities are also looking to commercial partners in research to bolster research revenue and academic research quality is still one of the key decision making factors in choosing research partners (D’Este and Iammarino, 2010), giving HEIs a significant financial driver to attain higher REF scores. This, together with the oft used strategy of departments and universities pooling resources to bid for research grants that would not be attainable in isolation, and the impact of globalisation discussed earlier, has seen a removal of territorial borders for research and “considerable heterogeneity between regions and countries in their propensity to collaborate” (Hoekman et al, 2010 p662).

As a performance-based research funding system, the REFs operate as vastly complex and dynamic systems with a myriad of meanings and interpretations of quality based upon what some see as arbitrary evaluative processes that balance peer review and a variation of metrics which are often unclear (and
occasionally not announced in advance of the assessment) (Martin, 2011; Smith et al, 2011). The process, a six yearly exercise, demands negotiation across the academic community and often results in the application of local strategies based upon estimates, guesswork and often academic gamesmanship (Trevorrow and Volmer, 2012; Berry, 2013). Some suggest that the application of such evaluative systems for research has led to the creation of incentives within university systems and the status and ability to control funds by professional elites (Hicks, 2012).

There are indications that the increase in evaluative mechanisms to ensure practice in HE are presenting demands upon academics that are largely untenable (Gibbs, 2013), leading to a greater degree of specialisation within the academic profession (Smith and O'Leary, 2013). Holroyd suggested that academics have become “increasingly fragmented into a plurality of occupational groups, rewarded in different ways and perhaps even with different contractual obligations (for example, academic-related staff and academic managers); the necessity to emphasize research output as the key indicator of quality has compounded the divisions” (Holroyd, 2000 p40) and the earlier chapter on professionalism in this work suggests that this has continued in recent times. This implied fragmentation of the academic body is one that is regularly referred to at Brown University, and the epithets 'researcher' and 'teacher' are often used to identify what sort of a professional academic one is and this will be considered further in the Chapter Four of this work.

What then seems clear is that the pressures on academic practice from the national perspective, irrespective of the political leanings of the government in power over recent decades, have basically followed a general shift from what were described as “from a National System Locally Administered to a National Systems Nationally Administered” (Ainley, 2001 p475) and the tenets of which form a similar recognisable pattern that Ball summarises as:
• “top-down performance management (pressure from government);

• the introduction of greater competition and contestability in the provision of public services;

• the introduction of greater pressure from citizens including through choice and voice; and

• measures to strengthen the capability of civil and public servants and of central and local government to deliver improved public services.”

(Ball, 2008 p102)

These four tenets look to have continued currency with comments made by Universities Minister, Jo Johnson in a recent speech to UK HEIs where he: called on universities to improve their quality of teaching and announced the introduction of a teaching excellence framework that will provide “recognition of excellent teaching – and clear incentives to make ‘good’ teaching even better” (Johnson, 2015); strengthened the importance of HEIs providing value for money when he said “[students] are looking critically at what they get for their investment, and so must we, as a government, on behalf of taxpayers” (ibid); committed to maintain the competitive approach to increasing quality when he commented “more competition will also be central to our efforts to drive up standards” (ibid); and identified an increased degree of importance of the graduate earnings premium as a means for improving the productivity of the nation but also as a provider of national financial benefits when he identified that “higher lifetime graduate earnings provide benefits to society – including higher tax revenues and faster and fuller repayment of student loans” (ibid).

National context summary

The national shift away from a state funded HE system has seen the introduction and advancement of the student loans system and significant shifts
in the evaluative mechanisms under which research is funded in the UK. Successive governments have decreased the state provision of funding and passed the burden of cost to the market, albeit with a supporting loans system to ensure that students only pay for their education once it is finished and they are in employment. At the same time there have been significant increases in requirements for accountability that have seen the introduction of a number of performance measures that guide and dictate levels of funding, but also are required to provide better competitive information to potential ‘clients’ in what is becoming an increasingly ‘marketised’ and ‘commodified’ UK HE sector.

**The institutional context**

The previous two sections have presented a consideration of the global and national pressures that impact upon HE institutions. This section will attempt to crystallise these pressures and to present an evaluation of how these macro level evaluations of globe and state have become manifest at the meso level of the institution through an evaluation of selected policy documents that represent an expression of the institutional values at Brown University. Consideration of the micro level of impact and pressure upon the individual through the analysis of interviews with current staff at Brown University will form the main thrust of Chapter Four of this work.

The discussions presented in Chapter One suggested that the professionalism in contemporary HE is pluralised in that it is both organisationally focussed and simultaneously concerned with a drive to increase individual academic capital through the provision of evidence to support managerially positivistic targets. In order to establish if the professional academics under consideration in this thesis are similarly impacted by such managerial strategies and what pressures these might present, it is necessary to present an indication of institutional values in evidence at Brown University. To that end this section will use as the basis for evaluation the summary presented by Stephen Ball of the “largely oppositional conceptions of the nature and purpose of education” (Ball, 2006 p125) that represent the ‘values drift’ between traditional
professional values and largely NPM-driven market values. Ball suggested that seven key aspects of compulsory educational practice, presented in Table 3 below, characterise the polar ends of a continuum of educational engagement that give opportunity to establish the extent to which institutions have shifted from traditional professional values towards market values and are influenced by competitive pressures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional values</th>
<th>Market values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual need (schools and students)</td>
<td>Individual performance (schools and students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonality (mixed-ability classes/open access)</td>
<td>Differentiation (setting/streaming/selection differentiation/hierarchy/exclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serves community needs</td>
<td>Attracts 'clients'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on resource allocation to those with greatest learning difficulties</td>
<td>Emphasis on resource allocation to the more able</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism (co-operation between schools and students)</td>
<td>Competition (between schools and students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad assessments of worth based upon varieties of academic and social qualities</td>
<td>Narrow assessment of worth based on contributions to performativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The education of all children is held to be intrinsically of equal worth</td>
<td>The education of children is valued in relation to costs and outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Ball's professional and market values

In the context of HE it seems appropriate to discount the second and fourth of these characteristics (commonality and resource allocation based upon students ability) since the initial level of abilities of students are largely similar and the bars to entry that are afforded by the University entry system mitigate against their inclusion. The remaining characteristics however all have resonance in current HE practice and where the evaluation of policies at Brown University present indications of the institutional values within this framework they will be identified as Brown University Values Evidence Base points in the
sections that follow. For clarity of expression the value traits identified above will be referred to by Value Indicators as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Indicators</th>
<th>Professional Values</th>
<th>Market Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Individual need</td>
<td>Individual performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Serves Community need</td>
<td>Attracts clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Collectivism between institution and students</td>
<td>Competition between institution and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Broad assessments of worth based upon a variety of academic and social qualities</td>
<td>Narrow assessments of worth based upon performativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Education of pupils is intrinsically of equal worth</td>
<td>Education of students is valued in relation to costs and outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Key for institutional value indicators

Institutional value as evidenced by policy

This section will attempt to discuss the potential impact on academic engagement of policy enactment at the institutional level – i.e. by the policies adopted at Brown University. A policy is variously defined as “an attempt to define and structure a rational basis for action or inaction” (Parsons, 1995 p14); “a statement of some sort, usually written down in a policy document” (Trowler, 2003 p95); and in terms of public policy “whatever governments choose to do or not to do” (Dye, 1992 p4). For the purposes of internal logic within this thesis, policy will be taken to mean a notion of the collective decisions taken by institutional leaders made in the context of decisions taken by political actors from positions of authority that “are normative, expressing both ends and means designed to steer the actions and behaviour of people” (Rizvi and Lingard, 2009 p4) and which offer pointers “to things that can in principle be achieved, to matters over which authority can be exercised” (ibid).

The analysis of policy, whilst being more of an art that a science thus presents significant opportunities to clarify the values of an institution both in terms of its decision making processes and in promoting an understanding of the forms of knowledge it holds in esteem (Wildavsky, 1979), but also present concretised notions that provide institutional “statements of worth” (Adams, 2014 p35) that will be useful in this thesis for establishing pressures that enact upon
academics at Brown University. It should be noted however that policy is regularly contested, engaged with through varying degrees of application and “interpreted and enacted in a variety of arenas of practice [such that] the texts and meanings of policy makers do not always translate directly and obviously into institutional practices” (Ball, 2008 p7), in essence policy is not always an indication of practice, but can legitimately be seen as an indication of intended practice.

Interestingly, an evaluation of many policy documents at Brown University provide a vast array of qualifying statements within policy documents, indeed such is the prevalence of the addition of “normally” into policy statements at Brown University that at a recent meeting of the Regulations Oversight Group it was suggested that the institution might wish to consider using a synonym for the term since a textual analysis of University Regulations might suggest considerable degrees of flexibility in practice that were not intended in policy construction. In the context of the department under investigation in this thesis however, it is generally accepted that the academics within the department are seen as arbiters of good practice and ‘sticklers’ for policy and regulation. In that context it is suggested that the evaluation of policy does give a valid interpretation of the expression of values of the institution and in particular how these may be manifest as pressures that enact upon staff within the department.

Since this work is concerned with academics and the pressures enacting upon them the policy documents that will be evaluated in this section are those that have direct impact upon academic engagement. To that end the policies regarding recruitment, enrolment, student welfare, finance and the like are not considered here. Two key policies that pertain to the evaluation and maintenance of academic performance have been identified as the key exemplifiers of the institutional view of professional engagement at Brown University:
• Departmental performance monitoring policy;

• University promotions policy.

In addition, the academic regulations that cover student engagement will be considered to provide insight into the institutional values pertaining to core academic business within the University.

Each will be considered in turn (the nomenclature for each of these policies have been changed to preserve the anonymity of the institution and for the same reason the specific documents will not be referenced). It should also be noted that permission to refer to these documents in anonymised form throughout this section was sought and granted by a Deputy Vice Chancellor at Brown University.

Before meaningful consideration of these policies can take place, it might be worth presenting some context about the culture at Brown University under which these policies are enacted.

*Brown University and the culture of performativity*

The publication of National HE league tables in various newspapers are now seen as key indicators of the ability of a University to attract undergraduate student numbers and therefore to attract continued funding. There are indications that despite initial worries about recruitment problems as a direct consequence of the introduction of student loan based tuition fees that have transformed the UK HE into becoming a “quasi-market in which the users of education services have become what some observers regard as ‘walking vouchers’ so that funding is closely tied to participation rates” (Demaine, 2002 p25), recruitment has, to 2014/15 at least, stayed reasonably unaffected. However, as was identified in Chapter Two the changes to student funding and changes in government policy have prompted increased commodification of HE. In this context Brown University is not alone in its need to continually attract students and increase the funding from research in an increasingly
competitive market in order to fulfil its growth ambitions. Much of the rhetoric from senior management at Brown University is therefore directed towards the league position of the university, and many institutional policy initiatives are in place that require educational departments to concentrate on improvement of procedures and practices that are focussed upon the end goal of moving the University into a higher league position than is currently held.

Whilst there are many who are critical of the flawed methodology and reductionism presented through the development of university league tables (Bowden, 2000; Dill and Soo, 2005), ultimately in a market economy institutions are under significant pressure to promote their exchange value as “organizations develop strategies to achieve high scores” (Morley, 2003 p41), which are manifest throughout the institution through ‘performativity’ measures (Lyotard, 1984; Morley, 2003; Ball, 2003). Brown University, like many UK institutions now uses league tables as a significant driver whereby “their strategic decisions are likely to be influenced by the expected impact on their ranking” (Tofallis, 2012 p2). This approach to strategizing and controlling activity in order to enhance league table positions has become increasing more visible at Brown University.

With the institution currently sitting in various league tables around the high forties to mid-fifties, an oft-used phrase in the institution is the promotion of the ‘Top 40 agenda’, and for departments who already find themselves placed nationally in their subject area as Top 40 operators, their watchword is to aim for Top 30 status. Internationally the institution is also focussing on league tables to identify areas for improvement. As one of the 1992 Universities the history of the institution excludes it from many international league tables, however it is eligible for consideration in the Times Higher Education 100 Under 50 rankings of worldwide universities who are less than 50 years old. The Top 40 agenda is therefore now regularly referred to as ‘Top 40/Top 100 under 50 objectives’ – the institutional strategy is founded upon climbing both of these league tables to enhance reputation.
Brown University statistical reporting across the institution on those areas of business that are seen to contribute to the various league positions are also regularly reported back to Department Heads and academic staff in terms of relative positioning of Brown University compared to its ‘competitor set’ – a named set of 10 other UK universities who are placed in and around the league table places where Brown University sits. Management reporting profiles are regularly re-written to provide evidence of performance of each department across the institution in those factors that determine league positions. Not all of the league tables use the same factors of influence to arrive at the League positions, and as such a number of ‘key factors’ are identified and acted upon as and when the significance of the performance of Brown University is established. Management information analysts are employed to provide institutional and competitor data on those factors that present the best opportunity for marginal gains in league placing, and to identify those areas where Brown University is being ‘dragged down’ the league tables. Departments are therefore regularly reminded to concentrate activity to directly improve factors of importance that have tangible long-term financial benefits, these factors include (but are not limited to):

- National Student Survey results
- Graduate employability (a response to the DLHE survey showing the percentage of graduates from each course achieving graduate level jobs within six months of leaving university or moving on to post-graduate study)
- Entry Points (the UCAS point average of all students enrolling on a programme)

- Student : Staff ratios (SSR)

- Good Honours (the percentage of students obtaining first class or upper second class honours degrees)

- Value added (a measure of the difference between ability at entry (Entry Points) and ability at graduation (degree classification) which is seen as an indication in some league tables of the quality of the teaching provision)

- Retention (a measure of the ability of the institution to successfully graduate the students it enrolls)

- Research quality (RAE / REF grades)

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**Brown University Values Evidence Base:**

*Value Indicator 5 - key performance indicators largely utility driven and couched in financial terms*

Much of the statistical reporting on these factors is done in a comparative fashion – results are seldom published exclusively in terms of measures of performance (for example in raw scores), more often they are reported in terms of relative placing of those raw grades in terms of percentile achievement when compared to either other departments in the University; the UK university sector as a whole; or as a relative positioning against the competitor set. One example of this comparative positioning analysis can be evidenced in the reporting of the 2013/14 results on student satisfaction. All grades in the NSS are based upon Likert Scale responses whereby 5=Definitely agree; 4=Mostly agree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 2=Mostly disagree and 1=Definitely
disagree. Marks in each question are aggregated across all students using mean values, and are typically interpreted such that anything above 4.00 is seen as a general reflection of satisfaction of students for that particular category. When published with recommendations from Senior Management at Brown University however the ‘level’ of satisfaction is largely ignored.

Table 5 shows two anonymised extracts presented for two categories in the NSS results for 2014 pertaining specifically to the subject area of the department under consideration in this thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Assessment and feedback</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>A University</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>B University</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>C University</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>D University</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Brown University</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>E University</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>F University</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Personal Development</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>G University</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>H University</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Brown University</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>I University</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>J University</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Extracts from NSS results 2014

It is interesting to note that the general level of satisfaction of students in Assessment and feedback of 4.06 represents less satisfaction than in the provision of opportunities for Personal Development which is 4.15. However,
in the ‘areas for action and concern’ report written by a member of the Senior Management Team that accompany these results when they were first provided to individual departments, it was the latter factor that was identified as warranting action in the coming academic year because in that section of the NSS the Department is not placed in the Top 40 when compared with other institutions, whereas in Assessment and feedback a relative position of 15 is seen as a successful achievement that warrants only continued effort and engagement even though the level of satisfaction is lower.

Brown University Values Evidence Base:

Value Indicator 3 - institutional performance measures use evaluative comparisons between departments and are competitive based and not indicative of academic collectivism.

This culture of performativity management through the provision of performance data, and specifically the comparison of performance between departments in the institution, between same subject departments at other institutions, and between Brown University and other institutions which previously was predominantly an unwritten but generally recognised principle, has now become concretised in policy, the evidence for which is presented in the next three sections which consider the key exemplifiers of the institutional view of professional engagement previously identified.

Departmental performance monitoring policy

For the academic year 2013/14, Brown University introduced a new departmental evaluation process whereby each department is required to conduct a self-evaluation on current academic engagement and to offer plans of action in response to prescribed areas of importance in university activity (formally identified as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as directed by Senior Management) and to compare departmental performance against equivalently published performance statistics of the university competitor set. The
evaluation process is scheduled to occur once every three years for each department, and the outputs from the process would be used to inform the financial budgets for the department for that three year period. The department under consideration in this thesis was one of the first to engage in the process.

The process of departmental review was rolled out at a presentation by two members of the Senior Management Team (the Vice Chancellor and a Deputy Vice Chancellor) prior to the engagement in the process, and it was promoted as an ‘inclusive process’ that all members of the Department were encouraged to participate in, and one that presents a useful opportunity for reflection and future planning, such that ‘each department can formulate their own internal strategies to assist the University in achieving its Top 40/Top 100 under 50 objectives’.

In each of four sub-sections departments are asked to compare KPI measures with the competitor set data that was provided in the form of charts and tabular statistics from the University Management Reporting Office, and for each factor there is a requirement to provide commentary under the heading “Measures to be taken to achieve or enhance Top 40/Top 100 under 50 objectives”.

The KPIs and the contributing factors that are included and/or performance measure crucial to that KPI are listed in Table 6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPI</th>
<th>Contributing factors / performance measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource, Student Numbers and Staffing</td>
<td>Educational Portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainability of high quality recruitment (Home/EU/International)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff profile, recruitment and succession strategies including SSR consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff professional recognition/qualification targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research, REF and Impact</td>
<td>Promotion of strong research ethos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REC income generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Education and Engagement</td>
<td>NSS improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic and pastoral support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovation in students education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student progression and completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good honours, including value added</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate salaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy and Organisation</td>
<td>Actions not covered by above to achieve Top 40/Top 100 under 50 status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Departmental evaluation process KPIs

It is notable that the sections on Research and Student Education and Engagement are directly transferable to those attributes that are used to evaluate the university league tables. Where the KPI is not league table focussed there is a clear indication in the review documentation that revenue bearing activity is of great significance – for example staff profiling includes reference to external funding, grant applications and REC income generation are key to the Research REF and Impact KPI and the significance of the revenue stream from international recruitment both at undergraduate and
postgraduate levels are given significant importance in the departmental response. It is also notable that the departmental review is the key driving force for supporting resource allocation for the department over the next three years, and staffing recruitment strategies are to be based upon the setting of targets for research revenue and student numbers articulated in this review document.

Brown University Values Evidence Base:

Value Indicator 1 – both research and teaching strategies emphasise the measurement of individual performance.

Value Indicator 5 – action on increasing international student numbers is based on attracting funding rather than for cultural expansion.

Responses to the Academic and pastoral support section and the Strategy and Organisation section were required to comment on actions taken by the department to improve the KIS data on each of the programmes offered in the department on such factors as assessment strategies and contact hours. Whilst not explicitly stated the implication of this has been understood to mean that there should be an increase in contact hours across the board, and a reduction of examinations across the portfolio as these are aspects that are generally viewed as critical in aiding the decision making processes of potential students when they make decisions as to which universities they should apply.

Action plans that fall out of this departmental review process now form the basis for the annual planning meeting that each Head of Department at Brown University has with Senior Management to discuss the funding requirements for the department for the next three years. This includes the formalising of resources that are available to the department in terms of staffing and physical resources which are primarily focussed upon the size of the student population within the department – the general principal adopted at Brown University is
that the any investment in staff numbers follows directly on from evidence of sustainable growth in student numbers and is generally based upon maintenance of a rough SSR of around 20.

Brown University Values Evidence Base:

Value Indicator 4 - recruitment and retention policies are utility driven and based upon students/research revenue first – appointments second.

Value Indicator 2 – Departmental review highlights recruitment and retention targets for teaching and REF funding targets for research.

Whilst it is not implicitly the case that all marketization mechanisms in HE have negative impacts, there are concerns that if the curriculum development of new awards is based upon what the students want to be taught; what they like to be assessed on; the means by which they will be assessed; and what they will report favourably upon when the time comes for them to leave, then academic rigour and integrity could be brought into question as there will inevitably be a tension between student expectations of grades and the academic provision of them (Creech, 1994; Pattison et al, 2013; Scully and Kerr, 2014; Teichler, 2015). The notions of managing student expectations in order to mitigate the potential impacts of marketization through institutional performance measurement is something that is becoming increasingly important in the activities of the department under consideration of this work.

Brown University Values Evidence Base:

Value Indicator 5 – Departmental review highlights curriculum construction requirements in terms of measurable outputs and not in pedagogic terms.
**Promotions policy**

The second Brown University policy document to be considered is the promotion criteria policy which is used to gauge the suitability of academic staff members to gain promotion to ‘Grade 9’ status (elevation from the HE Framework Single Pay Spine 43 to 44), in common parlance this is a promotion from Senior Lecturer (SL) to Principal Lecturer (PL). Academic staff at Brown University are typically appointed at Lecturer (L) level which under the Single Pay Spine equates to the 30 to 35 range and is classed as a Grade 7 academic in the Brown University Grade Structure. Annual increments at the start of each academic year see academic staff progress one point higher up the Spine Point and promotion from Grade 7 (L) to Grade 8 (SL) is in practice an automatic elevation that is officially dependent upon Head of Department recommendation but which is almost always achieved solely through the annual increment process. Once the Spine Point 43 is reached however academic staff are deemed to be “at the top of SL” and no further increments are applied without engagement in the academic promotions process, which at Brown University is an annual promotions round which commences in January and concludes in June each year. It is not uncommon for academics to reach the top of the SL scale and remain there to the end of their careers. Once promoted staff achieve Grade 9 status their annual increments are reactivated until the ‘top of PL’ is achieved at Single Spine point 49. Promotion to Grade 10 moves staff out of academic contracts and into management contracts.

Given this thesis is concerned with pressures on academic staff already engaged at the university, it is not deemed appropriate to consider recruitment policy at Brown University since this to a large degree has no impact upon currently engaged academic staff. Therefore consideration of the criteria for Grade 9 promotion presents the only gauge for understanding the aspects of professional engagement that Brown University values and sees worthy of consideration for promotion.
Brown University currently has two Grade 9 promotion routes, one of which has three sub-routes, these are summarised in Table 7 together with a summary of the aspects that need to be demonstrated in order to be considered eligible for promotion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 9 Title</th>
<th>Sub-route</th>
<th>Field of Excellence</th>
<th>Sustained Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Leadership and wider contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Lecturer</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership and wider contribution</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
<td>Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership and wider contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise</td>
<td>Enterprise</td>
<td></td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership and wider contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 Grade 9 promotion routes

As can be seen from this table the requirements are expressed in two forms – excellence in the field, and demonstration of sustained effectiveness. For each promotion route excellence needs to be demonstrated in one field and sustained effectiveness needs to be evidenced in three others. In the promotions policy document there are indications of what excellence and sustained effectiveness might look like in each of these fields, these are summarised in four tables below.
### Teaching and Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustained Effectiveness</th>
<th>Excellence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective use of Virtual Learning Environments</td>
<td>Delivery of innovative and creating teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A record of delivering research informed teaching</td>
<td>Effective Programme Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience in curriculum development</td>
<td>Experience of curriculum development inside and outside of the institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holds an HE teaching qualification</td>
<td>Made significant contributions to student support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution to pedagogy within their field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Made significant contributions to the improvement of practice of colleagues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 Characteristics of grade 9 teaching and learning criteria

### Research and Scholarship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustained Effectiveness</th>
<th>Excellence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proven track record of attracting funding</td>
<td>An outstanding research profile with high impact publications to national and international standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sustained record of individual and collaborative research</td>
<td>Made contributions to impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sustained record of research that have contributed to the wider university</td>
<td>Experienced in engaging the media in relation to research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a PhD or equivalent</td>
<td>Successfully supervised PGRs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Produced at least 1 peer refereed paper per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A proven record of generating external income as PI on medium to large research grants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 Characteristics of grade 9 research and scholarship criteria
## Enterprise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustained Effectiveness</th>
<th>Excellence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotes and maintains links with industry, business and communities that are valuable to the University</td>
<td>Substantial contribution to academic enterprise across a broad range of activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates evidence of academic enterprise and innovation</td>
<td>Proven track record of leading CPD / CE programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generates significant income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish strong enterprise networks at national and international level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate leadership in academic enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A proven record of generating and delivering knowledge exchange programmes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 Characteristics of grade 9 enterprise criteria

## Leadership and Wider Contribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustained Effectiveness</th>
<th>Excellence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrable willingness to take on additional tasks to support the work of the University</td>
<td>Maintain an external network that contributes to the success of the University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates performance over a period of time to leadership and administrative duties</td>
<td>Effective coaching and mentoring of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrable delivery in a range of leadership duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding of the development and influence in KPI measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 Characteristics of grade 9 leadership and wider contribution criteria
What seems clear from these tables is that whilst acknowledgement of excellence in one area of professional activity is of primary importance in gaining promotion, it is no longer sufficient to be excellent in one field alone. The promotions policy dictates that engagement with three other fields are required, ensuring the plurality of function of the academic discussed previously.

Analysis of the four progression routes identifies that the Teaching and Learning route best exemplifies what might be seen as classical educational professional values in that the requirements here are focussed predominantly upon pedagogy, practice improvement and innovation in teaching practice. The remaining three pathways all signify the requirement for enhancing University revenue, explicitly in the case of the Research and Scholarship and Enterprise routes, and implicitly for the Leadership and Wider Contribution route. The Research and Scholarship route does require a contribution to be made with regard to societal impact of the research done by the academic, but it is perhaps notable that this requirement was only introduced with the advent of the REF requirement for impact to be identified in order to make research staff returnable under the new evaluative framework. Whilst the Enterprise route does acknowledge wider contributions than just those that impact upon the institution, the requirement for strong enterprise networks at national and international level are predominantly couched in terms of the potential of these links for providing revenue streams for Brown University. Similarly the Leadership and Wider Contribution promotion route is largely framed around contributions to University revenue streams, either through the maintenance of external networks that have a utility to the institution in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, or through engagement with occupational practices that have direct impact on institutional KPIs.

It may be noteworthy, and perhaps not surprising, that the characteristics that define Grade 9 academics presented here need to be clearly demonstrated and evidenced in practice when employed as Grade 8 academics if there is to be any
consideration of any application for promotion. Anecdotally many academics see this as the institution requiring ‘more’ of grade 8 academics than is warranted by their current position if they are ever to be considered for elevation to Grade 9 status – potential worth it seems is not sufficient to gain promotion, the worth of a Grade 9 academic has to be evidenced in advance of any recompense for that level of academic engagement to be given.

Brown University Values Evidence Base:

Value Indicator 4 – promotions policy articulates utility of the individual and worth to the institution and uses primarily performativity measures in a narrow assessment process.

Value Indicator 2 – three of the four promotion routes emphasise revenue generation suggesting client focus.

Academic regulations
Brown University prides itself on the principles that underpin all academic regulations in the institution which embed the student in all academic decision making, and require in return a commitment from students to be the providers of their own education in a collaborative process with their lecturers rather than acting as the recipients of a learning experience in a guiding principle called Student as Constructor (SAC), again the actual epithet of this principle is changed in this thesis to aid in providing anonymity for the institution. Whilst this underpinning principle has proved successful and has had impact upon curriculum development and academic processes, in practice it has been noted that SAC has not had significant impact on student engagement with the education process and the student demands and expectations of a market-driven educational process discussed previously are still evident.
Recent years have seen a period of general stability in the academic regulations at Brown University. There has been both the introduction and subsequent removal of regulations to permit failing students to effectively double the number of attempts they have to pass assignment work which was instigated to improve the retention rates across the institution. Evidence after four years of engagement with this regulation however provided support to what academic staff often believed to be the case – that improvements in progression rates were only minimal, but the overhead in additional marking for academics was considerable. This regulation as of the academic year 2014/15 is in the process of being phased out and will be removed from the academic regulations for all students by the end of the 2015/16 academic year. Brown University uses condonement regulations whereby students not making the minimum pass mark can still progress from their first year of study to their second year of study without having to engage in resits (within certain parameters), and allows ‘fail and trail’ for second year students to allow them to carry a small number of failed units of study into their final year of study. Such tweaks to regulations to maximise the retention of weaker students is not uncommon in the sector but these regulations do identify the drive from Brown University to maximise the utility of all recruited students.

The 2014/15 academic year has seen some consideration of future changes to regulations that might allow uncapped resits for undergraduate students and the introduction of condonement regulations for taught postgraduate programmes which would bring Brown University in line with international institutions with whom the Brown has collaborative arrangements. Some partner institutions in Europe operate with regulations that allow students to...
resubmit work to improve grades and whilst this has been suggested as a potential mechanism to add a parity of experience to students on shared programmes, there are some concerns that if implemented it could be viewed as a first stage process in making the policy apply to all programmes as a means to enhance both the good honours and added value performance measures that are prevalent in the calculation of university league tables.

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**Brown University Value Evidence Base:**

*Value Identifier 5 – Academic assessment policies seek to maximise the value of students.*

*Value Identifier 1 – Proposals for changes to assessment regulations seek to directly influence measurable attributes of student’s performance towards enhancing League Table performance*

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One final change to academic regulations at Brown University that warrants consideration here is that the institution has introduced a new award level that can now be an enrolment point for students to apply to the University. The practice of introducing admission policies to allow enrolment not just to the more normal BSc or BA programmes, but also to Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) programmes is now relatively common in the sector. CertHE is a 120 CATS programme of study which is equivalent to the first year of study on an equivalent BSc or BA programme, that had until recently only been available as an exit award for students who fail their second year of study after successful completion of their first year. In many UK HEIs the award now offers a progression route to full Bachelor status at the commencement of a second year of study if students are successful in completing it – thus allowing students to engage in three years of study to obtain a full Bachelor degree but not by the more traditional route of applying for a Bachelor programme at point of entry. The entry points required for enrolment are lower than those required for the equivalent BSc or BA programme. The significance of allowing
students to enrol on this award is that it allows HEIs to recruit students to what could potentially be a three year programme (one year on the CertHE and two on the Bachelor progression route) but which allows the institution to recruit students at lower entry points than would normally have been allowed. This can be done without impacting upon the points at entry league table performance measure which is present in most of the commonly quoted university league tables (the calculations are not based upon students who are deemed to have ‘accelerated entry’ to a degree programme). This is openly identified as a means to maximising recruitment possibilities (of weaker students) whilst at the same time not impacting upon the factors that influence league table standings and no consideration has been made as to the validity of a CertHE as a marketable qualification in the workplace. The recruitment cycle at Brown University will see this new level award come into play at clearing in August 2015 and its impact is due to be evaluated during the academic year 2015/16.

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Brown University Evidence Base:

*Value Identifier 2 – Academic recruitment policies structured to maximise revenue from students and views students as clients.*

*Value Identifier 5 – creation of award structures to maximise student utility not to provide worthwhile qualifications.*

Institutional context summary

This review of policy and procedure at Brown University has presented a picture of a university that through an understanding of the external pressures impacting upon it has directed a significant proportion of its policy adoption upon activities that it perceives to be those that directly contribute towards the continued financial viability of the institution. Much of the evaluation of departmental engagement in terms of KPIs are focussed upon promoting actions that directly influence league table positions; that embed the
requirements upon academics to generate revenue whether in the form of research grant awards or from consultancy and enterprise activity; that explicitly codify the requirements of teaching practice in terms of student satisfaction and student attainment and that ultimately exhibit many of the transitions between professional values and market values as suggested by Ball (Ball, 2006).

A summary of the shift towards Market Values at Brown University is presented in Table 12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Indicator</th>
<th>Professional Values</th>
<th>Market Values</th>
<th>Home University Value</th>
<th>Evidence Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Individual need</td>
<td>Individual performance</td>
<td>Individual performance</td>
<td>Departmental review policy clearly articulates measurement of individual performance. Teaching and Learning strategies are predicated upon attainment and achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Serves Community need</td>
<td>Attracts clients</td>
<td>Attracts clients</td>
<td>Departmental review policy highlights recruitment and retention targets. Promotions policy emphasises revenue generation in three of the four promotion paths. Academic policies structured to maximise revenue from students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Collectivism between institution and students</td>
<td>Competition between institution and students</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Institutional performance measures imply evaluative comparison between departments. Education policy embeds student engagement in all processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Broad assessments of worth based upon a variety of qualities</td>
<td>Narrow assessments of worth based upon performativity</td>
<td>Narrow assessments of worth based upon performativity</td>
<td>Departmental review policy clearly articulates measurement of individual performance in narrow categories. Promotions policy articulates utility of the individual and worth to the institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Education of students is intrinsically of equal worth</td>
<td>Education of students is valued in relation to costs and outcomes</td>
<td>Education of students is valued in relation to costs and outcomes</td>
<td>Recruitment and retention policies are utility driven, staffing is based upon student numbers first - appointments second. Departmental review policy requires action on increasing post graduate numbers and continue internationalisation of the student body as a means of attracting funding not in terms of cultural expansion. Academic policies direct maximisation of revenue not maximisation of achievement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 Shift towards market values at Brown University

The evidence base provided suggests that in all but one of the value indicators the policy documents at Brown University espouse market values in preference to classical professional values. The sole value indicator where there is evidence
to support a mix of professional and market values is in the relationship between students and institution where the underpinning ethos of Student as Creator present a clear undertaking to embed the student within (rather than against) the key strategic processes in the institution and emphasise the collaboration between student and institution in all levels of engagement. This is mitigated to some degree by increasingly competitive evaluative mechanisms in all areas that do not directly involve students – there highly competitive practices and evaluative policies and procedures are in operation that compare departments against departments, faculties against faculties, and through the use of the competitor set, institution against institution.

Chapter summary
This Chapter has presented a literature review and evaluation of policies to demonstrate the external and internal pressures on academic engagement at Brown University. The evidence suggests that the institution currently operates by utilising predominantly competitive evaluative mechanisms to influence practice that is largely directed to enhancing reputation and marketability as espoused by university league tables at both national and international level. Much of the policy documentation that underpin the management strategies at the institution explicitly identify recognised factors that influence various league table calculation mechanisms and the goals and objectives of the institution are typically couched in terms of the current, and aspirational position that the University holds.

Policies relating to student activity, in particular in the areas of assessment and recruitment, are increasingly presented in terms of market values and are focussed on maximising the financial utility of each student, although Student as Creator demonstrates the value of student engagement and collaboration as an underlying academic principle that demonstrates that a continued sense of value is placed in pedagogy. Policies relating to academic staff promotions are, in three out of four routes, written to maximise potential for promotion through the development of revenue and revenue opportunities and all routes
identify an explicit requirement for academics to demonstrate plurality through effectiveness in a number of core competencies.

In the main these local policy adoptions are a natural reaction to global market pressures and neoliberalist Government policy and practice, that through the continued use of NPM strategies seek to ensure effective and efficient use of public funds through funding initiatives in teaching and research that increasingly rely on private sector resources. The impact of the market is clearly evident here as HEIs respond to the pressures of increased producer competition and significant increases in influence of consumer demand by applying ever more utilitarian processes that seem to be at odds with working definition of professionalism presented in Chapter 1.

How academics at Brown University have responded to these pressures is the main thrust for investigation in Chapter Four of this work, but the next chapter will consider the methods by which this investigation will be conducted, and present a underpinning to the ontological and epistemological foundations for the research.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

The previous two Chapters of this work have presented a grounding for the research in terms of literature reviews to provide the context under which the research is undertaken, and to provide a rationale as to ‘what’ the research will attempt to establish. Now that this foundation has been presented, it is necessary to present an indication of the ‘how’ the research should be engaged. The need to “understand the consequences of doing or not doing something, so that you are able to make good decisions according to the circumstances [of your research]” (Newby, 2014 p7), and “that you are confident in your judgements [such that you can] persuade others that the choices you have made and the way you have done things are appropriate” (ibid) are the key attributes of research. This chapter therefore will present a description of methods undertaken in this research, and also present both a justification for, and acknowledgement of the limitations of those chosen methods.

In order to provide confidence in the theoretical foundations of research the first section will consider the ontological and epistemological questions that are inherent in research that is conducted in an educational context. Secondly this chapter will present a summary and justification of the methods adopted in the conduct of this work. This will include a justification for the use of interviews; an indication of how anonymity of the participants was ensured; a justification for the sampling method that was adopted to arrive at the final set of academics who were interviewed; and a discussion on the means by which the content of the interviews were analysed to provide dependable results that were used to form the findings of this thesis.
Ontological and epistemological foundations of research

At the outset it is probably worth presenting a definition of what is meant by research in an educational context. One suggestion is that educational research is "the way in which people acquire dependable and useful information about the educative process" (Ary et al, 2010 p19) whilst this is a definition that provides a basis for commencement of a research project, it does leave a number of questions unanswered. As Pring suggests, definitions and clarifications of terms within those definitions, especially in the field of education leads to inevitable controversy since many of the terms encountered in the field are 'essentially contestable' in that "certain words can rarely be defined in a way that attracts universal agreement" (Pring, 2000 p9).

Paramount amongst these terms are descriptions and definitions that relate to the encompassment of what exactly we mean by 'education' and by extension Ary, Jacobs et al's use of the term "educative process". The processes of knowledge acquisition are themselves “poorly understood in spite of recent dramatic advances” (Segal et al, 2014 p.8) and what makes this acquired knowledge useful and dependable; and what specifically makes these things appropriate in an educational context is therefore equally open to contest and debate. However, this should not detract from the process of furthering the desire to improve knowledge - the basic tenet under which all research is undertaken.

Pring suggests an approach to deal with these contestable terminologies when he suggests that the researcher should clearly articulate what it is they are talking about in definitions, whether through stipulative definitions - explaining what is meant by each contestable term; ostensive definitions - definition through the association of specific objects to which the term refers; or through examination of the use of terms and words in context (op cit). It is here that an examination of Ary et al's suggestion of what constitutes educational research highlights terms that require clear definition. What do they mean by 'acquire', 'dependable', and 'useful'? If one takes each of these terms in turn and extrapolates the implied underpinning understanding in their common
parlance, then one can begin to contemplate the importance of methodological context in which research takes place.

The use of the qualifying statement concerning the applicability of the information garnered through educational research, that it must be 'useful' leads to a debate on the purpose of the research to be undertaken, and also on the intended use of the findings generated. Here the debate required is therefore largely related to questioning of the context under which the research is conducted and ultimately the context which is applied to any generalisation of the application of findings that arise from an evaluation of that research. If research is to be useful then the outputs of the research process should provide the means to allow readers to gain an understanding of the cultural settings that the research purports to describe and which is informed by those same cultural perspectives (Bogdan and Biklen, 2002). Inevitably therefore one must contemplate the rationales of the associated actors within the research to either engage in it, or to be the recipients of its findings, but without context (and by implication without a current understanding of the complete nature of the research to be engaged with in this thesis and the motivations of anyone reading the findings) these aspects may be considered at best lacking in applicability, or at worst redundant.

O'Donoghue points out that those doing research typically start the process as they typically feel “that all is not well with current practice and [they are] prompted to bring about change directed at trying to improve the situation” (O'Donoghue, 2006 p4). The usefulness of research therefore acts as both a driving factor for the engagement of the research process and also as a potential provider of obfuscation and bias since the initial perceptions of the researcher are founded upon notions of failure of current practice. The motivations behind the research therefore requires consideration of the second aspect of Ary et al's good quality research - that the information gained through educational research be 'dependable'. Enquiry into the dependability of the research conducted leads one to present discussions on the application of
research findings, and on the meaning given to both the findings generated by the research and the methods adopted by the researcher. Similarly, the application of a generalised set of findings to a wider world - that is, to purport that the findings of any particular research project can be extrapolated to a wider context than that under which the research was undertaken - is also an area that warrants discussion. With this in mind it is likely that the questions that are posed in any given research context rely on statements and interpretations of truth, the nature of perception, and the definitions of objects within the environment, all of which are bounded within ontological assumptions about the nature of things and of reality.

Ontology is "the study of being. It is concerned with "what is", with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality" (Crotty, 1998 p10). Before one can hope to engage in research to establish a 'truth' a researcher is typically required to acknowledge their own ontological position of what the world is and how their place in it is influenced by, and has influence upon the environment in which the research is adopted. It is suggested that without consideration of one's own view of reality, any findings from research will be tarnished by the application of bias, whether knowingly or innocently, from both the methods adopted and the interpretations of any findings that fall out of the research. As Corbetta suggested “every research tool or procedure is inextricably embedded in commitments to particular views of the world and ways of knowing that world made by researchers using them” (Corbetta, 2003 p12). Thus, the motivations of the researcher engaged in this research as discussed in the opening section of this work must be considered when trying to establish the nature of values in an academic context. The implication presented by some as a key pre-requisite in determining the methodological foundations of any researcher is therefore that, whether the adoption of a strong objectivist view of reality at one end of a continuum through to a strong relativism view of the world at the other, the researcher must not just understand the meaning of the world but also recognize what their ‘own ontology is’ (Crowther and Lancaster, 2008). That is not to imply that research and research methods are by definition
inherently insular and based upon the belief systems of the researcher. They may well be so, but the implication here is that it is a requirement of good research for the researcher to acknowledge their ontological perspectives, and perhaps more importantly demonstrate an awareness of how those perspectives can influence both the choice of methods, the means by which the methods are applied, and the interpretive mechanisms used to generate 'meaning' and 'dependability' from the results obtained (Corbetta, 2003). 'Good' research from this perspective is therefore done when the limitations imposed by one's own ontological foundations are not eradicated, but where the influence of them is acknowledged, and wherever possible, the impact of them is minimised. Similarly, the extrapolation and generalisation of any conclusions from research must be contextualised by the examination of ontological foundations which underpin the research.

Strong Objectivism implies that the world is underpinned by eternally true facts and values which are revealed to us in one way or another to guide us through the world, the view implies that there is a clear and identifiable reality which is tangible and measurable in an objective way (Crossan, 2003). From this empiricist perspective reality can in effect be measured, causal relationships can be concretised through an understanding of the interaction of variables and social reality can be ‘understood’ (Creswell and Clark, 2007). With a more Subjectivist ontological stance the world is seen as one whereby knowledge of the truth of facts and values are limited by personal viewpoint; where reality is 'out there' but that it is imperfectly comprehensible. As Bryman points out “if a research question is formulated in such a way as to suggest that organizations and cultures are objective social entities that act on individuals, the researcher is likely to emphasize the formal properties of organizations or the beliefs and values of members of the culture” (Bryman, 2012 p34).

With a Strong Relativistic ontological view of the world the belief is that there is no such thing as 'truth' in the societal sense, merely that the world is experienced, it is the feelings of individuals and groups about their own
experiences that shape what reality is, where reality is a constructed composite of social, cultural, economic and political mores and values (Berger and Luckmann, 1991). Here there exist multiple realities each of which is constructed locally and here qualitative methods are typically adopted since all that can be established through research is not 'how the World is' but to try to create a framework whereby the participants in the activity being investigated are given opportunity to adequately communicate 'how the World is to them'. The reality that research tries to establish from this interpretivist philosophical stance is therefore acknowledged not to be established by that which is observed, but more that “that is interpreted” (Corbetta, 2003 p21). With this stance adopted research is likely to have an emphasis “on the active involvement of people in reality construction” (Bryman, 2012 p34) and where the approach is directed towards the consideration of particular understandings of the world, of values and of behaviour. It is here that the ontological perspective of the author of this work are founded.

When applied to method, these ontological stances should not necessarily focus the researcher on particular practices, nor should these stances promote attempts to reduce the import of qualitative research methods when compared to quantitative ones, more to acknowledge that the way in which one shapes one's world and one's own truth, whether from the concretised axiomatic and empirical to the more belief driven truths, is key in the generation of methods adopted in a particular research project. These ontological differences may then shape the research project to enable, in the researcher's eyes at least, either the only method of measuring the world at one end of the continuum to the best method to 'get the world as it really is' at the other that drives the researcher to acknowledge that the 'reality' researched "can never be independent of the person researching it" (Pring, 2000 p45).

This apparent dichotomy between logically different ontological perspectives, whilst being a well-rehearsed argument, is not one that gives comfort to the researcher since much effort can be expended on establishing the foundations
for the research before consideration of the applicability of methods is established. Plowright suggests an alternate paradigm might be applicable in social research whereby the philosophical foundations are not the drivers for decisions on research methodology, but rather that it is “the other way round: methodology determines the philosophy you might employ to explain your approach to undertaking research” (Plowright, 2011 p181). From this perspective it is not the ontological considerations that are paramount, but the pragmatic application of research processes to produce conclusions based upon ‘warranted’ claims as to the applicability of the findings of any research together with well-considered potential rebuttals to any argument that produce ‘good’ research.

Educational researchers of a more traditionalist, and some would say less pragmatic view of the ontological foundations of research methods propose that ontological assumptions made about the nature of things must give rise to epistemological assumptions concerning methods of gaining knowledge and making enquiries into reality and the nature of things (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). As such in order to engage in what Ary et al term good educational research one must adopt methods that allow for the acquisition of information - a crucial facet in the research process, and in order to engage in the acquisition of information, the research methods adopted must, as discussed above, acknowledge the ontological stance of the researcher, but also require an evaluation of the fundamentals of the epistemological limitations of research in general.

Epistemology concerns itself with the nature and forms of knowledge itself - what is knowledge, how do we know what we know and why do we know what we know (Newby, 2014)? In the context of research methods perhaps the most important epistemological conundrum is how is knowledge acquired, and in what form can knowledge be communicated to others such that the transference from one person to another results in a meaningful exchange whereby the outcome of the process is a shared understanding of the
knowledge that is equally meaningful to both parties (Grix, 2010)? By extension the epistemological questions around the acquisition of knowledge apply in the context of research since the very mechanisms of writing up research are predicated upon the representation of a body of work (the thesis) that presents the researchers understanding of knowledge that has been acquired in the process of doing the research. The applicability, or from an integrated methodological stance, the ‘warrantability’ of any conclusions drawn from research therefore are fundamentally linked to the ability to acquire, and represent knowledge gained that was not present at the outset by means of an appropriate method.

To hold the view that knowledge is objective and tangible - the positivist stance - implies that observance of practice and the application of reason will reveal knowledge to the beholder in a meaningful way. The driver behind methods to acquire knowledge in a research project if one holds this positivistic approach therefore is likely to be one of empirical investigation of societal phenomena using methods akin to the natural sciences - whereby experimentation and reasoning can establish foundations of knowledge upon which to base conclusions as to one's research. In this context research methods are largely quantitative in nature and will be concerned with "identifying and defining elements and discovering ways in which their relationships can be expressed" (Cohen et al, 2011 p6).

In an educational context however it is likely that experimentation through observance with the goal of measuring a response is not one which will often be attempted, especially when consideration of things like values are the primary drivers for the research. That is not to say that scientific measurement is inappropriate, since there are many educational research projects that evaluate concretised data, for example in evaluation of attendance patterns, establishing links and trends in assessment grades, and the like. However, in most educational research these objective research engagements are rarely engaged with without wishing to establish reasons why the data are as they
The epistemological foundations of the education sector therefore typically divide educational research into two separate camps, research driven by targets and achievements - those that can be investigated using quantitative methods for example by comparison of examination or assessment results given the delivery and pedagogic parameters under investigation; and those that are aimed at establishing insight into values and means of imparting knowledge rather than into establishing means to achieve a specific educational goal. The research for this thesis falls clearly into the second of these camps.

The counter stance to the objectivist view on the nature of knowledge, often referred to as anti-positivism (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) implies that knowledge is subjective and personal to the holder of the knowledge, and therefore the focus of investigation changes to try to establish an understanding of "the way in which individuals create, modify and interpret the world in which they find themselves" (Cohen et al, 2011 p6). Observation is still likely to feature in research methods if this stance is adopted, but the findings established do not always lend themselves to immediate generalisation since much of what can be established in terms of findings is an explanation and understanding of the individual engagement with the environment at that moment, and perhaps more importantly the findings are, at best, 'only' the researchers interpretations and understandings of the means by which the knowledge holder has communicated those findings - generalisation and application to theories in a universal context are therefore likely to only be seen as applicable through the gaining of large numbers of congruent findings. Qualitative research therefore is a process whereby the action of research to describe “meanings in individuals” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005 p3) falls predominantly out of investigation of words and concepts and where textual analysis is likely to predominate (Morrison, 2002).

Methods adopted to try to establish this understanding of subjective feelings and values are therefore less likely to include application of the quantitative means to investigation in isolation, and are more likely to include the addition
of means to establish through qualitative indicators the explanations of the
individual feelings to the circumstances in operation. That is not to weaken the
argument that positivism is an acceptable start point for educational research,
more to posit the warning to the researcher that what is established as a
justifiable fact through the means of research may need to be countered in some
part by the anti-positivist argument that the application of the findings could
be environment specific, and that the field of investigation that forms the
environment is often constructed through feelings and values of the people
involved in any investigation (Hammersley, 2007). The applicability of the
research therefore relies upon a clear statement of the potential limitations of
the methods adopted, or as Plowright indicates, an indication of alternative
inferential explanation to the findings by consideration of “alternative
explanations and reasons for the results of your research” (Plowright, 2011
p143). The researcher is therefore committed to answering methodological
questions on the context in which the research is to be undertaken, to
understand the environment and the context in which any investigations are
made, and to posit methods that are best suited to allow the interpretation of
meaning for those engaged in the research as participants whilst at the same
time acknowledging the limitations of the methods as a consequence of the
actions and beliefs of the researcher; or to use a framework for investigation
that requires consideration of the integration of ontological and epistemological
foundations within a warrantable and contested exploration of a specific
research question.

Research methods typically begin with trying to formulate an understanding of
the problem domain through a literature review that will ground the project in
validity and reliability, but many in the educational research field consider
‘validity’ and ‘reliability’ to be quantitative terms that are inapplicable to
qualitative methodology since “observers cannot agree on the meaning of what
they are observing, which in turn means that a valid measure cannot be in
operation” (Bryman, 2012 p173). By establishing what important research has
been done, what policies have been enacted and what problems have been
reported upon the researcher should be able to "define key terms, constructs and concepts, reporting key methodologies used in other research in to the topic ... and identify gaps that need to be plugged in the field" (Cohen et al, 2011 p121).

That then brings us on to the question of what style of research is to be engaged with and how data is to be gathered - what makes the research 'dependable' in Ary, Jacobs et al's definition of good research. The gathering of data in research is of great importance, the meaning of data - information, and the epistemological notions of knowledge - the application of information in context, therefore require data gathering methods that acknowledge the type of data to be gathered. With a positivist stance, quantitative data gathering methods lend themselves to traditional measurement and evaluation, typically through statistical analysis. Increasingly however it is suggested that there is much overlap in the importance of both quantitative and qualitative types of data and research techniques are generally adopted that acknowledge that each type of data can make valuable contributions toward the development of knowledge or in the solving of specific problems (Hakim, 2000). The overlap between types of data and the blurring of the lines of applicability of quantitative and qualitative data can be evidenced in a number of areas. Firstly quantitative methods are used for testing theory, but they can also be used for exploring known areas and generating hypotheses for further investigation (typically associated with qualitative data), similarly qualitative research often includes quantification mechanisms (Blaxter et al, 2010). It is probably the case that the "underlying philosophical positions are not necessarily as distinct as the stereotypes suggest" (ibid, p66). The conclusion to this understanding is that polarization of methods into either quantitative or qualitative research methods is probably neither meaningful nor productive and the natural outcome that mixed methods are adopted with greater prevalence, especially in the education field. Some go so far as to suggest that mixed methods are "necessary to uncover information and perspective, increase corroboration of the data, and render less biased and more accurate conclusions" (Reams and Twale, 2008
Plowright however presents the possibility of an alternative paradigm whereby the pragmatic approaches to research methodology dictate that “it is the research question that will determine the approach you take” (Plowright, 2011 p185 emphasis added).

As suggested at the start of this chapter, the educational field is full of contestable meanings and definitions, behaviour (and thereby data) is often socially situated and open to interpretation and misinterpretation and the realities one must address are many, differently constructed and based upon many value-based systems. Indeed it could be argued that there is a paradoxical acceptance of quantification of findings in the HE sector since in its most concretised output form it presents an embodiment of what Horkheimer referred to as the 'mathematization of nature' (Horkheimer, 1972) in the sense that the outputs of student work are ultimately marked and given a quantitative value (a grade) which represents an aggregation of any number of qualitative thoughts and perceptions of the value of the work made by an academic staff member. This quantitative 'conversion' of qualitative aggregations into a degree classification (a measurable device that is understood both within and outside the educational establishment) is often replicated in the field of educational research where feelings and thoughts are categorised to aid in quantitative analysis. Much educational research may therefore be typically characterised by a number of ethnographic axioms that are likely to shape the style of investigation, leading to some schools of thought that suggest it is likely that:

"studies must be set in their natural settings;
...
qualitative methods sit more comfortably than quantitative ones;
purposive sampling enables the full scope of issues to be explored;
research designs emerge over time;
...
the outcomes of research are negotiated;
the focus of the study determines its boundaries;
trustworthiness replaces more conventional views of reliability and validity."

(Lincoln and Guba, 1985 pp39-43)
Ultimately the educational researcher must be mindful that the research methods adopted must provide a best fit to the research question that is being asked. With this in mind, it is necessary to present a brief indication of the research question that will form the basis of this thesis. The main research question to be investigated is "To what extent are professional values in one department of a Higher Education Institution compatible with current pressures: the perceptions of academic staff". Driven by previous investigations into policy strategies at two real UK HE institutions that questioned the impact of global, national and local policy drivers upon the activities engaged with by lecturing staff, the research question is an attempt to better understand the impact of policy upon professional practice by investigating the extent to which professional values of academic staff are impacted and influenced by institutional policy.

This work is focussed primarily on qualitative methods using an interpretivist paradigm, and will adopt methods that use known subjects in a given environment to try to establish a view of reality that is inherent within its own context, but which cannot present findings that are bias-free. Both the environmental context and the individuals under investigation are known to the researcher and therefore the research will be influenced by previous experience. The need to maintain a commitment to objectivity, by searching for alternative views and potential areas of conflict between the values held by the researcher are therefore paramount.

This research then is an attempt to establish subjective meaning and perceptions of academic staff engaged in the day-to-day activities that they undertake at Brown University. The notions of phenomenology are important here since exploration of subjective experience is crucial. Social phenomenology is a descriptive and interpretive theory that presents the view that in normal daily life people are able to ascribe meaning to situations and to make judgments about them (Schutz, 1982).
A critical aspect of research that tries to capture or represent the subjective viewpoint of research subjects is that the phenomenon under investigation must be those that are present and have meaning for those investigated, and not have them replaced by the world constructed by the researcher. Since social phenomenological concepts acknowledge the impact of how social interactions and life circumstances mould and form our understandings of the interactions we have with the world (Newby, 2014), it should be noted here that the research is undertaken with staff members at Brown University, but also conducted by a staff member at Brown University. This is not to purport that the social phenomenological underpinnings to the research here are likely to be less impacted by an alternate view of the world that is constructed by the researcher because the social constructions are similarly formed; but it should be acknowledged that the meanings and means of communication between researcher and research participant are probably more likely to be transferrable in terms of applicability to the generalised view of ‘the way things are’ at Brown University, or more specifically the way things are perceived within one department at Brown University than they might have been had the researcher not had a similarly constructed social phenomenology.

All research methods have their pitfalls, and each has particular facets of engagement that are made problematic by the probable use of them within the organisation where the researcher engaged in this study works - power relationships, sensitivity issues, ethical issues and security issues may all impact - however the interview process seems to present the most likely method to adopt given the ontological and epistemological issues currently considered. Further considerations of the limitations of this approach are presented in the next section.

Hitchcock and Hughes (op cit) further suggested that in addition to ontological and epistemological discussions, the researcher must consider axiological questions relating to the values and beliefs that we as researchers hold, and the implications for research method if one inevitably considers that one's World
View must influence the tools and requirements of the nature of enquiry. So whilst one must acknowledge the limitations of the research in terms of the nature of truth and the social perception of it, one must also acknowledge, and by implication reduce, the impact of personal \textit{weltanschauung} in the adopted methods (Checkland, 1999).

Of course, as was intimated in the opening section of this work, the HE sector in the UK (and by continuation the place of the researcher conducting this study) is currently undergoing significant changes in funding regimes and a movement towards a market driven approach to HE that together with increases in the control and accountability of academic engagement through performativity measures and NPM has led to expressions of concern for the future of the academic process. The impact of such turmoil on the research findings established here must ultimately be considered and commented upon in the final presentation of the limitations of this research.

In the final reckoning, the interactions between research methods and the environment, whether in the form of political tensions, ethical issues, conflicting belief systems or views of reality, must be countered by an element of inquisitive pragmatism - the research methods adopted cannot ever be seen as a perfect fit for any research project. The methodological underpinnings to any research project are therefore tempered by an acknowledgement of limitations of those methods, and in the best case scenario - a justification of the best possible fit given all that limits the application of the chosen methods. Critically however, any findings that fall out of this best fit approach to research method must be countered by a suitably considered approach to the reporting of generalisations and applications of the findings that fall out of the research. At best what is likely to be presented here are contextualised, qualified interpretations that are likely to be expressed and bounded by what Bassey calls ‘fuzzy predictions’ (Bassey, 2001) where findings are “supported by a research account which makes clear the context of the statement and the evidence justifying it” (\textit{ibid} p5).
In order then to make an appropriately contextualised and considered commentary in the findings and analysis section of this work, it is necessary to present an indication of the methods adopted in the research process such that the limitations and ‘fuzziness’ of the predictions can be adequately tempered. To this end what follows is a justification for the methods adopted in this research.

**Methodological approach**

The question ‘what do we mean by an HE professional’ is, to some degree at least, answerable with reference to secondary sources of information in the form of journal articles, text books and academic papers on HE practice. By setting a context for subsequent investigation, evaluation of the current literature in the field has grounded the thesis in current educational theory and policy and provided a foundation on which to explore the engagement of HE professionals in practice. It is here then that primary research is likely to become the method that drives an increased understanding of the views and opinions of practicing academics and to establish some indications of the key values that drive practice. These were then compared with the implied values of the institution by investigation of the policy enactments that, either explicitly or implicitly direct academic practice through instruction and influence.

**Knowledge acquisition through interview**

Interviews are widely used tools for data collection in educational research as the social aspects of the process mirror the social construction of their reality. The process allows for discussion of their interpretations of the world, and if handled properly allow the interviewee to express how they regard situations from their own perspective. The interview process itself is a multi-sensory one in that it allows engagement not only verbally but also visually such that nuances of tone and gesture can be witnessed and recorded in a way that could not be done through other means, and the ability of the interviewer to delve deeper into areas of interest generate the potential for more complex and revealing responses to emerge. The potential to rephrase, redirect, and re-question allows
opportunities for the interviewer to reveal aspects of the world view of participants that may not have been considered at the outset of the process, and where new and interesting areas emerge the interviewee is not restricted by a pre-determined question set that might not have allowed investigation into 'off topic' areas. Of course these advantages do not come without cost. With power-relationships and political implications comes the potential for the interviewer to impose personal bias on the findings, or for deceptive responses to be the order of the day - Lincoln and Guba's notion of trustworthiness rather than validity is key here - and justification of the methods adopted in the interview process become paramount in the methodological considerations of any research project.

The type and nature of any conducted interviews also need to be considered. In most cases the nature of the process is dependent upon the type of data that are being sought. In informal conversational interviews for example there is unlikely to be any pre-determined questions or specific phraseologies used and this increases the relevance of questions which can be matched to each individual and the context in which they operate. This less than systematic approach however does present the researcher with a number of different responses that may not warrant any kind of common interpretation of a possible generalisation of ideas or values, and the findings may be more difficult to analyse and collate in this form of interview. More structured approaches however, for example closed quantitative interviews, make for easy comparison and aggregation of findings, but may be seen as impersonal or even limiting as the required responses are often those of the interviewer rather than the interviewee. There is also the danger that pre-determined responses to questions are open to misinterpretation and misunderstanding - each question and possible answers must mean the same to each respondent in order for any findings to be meaningful.

Interviews are often conducted in a standardised open-ended style where fixed questions and sequences of questions are established before the interview
commences, but the interviewer allows the interviewee to concentrate on issues or topics as they see fit. The ability of the interviewer to conduct exploratory interviews is therefore paramount. The characteristics of good interview technique therefore need to be fully understood. One source identifies a number of key characteristics of research interviews by saying that they should (amongst others):

"engage, understand and interpret the key feature of the lifeworlds of the participants;

use natural language to gather and understand qualitative knowledge;

be able to reveal and explore the nuanced descriptions of the lifeworlds of the participants;

elicit descriptions of specific situations and actions, rather than generalities;

adopt a deliberate openness to new data and phenomena, rather than being too pre-structured;

focus on specific ideas and themes, but avoid being too tightly structured;

accept the ambiguity and contradictions of situations where they occur in participants;

accept that the interview may provoke new insights and changes in the participants themselves;

regard interviews as an interpersonal encounter;

be a positive and enriching experience for all participants."

(Kvale, 1996 p30)
This leads to an investigation plan that requires the engagement of a number of semi-structured interviews, but some consideration of the number of interviews to engage with is required. The primary sampling driver should be that the “sampling procedure should meet the needs of the research question [and] the calculation [of the sample size] needs to take account of the likely response rate” (Newby 2014, p266). Ultimately this research is not looking to establish a statistically viable set of sampled opinions that might be used to form generalisations or be extrapolated to a larger population set. The purpose is to gain insight into values of academic staff from a potential pool of 27 academics. Pragmatism and problems with ensuring anonymity of the participants dictate that interviewing all 27 academics would not be a viable solution to the issue, so it was decided that between six or eight participants would provide enough engagement to furnish meaningful results to the investigation whilst simultaneously allow for a lack of attribution to any particular individuals should the department in question be identified in some way. Ultimately eight academics were interviewed.

A key principle in constructing the means to investigate values of the participants in this research is to minimise the impact of the values held by the interviewer. This is particularly important in this research since the interviewee is both known to all of the participants, and also works in the same institution as the participants. It is worth re-emphasising at this point that the interviewer has no line manager responsibilities and has no oversight of any of the participants. Power relationship issues therefore are not present here. Nonetheless it was important to provide a context for the interviews that allowed for the minimisation of influence from the interviewer. To this end an initial stage in this research was to write a questionnaire instrument which was used to gauge opinions from academic staff on a small range of professional issues and offer open ended questions through an anonymous online survey which academics at Brown University were invited to participate. The questions asked in the survey were designed not to gauge any depth of
understanding about professional issues, but simply to provide a means for identifying areas that might be investigated in the interviews that would follow.

The questions asked in the online survey were:

- What do you believe to be the main personal and educational qualities required to be a practising academic?
- Which area of your work life makes you feel most satisfied?
- Which aspects of your job do you feel most comfortable with?
- Which aspects of your job are you least confident in dealing with?
- What do you think are the major issues you need to tackle in your current role?
- Which one aspect of your work life would you most like to be without?

The responses to these questions were analysed and where there were recurring themes these were used to help formulate questions for use in the interviews. This mechanism allowed the interviewer to pose such questions as “would it surprise you to learn that in my initial survey x% of respondents identified y as a key area of concern in their current practice?” allowing for investigation of themes that were not driven by the value set of the interviewer. The findings from these questions were also used as follow up points in the interviews so that the professional values expressed in the open responses to the questionnaire were the basis for the bulk of the questions posed.

In order to maximise the potential for each of the questions used in the interview process to elicit a response that is meaningful, each question was ‘tested out’ before use in the actual interviews. For this research a ‘dummy run’ interview was conducted with an academic at a different university to that where the final investigations were conducted, and that academic came from a
discipline where interviews are widely used as a means for investigation. The academic, who was known to the author of this work only as a friend of a friend, agreed to engage in the dummy run and at the conclusion of the interview to offer a critique of both the interview practice and of the questions used in the interview. This academic identified the strengths and weaknesses of the questions asked and offered insight on the effectiveness of individual questions in gaining meaningful responses. They helped to refine the sequencing of questions, and to identify where the nature of questions was either unclear or produced responses that were not expected.

Two key areas for change in the questions asked were made as a consequence of evaluating the dummy run interview. The first change was to give the interview an opening and final question to ‘close the discussion’ that was a callback to the initial question. This offered both a context to the subject matter under investigation and simultaneously offered the interviewees a comforting opening that hopefully would create a relaxed atmosphere, and an end point that prompted the interviewees to look to their future engagement in academia – in the dummy run the first and last questions ultimately asked were not present. The first question about what brought the interviewee into academia would present a comfortable start point to the interview by giving the interviewee an opportunity to talk about themselves and give a relaxed feel to the interview, whilst simultaneously establishing motivations to be an academic. The final question pertaining to the end point of the interviewee career offers both a pleasing end point to the interview but also provides a summary of the general level of satisfaction in their professional practice that was informative.

The second key change to the questions asked was to explicitly offer a hierarchical sub-question to the questions pertaining to personal views such that the participants were guided to make not just personal viewpoint responses, but were encouraged to consider their views of departmental and institutional drivers and pressures on practice. The question pertaining to the
notions of connectedness were similarly changed to consider connectivity at the levels of department, institution and profession.

The dummy run interview as also used to test out the statements offered as explanations of the ethical principles that underpinned the interview, and also to consider the mechanics of the interview process. As a consequence all interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis in a neutral environment, the questions were asked informally and where appropriate additional and supplementary questions were posed – supplementary questions were identified in advance to investigate deeper areas if these did not fall out of the answers provided to the initial question.

Table 13 Interview questions gives a summary of the rationale for adoption of each of the questions ultimately used in the interviews, together with an indication of which of the research questions presented in the Motivation section each question attempts to address. The questions that formed the ‘bare bones’ of each interview are presented in Appendix 1 – Semi-structured interview Questions.
Participant anonymity

If, as some suggest (Gibbs, 2013; Shattock, 2014; Teichler, 2015) there is an erosion of the level of academic credibility and academic standards as a consequence of the recent changes in policy, and any implicit or implied managerialist pressure to reduce standards and thereby maximise the market potential of individual students (Brown, 2013), then it is unlikely to be something that many academics would wish to voice publicly without potentially impacting upon their standing within the institution in which they work. For the individual conducting this research the findings presented may

Table 13 Interview questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Follow-up / supplementary question</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Research question addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What brought you into academia?</td>
<td>Was there a particular rationale for being in the discipline you are in?</td>
<td>An easing in question that also acts as a scene setting question. Also establishes motivations at point of entry to the occupation which could point to early indications of professional values.</td>
<td>In part answers what do we mean by HE professional from the perspective of participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What in your view makes the perfect academic?</td>
<td>Do you think there is a Departmental view or an institutional view of what the characteristics of a perfect academic are?</td>
<td>Initially to get a view of personally held values about the nature of professional engagement. Supplementary questions aim to identify perceived areas or mismatch between different individual values and the perceptions of those held by department and institution.</td>
<td>Initial question pertains to HE professionalism, supplementary questions address both internal and external pressures on HE professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions pertaining to personal views about the findings from the questionnaire.</td>
<td>Reflection on Personal attributes required to be an academic:</td>
<td>Each of these questions are asked in the context of responses to the previously conducted questionnaire. The motivation was to identify 'issues' presented by other academic staff (not necessarily those of the interviewer) to gauge a view as to the extent that the espoused views of 'others' were held in common with the interviewee. Opening up these questions with follow ups about other values and areas of concern would also allow for further themes to emerge that were not expressed in the survey responses.</td>
<td>In part answers what do we mean by HE professional from the perspective of participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your understanding of the key drivers for activity at Brown University?</td>
<td>How are these drivers manifest?</td>
<td>Intended to guage the understanding of, and need for, institutional drivers and to establish a basis for identifying which of those drivers mentioned are subsequently identified as being in conflict with personal views.</td>
<td>These address both internal and external pressures on HE professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do drivers for your personal practice match those of the institution?</td>
<td>At Department level?</td>
<td>Questions at three levels of engagement to establish where potential areas of conflict and or compatibility lie.</td>
<td>The extent to which espoused professional values are seen to be compatible with perceived pressures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel connected?</td>
<td>To your Department?</td>
<td>The notion of connectedness at different levels of engagement give a supplementary view of perceived conflict areas that are not necessarily concerned with key drivers - it was hoped this would identify other areas of conflict that are not solely policy driven.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think you will be happy to be an academic at the end of your career?</td>
<td>A question to guage an picture of overall satisfaction with the role of an academic, and to 'round off' the interview with a call-back to the first question.</td>
<td>In part answers what do we mean by HE professional from the perspective of participants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
present some political difficulties once the results are made public, and the
difficulties and potential pitfalls of investigation into one’s own institution are
well documented (Bell, 2005; Seidman, 2006; Creswell, 2009; Coghlan and
Brannick, 2010). The author is however, both aware, and critically, responsible
for the presentation of this work for public scrutiny. Whilst absolute anonymity
is pragmatically impossible there is a requirement for the researcher to minimise
the potential for the publication of personal or institutional information that
could be professionally damaging or worse impact directly upon the individual
participants who have volunteered to engage in the research process.
Investigations here are predominantly focussed on gaining understanding of
the values of academics within a single department at Brown University, and
throughout this work the real names of the Department and the University are
never used. Steps also need to be taken to minimise the likelihood of
identification of the interview participants in this study.

Firstly, the participants names in all interview transcripts, supporting
documents and this thesis are never mentioned, and whilst participants are
identified through naming conventions in this work, a random number
generator was used at multiple stages to ensure there could be no linkage
between identifier and participant. It is also worth noting that the voice
recordings of all interviews have been stored in an encrypted format that
ensures only the author of this work can access the audio content that could
identify individual participants.

Transcripts of the interviews were sent to each participant for approval and
requests for redactions were encouraged and implemented as appropriate
before use in this thesis. Only two of the participants requested any redactions,
one to remove the previous employment history of the participant which it was
felt would specifically identify the individual, and one to remove reference to
early career geographical information for the same reason. All participants
formally approved the transcripts, with one even commenting that they were
surprised to have been sent a full transcript for approval since in their view by
agreeing to the recording of the original interview they were very much of the mind that “everything I said would be fair game”. As a final mechanism to preserve anonymity, all files pertaining to the transcripts are also stored with anonymised file names and have all reference to named persons or institutions redacted or replaced with anonymised equivalent terms.

A second key factor in the anonymization process is done through the sampling process. If all academics in the department had taken part in this research then it could have presented a more generalised picture of the findings, however it would have made anonymization of participants harder to achieve since the identification of the institution and department under investigation would, by default have identified all of the individuals who have contributed to this work. It is also worth noting that pragmatic limitations also made 100% engagement with this research impossible. To this end a sampling mechanism had to be adopted that provided a suitably populated sample set of interviewees that would maximise the potential for anonymity but also provide as meaningful a results as possible. The next section will therefore discuss how the sampling was conducted.

**Sampling**

Schofield identifies two main methods of sampling, the probability (or random) sample and the non-probability (or purposive) sample (Schofield, 1996), in the former there is an equal probability of questioning any member of the wider population, in the latter some members of the wider population will be excluded and others definitely included. Here, because of the small number of potential participants it seems pertinent to apply purposive sampling.

The Department under consideration consists of 27 full time academics which presents a relatively small population set from which to draw samples. Within the Department there are a number of potential means for categorisation of the academic staff to enable quota sampling to take place – for example one might
look to the grade of academic – within the Department this would break down to the following:

- 5 Senior Academics
- 6 Principal Lecturers
- 12 Senior Lecturers
- 4 Lecturers

Similarly categorisation could take place based upon key focus of activity whereby academic staff can ostensibly be divided into four primary functioning types (the numbers in parenthesis identify the breakdown of the 27 staff members by each function type):

- Managerial (1)
- Research Specialists (14)
- Teaching Specialists (4)
- Research / Teaching Hybrid (8)

Unlike the first categorisation method, this approach is based primarily upon the researchers own interpretations of the role and function of the members of the Department and the role categories presented are not formalised or institutionally recognised and therefore present limited justification for their adoption as sample defining characteristics. What is likely to be of significant import in this study however is that the nature and role of the academics under investigation are likely to be influence by the ‘type’ of academic engaged in the study. It is probable that a research active member of staff who is engaged primarily in research who has only a limited amount of teaching will hold different values than a member of staff who is predominantly teaching
focussed. The focus of this research is not to establish the values of staff members engaged as a particular type of academic, but to identify compatibility between the value sets inherent within the Department and the pressures that enact upon it, as such all values held in the Department are equally as important. Since the process of establishing values will not lend itself to the generation of statistical analysis, there is no requirement to ensure the statistical credibility of the sample set. Therefore, a non-probability sampling process is just as valid as a probability based approach. The characteristics of the evaluations to be engaged with where issues and values are likely to be the main source of findings, together with the small population size that this investigation offers implies that either specialist group sampling or convenience sampling are likely to be the primary candidates for consideration (Newby, 2014).

Specialist group sampling is particularly useful when a research project needs to gain insight into “behaviours or activities from a closely defined group, for instance in policy research” (*ibid* p255) as in this research. It is a sampling method that allows the pre-selection of criteria to be used for the identification of viable participants based upon the specialism that is pertinent to the area of investigation. It could be argued that the specialism in question here – being an academic within the Department under investigation in effect rules out the notion of categorisation, and therefore that a convenience or opportunity sample of the 27 academics in the Department would be just as valid a selection mechanism. However the ontological position of the researcher should be taken into consideration here since the researcher is one of the 27 academics and therefore ‘fits’ into the potential characterisations presented above. What therefore seems pertinent would be to apply criteria to the sample set adopted here to allow consideration of the values of academics from each of the groupings presented such that ‘like-minded’ academics with activity and seniority profiles akin to the author of this work are not the sole contributors.

A decision that was taken early on in the research was to remove from consideration in this sampling process the Head of Department (who is
included in the count of 27 full time academics operating in the Department). Despite still holding many of the roles that one might expect of a contemporary academic including retaining research and teaching activities, it was deemed that the managerial aspects of the Head of Department role, together with the inevitably different set of pressures that engage upon line managers in universities, could mean that the different types of responses that might be presented in response to the interview questions could be immediately attributed to the Head of Department and would therefore remove the likelihood of anonymity to be offered to the Head of Department. The decision was taken therefore to exclude the Head of Department from the sample set. Aside from that particular role, it was not considered that the academic grade of the participants was of any significance – the adoption of personal values in education are not generally predicated upon status, and whilst values may change over time this study is not concerned with the values over a given time frame and as such all grades of academics are of equal import to this study.

Academics across the Department were therefore invited to take part in the interview process based upon a selection criteria that was solely based upon obtaining a final set of participants that included at least one of each of the functioning types in the final sample set. Selection of the participants was based entirely on availability of the staff members, and on a first come – first served basis as might be engaged with in a convenience sampling method, but acceptance of each candidate as a participant was prioritised such that each of the role types were engaged with. The characteristics of the final set of eight candidates did include at least one member from the last three academic types detailed above.

The summary characteristics of the eight staff that were interviewed is presented in Table 14. It should be noted that preservation of anonymity of the participants is paramount here and as a consequence the Interviewee numbers in no way relate to the identification of Interview Participants epithets
in the *Presentation of findings* chapter. In that chapter individual quotations are attributed variously to IP1; IP2; IP3; etc. but there is purposefully no correlation between IP1 and the characteristics of Interviewee Number 1 as presented in this table. A randomisation algorithm was used to generate the IP epithets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Number</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Academic Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>Research/Teaching Hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Research/Teaching Hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Senior Academic</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Principal Lecturer</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Research/Teaching Hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Senior Academic</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 Interviewee characteristics

*Results analysis method*

Subsequent to the interviews being held, the text of each interview was analysed using thematic analysis by an inductive, data-driven approach as described by Boyatzis (1998). The process of coding interview data involves the identification and encoding of important moments in the interview and applying a coded interpretation of what is being said by the interviewee. Boyatzis describes a “good code” as one that encompasses the qualitative richness of discussed phenomenon and by embedding meaning within the code the process can help the researcher organise interview data in meaningful ways.
that help to develop themes from numerous data sources – here the transcripts from eight separate interviews. An initial read through of the interviews was used to present initial ‘broad’ codes and these were used as the basis for the subsequent coding of all of the transcripts. Where segments of data described new themes emerging that had not been coded in the preliminary read-throughs these were added, and the code book expanded accordingly.

The process of encoding is done iteratively and involved reading, summarizing and re-reading the data and processing the information presented in the data both consciously and unconsciously such that meanings and areas of consistency hopefully emerge. From these emerging areas of consistency themes can be identified and exemplified through the application of the codes, and this is aided by the use of the NVivo data management tool. Less technical tools, such as whiteboards and ‘post-it notes’ were also utilised in an attempt to increase the dependability of the codification process. Dependability, akin to reliability issues in quantitative research is a requirement that seeks to ensure that the findings of a research project are identifiably falling out of the data that has been presented, and also that if the process were to be repeated that the findings would have a high degree of consistency and commonality.

Ideally the codification process would have been done independently by other researchers in order to present some ‘inquiry audit’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) of the findings, however the nature of EdD study prohibits this process. In an attempt to verify the dependability of the findings, connecting codes with similar attributes and identifying areas of consensus and of potential conflicts were also used to group together data into themes, and a subsequent codification process starting from the application of thematic analysis (as opposed to the codification of meanings of each sentence and/or paragraph as done previously) was also conducted. This two phase approach offered some degree of dependability, but also offered further insight into the meanings expressed in the data.
**Chapter summary**

This chapter has presented a methodological underpinning to the research undertaken in this thesis. The purpose of the research is to establish the perceptions of academic staff of their current professional engagement in the academic process, and to identify where pressures from an institutional level impact upon their professionalism and values. Two literature reviews, one on the nature of professionalism in an educational context, and the second on the external and internal pressures that impact upon academic engagement through policy have provided a foundation for the research. Interviews were conducted with a sample of staff within a department at Brown University to present an understanding of the perceptions of academic staff.

Throughout this investigation the author has adopted an ontologically interpretivist stance where the local constructions of reality are seen to be socially constructed and where the values and meanings of social phenomena which have relevance for individuals are at best made known to the researcher through interpretations of those reality constructions. An understanding of these individual values and meanings has been garnered using interview processes that have provided the research participants with an opportunity to offer their particular understandings of the world that is bounded by the research area of concern in this thesis. These interviews have been supported by a general adoption of similar phenomenological constructions of language and terminologies that present themselves as a consequence of the fact that the research has been conducted within the institution in which the author, and all research participants work.

The research is based upon a largely constructivist epistemological stance that attempts not to measure but to try to understand the nature of the truth as expressed by the participants, and where subjectivity of both the interviewee and interviewer are acknowledged to present limitations to the research that need to be considered when presenting any findings and generalisations in concluding the work. The analysis of the interview responses has been
performed using techniques that attempt to maximise the dependability of the findings, but which ultimately are tempered with a degree of pragmatism that is inherent in work of this nature. As such the conclusions to this work will be presented together with consideration of the warrantability of the findings and an acknowledgment that any findings are at best contextualised and qualified interpretations bounded by fuzzy predictions that are ultimately limited in their applicability by the methods adopted.

The next chapter will present the findings from the interviews which will then form the basis for the provision of conclusions in the final chapter of this work.
Chapter 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

Previous chapters of this work have attempted to identify the current thinking about the pressures, both internal and external, that enact upon the professional engagement of practicing academics at Brown University, through the identification of a literature review on current developments in global, international and national policy (external) and through an evaluation of key policy documents at Brown University that direct promotion opportunities and dictate academic activity through policy (internal). This chapter will present the findings from eight interviews which will identify key themes that form the perceptions of academic staff within a Department at Brown University and
thus identify the professional values that are in evidence within the Department. These themes will form the basis for an evaluation of the compatibility between the evidenced values of individuals within the Department and the current pressures which will be presented in the next chapter.

Since the interviews were transcribed in their entirety in preparation for the codification process discussed in the Results analysis method section of the previous chapter, an opportunity arose to present a word cloud representation of text contained in the eight interviews. A word cloud is a pictoral representation of words from source material that gives greater prominence to words that appear more frequently and therefore gives a (very rough) visual interpretation of the most important words as dictated purely by frequency of use. Word clouds can be constructed from raw transcripts with no exclusions, but this typically gives precedence to common linking words (and; of; the; with; which; where; etc.). Software such as NVivo allows for the generation of more targeted word clouds by allowing users to create customised ‘stop word’ lists, to restrict eligible words by length, and to limit production of the word cloud to only present a reduced number of top ranked words (for example only to display the top 1000 ranked words in terms of frequency within the source documents). The software also offers a limited but relatively effective synonym evaluation as part of the process of generating a word cloud – using this tool for example similarly formed words with different stems (e.g. academic, academics, and academically) can be deemed to be synonymous and are dealt with automatically by the software (and in the case of this example are all deemed to be instances of the word academic). The word cloud generated from the eight interview transcripts evaluated in this thesis (with minimum word size set to five characters, only the top 100 ranked words listed, with linking phrases added to a stop word list and with key terms anonymised in line with the terminologies used throughout this thesis) is presented as the introduction to this chapter as an example of this process and to give some insight into the words that were most commonly used by the interview participants. The
principle of noun and verb analysis of documentation to support systems is a regularly used tool in the field of Computer Science where objects of importance can be identified by frequency analysis, and whilst useful it is considered to be a relatively blunt instrument that is helpful only as part of the larger process of systems investigation. From this perspective it could be argued that the construction of a word cloud could influence the codification process, so it should be noted that the construction of this word cloud was done after the codification of the interview transcripts was conducted and therefore this word cloud did not influence the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts.

**Thematic codification**

As was presented in the Results analysis method section previously, the codification of the interview transcripts followed an inductive, data-driven approach as described by Boyatzis (1998). Each of the interview transcripts were imported into the QSR NVivo software package and for each response to questions a code, or in some cases multiple codes, were added as ‘tags’ to summarise the concepts inherent in the comment. The codes are intended to present a distilled version of the nature of the comments made at each point in the interview, and where appropriate to summarise and contextualise comments made that may require interpretation in order to give meaning in a generalised sense to outputs of the interview process. As an example the following interview snippet:

“Look, if you are the Vice Chancellor of the University, then your job as given to you by the Governors or whatever, is to achieve certain things. Those things might be achieving a certain point in some league table or something like that.”

was encoded using four tags in the first pass of this process. Because the first sentence refers to the perceptions of motivation for the Vice Chancellor the tags <Views of Senior Management> and <Management Motivation> were applied; the second part of the first sentence pertains to the provision of targets as a means of managing and hence the tag <Managerial Targeting> was also
applied to this sentence. The second sentence was initially tagged with the tag <League Tables>.

This process of distilling each sentence into a series of tags was repeated for each sentence of each interview, and repeated and refined as appropriate as the re-reading process brought out more nuanced understanding of the comments made. In many cases the initial tagging on first reading resulted in variations of similar tags being identified and since the software permits multiple tags to be applied to sections of the transcripts a hierarchy of concepts was soon established as it became clear that some tags were sub-sets of an overarching tag. Each subsequent reading of the interviews allowed some tags to be rephrased slightly such that the tag applied to multiple instances and as such the number of tags reduced slightly as the process continued.

The NVivo software does not just allow tagging as an input process, it also allows the researcher to view sections of transcripts, individually or multiply, where tags have been applied, and as such the transcripts can be read selectively by tag, or by multiple tags. As an example it is possible to identify all of the interview transcripts as the source, and then view all instances of sentences that have been tagged with a pre-determined set of tags – thus viewing all references to <League Tables> and <Targeting> would return all sentences from all of the interviews that refered to both of these concepts. This capability had a significant impact on the author of this work being able to be suitably immersed in the primary data, but also presented opportunities to be able to more easily identify common themes and concepts across multiple interview transcripts.

By the completion of the third iteration of the tagging process the number of tags and the placement of them had become relatively stable and at this point the full set of tags were transcribed onto traditional ‘sticky notes’ and the process of identifying themes from the tags was undertaken using a large wall and a whiteboard. Sticky notes were grouped and re-grouped, and linked together using multiple coloured arrows, and the identification of themes began
to be presented through this process. These broader themes were then used as the basis for a second pass through the codification process so that the tagging of interview transcripts could be tagged using a top-down approach such that further investigation of the interviews by themes could be engaged with. Once completed the manifestation of each of the themes could be generalised and the characteristics of the theme (including boundaries of any continuum of values within the theme) was generated.

The first pass in the process of codification of the eight interview transcripts identified that in all cases the interview responses fell largely into three broad categories:

- Personal historical perceptions – characterised by indications of personal, educational and employment history;
- Personal evaluation of practice – characterised by indications of what work entails, what work should entail, what work used to entail, and comparisons between current and previous engagement with the role of work;
- Personal perceptions of external influences – characterised by indications of how policy and regulation from Government, the University, the Faculty and the Department are viewed as appropriate or otherwise.

Once the eight interviews were all completed and transcribed, each participant was sent a copy of their own interview transcript and invited to request amendments or redactions as they saw fit. Only two participants asked for redactions and in both cases the redactions were entirely focussed upon the removal of personal historical comments which were deemed to easily identify the individual concerned and which could have compromised the anonymity requirement of this research. The evaluation of the personal history content could be deemed to be outside of the scope of this research, and could
therefore have been removed from the codification process for all participants. However, there were some interesting notions pertaining to motivations to enter academia and to move between institutions that presented opportunities to exemplify the values of the individual that justified the inclusion of these aspects even though the removal of the details of two of the participants meant that the findings in some aspects of the results are not based upon comments from the full sample set. The personal historical information for the remaining six participants was therefore included in the codification process and contributes to the findings presented here.

Subsequent to the broad categorisation codification, the personal historical information was effectively subsumed into the second category – that of personal evaluation of practice. The broad categorisation process presents two remaining overarching categories which were thematically codified as “Notions of Self” – indications of the professional values espoused and as mediated in personal practice, and “Notions of Other” – indications of the individuals perceptions of the practice of others, largely concentrated on the institution in which all participants work, but also manifest in the broader context under which the academic operates. It may be significant to note that in the early iterations of the codification process the “Notions of Other” broad categorisation was initially coded as “Notions of Imposition” such was the overriding interpretation of meaning in the comments made.

Much of the interview process identified factors impacting upon individual practice with a clear underpinning message of academics acting according to policy and practice that was at odds with their own preference and ostensibly that which was forced upon them, which led to this original coding epithet. However the negative connotations of imposition in a number of cases acted against the requirement for dependable codification of the meaning of statements and phrases so this was renamed to offer a more generalised use of “other” which allowed for the inclusion of policy and practice that embraced personal notions of best practice as well as those that were counter to it. Later
in this chapter these ‘Notions’ will be discussed in the context of the shift from Professional (self) to Market (other) values as presented in the *External and internal pressures on academic engagement* chapter earlier in this work.

Once these broader categorisations had been identified, the next stage in the process of codification was to apply phrase by phrase codification of the text of each of the eight interviews and to restructure and re-encode the texts repeatedly to identify a dependable and justifiable summation of the main themes that fall out of the interviews.

The result of the codification process was the identification of five broad themes which present an indication of the professional values expressed by the interview participants. Each of the themes will be justified and discussed individually in the following sections with reference to supporting quotations from the eight interview participants. Supporting quotations are provided to give a representation of the responses but these are not exhaustive and each quotation is identified by reference to an appropriate code for each interview participant – IP1, IP2, etc. The significance of the themes will be analysed in the next chapter of this thesis - *Analysis of findings*. A thematic summary and characterisation of these five broad themes is presented in Table 15.
Table 15 Summary of themes from participant interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Manifestation</th>
<th>Characterisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Definition</td>
<td>Mandate</td>
<td>Self-imposed through to institutionally directed/imposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>Broad (multiplicity of function) through to narrow (focussed functionality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commonality</td>
<td>The extent to which roles are differentiated within the Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>Level of autonomy or control in defining work patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adherence to Standards</td>
<td>Influence of standards, policy and practice norms on personal engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Worth</td>
<td>Motivations</td>
<td>Altruistic through to Utilitarianistic driven self improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Level of personal satisfaction in terms of role and position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Degree to which individuals are connected to conditions of service / functional definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Impositions on practice from other individuals and/or functional groupings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Institutional Engagement</td>
<td>Degree of contribution to institutional well being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Engagement</td>
<td>Definitions and perceived importance of the profession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Role definition

As was discussed in the *Meanings of professionalism* section of the *Professionalism in higher education* chapter of this work, the key aspects of the notion of professionalism include occupational autonomy and a set of behavioural norms that help to define and characterise the profession in question. The section also presented indications that the education profession in particular is experiencing increasing differentiation of practice and an increase in market-driven utilitarian management practices that increase the potential for ‘maximising gain’ from each member of staff within an academic institution. Evaluation of the transcripts of the eight interviews conducted in this research identified three key aspects of the role definition of the individual as expressed by the individuals themselves. Each of these aspects will now be considered in turn.
Mandate

The first identified aspect that influenced role definition was how the academic role was mandated – where the driving forces for guiding (or imposing) practice were perceived to come from. Whether the academic professional characterises that their practice is mandated largely through institutional or governmental policy; or through self-imposed notions of what the academic role requires should give insight as to the degree to which current practice can be seen to be within the purview of the individual academic.

Many of the respondents identified instances of managerial expectations as examples of institutional mandate:

Do I think I’m contributing towards Department and to the Institution”? Yes, I do… to those metrics that they’re using, I feel that I contribute to achieving them but … I’m contributing to them [even though] I don’t value them, personally.

IP5

We have to bring in external research income, we have to be excellent in teaching and satisfy the students. There are multiple agendas, external factors that I think give the University a fairly clear idea of what they expect from us.

IP6

In order to do well in each aspect of your job you have to do more …more… because [everything] is driven by league tables.

IP8

They [management] see academics in terms of how those academics are going to help them to achieve their goals.

IP4

I suppose it’s just that I don’t think the [academics in] Department have the power to choose themselves what our priorities are. I think they just get told.

IP7

and that these expectations are actually perceived as legitimised control structures that are enforceable:

It’s a balancing or a juggling process. You can’t kick against them because to kick against them would put you in a vulnerable position

IP5
There is pressure to achieve all these things and if you don’t achieve them, well... just survival becomes a big [driver]

Although the source of the mandated requirements on the role of the individual were not entirely clear to some:

I think that I am told to do things because the people who are telling me to do it think they are supposed to tell me to do it, and they don’t actually value it.

Some respondents identified disquiet at the lack of input they had into the formation of working policy and practice norms, specifically in terms of the lack of engagement and input into policy changes that define role from the academic body:

There should be more input from the academics in the direction the University is going. Because there doesn’t seem to be that much influence from us. I think we’re treated like employees rather than experts.

I suppose my point is that we were never involved in any discussions about setting benchmarks for [things like] marking turnaround times.

I understand where they’re [senior management] coming from. But also I suppose it’s a shame that the academics can’t have more of a say.

However, not every respondent felt that institutional management was their main source of the definition of the academic role. One respondent identified an acknowledgement that they had the means to define for themselves the nature of their role:

you can decide yourself exactly what kind of academic you want to be.

But interestingly followed that up with an acknowledgement that this self-defined role is, in part at least, influenced by the need to satisfactorily present a picture of the department they work in to the Institution:
I feel it is important for the Department to have a good reputation and it is part of my role to ensure that what I do is good quality and gives the Department a good reputation.

IP6

One respondent suggested that the recent influx of early career academics into the Department has, of itself promulgated a change to the role of an academic that is neither explicitly stated nor managed:

Here we've got quite diverse backgrounds but I got the impression that with this new wave of academics that the background somehow defines the role – people build similar ideas about what it is to be an academic.

IP3

The respondents did however cite a marked change to their role as a consequence of institutional imposition of policy in recent times, comparing current policy initiatives, especially around the administrative requirements of the academic role, almost exclusively unfavourably with those that were in force during earlier management regimes:

I think we have become much more of a... I call it the compliance culture.

IP6

this I think is partly driven by this kind of compliance culture that nowadays it is not enough to be good at something you have got to have a piece of paper that says you are good at something

IP7

But I suppose you do kind of see this gradual move to us being bureaucrats rather than experts, which is quite depressing, I suppose.

IP7

I would like to spend more time on scholarship and doing the really academic stuff, reading the papers, producing the knowledge and disseminating the knowledge. Less on administrative stuff.

IP6

Academics see the devolution of admin tasks is down to them as academics that they didn’t necessarily have to do a few years ago which is interesting, I think. That’s definitely happening, I can see that as well so I’m sympathetic to that view.

IP8

Although the need for administration was largely understood, there was a fair degree of antipathy and frustration evidenced about the increasing role that
administration plays in the day-to-day function of the academic. One respondent identified the need for administrative processes, but expressed concerns about their engagement with it:

*I wouldn’t say that I’m not confident in administration, but I find it difficult to understand some of it, in terms of the way it’s written, in terms of understanding its purpose. And duplicate, because you see things that are duplicated and then you have to understand that a lot of the times we are not the driving force behind that documentation, it’s coming from somewhere else for their purposes - you’ve got some dissonance already there, “Why am I doing this?” and that’s going to affect your ability probably to do a good job of that, filling out that form or doing documentation. Then you’re going to start picking it apart and looking at it, “Well, what do they mean by that, they asked that in question four?” Yes, it is a difficult area. But I wouldn’t say it’s about confidence, it’s about understanding the bigger picture of why you’re doing it.*

*IP2*

And one academic summarised their disquiet with the way that their job has changed over the years when they exclaimed:

*I’m an expensive administrator; a very expensive administrator.*

*IP5*

What was an interesting aspect of the interviews in terms of the mandate for role definition was how many respondents presented indications of personal coping strategies to deal with the general feeling that institutionally directed role requirements were at odds with personal values, these ranged from the evaluative:

*it’s about managing them [management requirements] in such a way that they have minimum impact on the way that you operate. So you satisfy them, if you like, minimally.*

*IP5*

through to the subversive:

*If they’re going to measure you by using this process or that, then the first thing academics do is completely dissect that and work out what’s the best thing to do for themselves and for their institution.*

*IP8*

Where there was a slight difference in response from early career to time served academics was in the level of acceptance of living with imposed role definitions.
One respondent indicated a liking for a more clearly articulated and enforced role definition since this allows for the identification of a clear, managerially sanctioned articulation of ‘what you do’ that gives both a justification of your role, but also which presents evidence of what you do to your line manager:

*I understand that the workload model facilitates or enables us individuals and the Department groups to make us move up those league tables, because there’s time validated for research. So it’s validated you, they’ve allowed you a certain amount of time for teaching. So that’s been quantified, it’s not just a case of here’s loads and loads of teaching and you can fit in your research wherever. It’s actually been properly, rigorously mapped out.*

   IP2

Another identified using institutional and national target setting mechanisms as a means for the self-definition of at least part of their role:

*So I think because of their desire to increase good honours and go up in the league tables for NSS, I’ve actively been thinking about ways in which I can develop my teaching practice.*

   IP1

One respondent presented a very personalised view of the way that the academic role is defined in the modern era when early on in the interview they declared:

*I act in spite. I would say that in the process of unlearning, I try and stay honourable to my own academic beliefs in spite of what goes on at the Department, the University and the national level in terms of things of importance.*

   IP5

In summary, the interview participants universally identified that the mandate for their role was very clearly derived from institutional practices, and that where variance away from their own personal values is experience they have each orchestrated their own mechanisms for presenting evidence to the institution that their practice is in line with what is required of them. There is evidence of conflict between the authority of the institution and the self-regulation of personal practice, but there was no evidence in the responses of acquiescence on behalf of the academics in the Department, instead there is a disguising of practice that presents an external view of conforming to the
requirements of the institution whilst maintaining a precedence for personal values wherever this is possible. Interestingly it is through the mechanism of administrative returns to ‘the centre’, the thing that so many academics identified as having a negative impact upon in their day-to-day activity, that this subversion is most clearly manifest.

Scope
The second identified aspect that influenced role definition was how broad the scope of the role of the academic is at Brown University. Discussions on the nature of professionals earlier in this work suggested that the role of a professional is predominantly broad in scope and involves a multi-faceted engagement with the process of work. When questioned what their view of a perfect academic might be the interview respondents typically identified a range of roles that would need to be fulfilled:

Well, things they would do would be an element of involvement in administrative duties and involvement in developing their subject of interest and an element of teaching, educating, presenting, imparting knowledge to an audience that wishes to develop their own learning.

IP5

the things I should be doing and doing well, is obviously, teaching, working with students, engaging with students, getting students enthusiastic about what they’re doing, why they’re here, doing research, taking that research to students, and saying, ”This is what I’m developing. This is what we’re doing. This is where we’re pushing the field forward.” Getting them enthused in that research.

IP1

Then you’d have to be good at every aspect of your job so the vanilla academic is 40% teaching, 40% research and 20% admin. To be the perfect academic you’d have to be stellar at every aspect of all those different things.

IP8

Whilst there was a general acceptance of the multiplicity of the academic role, a number of respondents related the notion of broad functionality to workload and perhaps a more parochial view of the academic role being required to serve as a provider of ‘more’ rather than ‘broader’ work patterns:
You talk to anyone who's heavily into research and they'll say, “Teaching gets in the way.” You talk to anyone who's into teaching who'd like to do research, “Can't find the time to do it.”

Two respondents critiqued the notion that plurality of the academic function in terms of scope of the academic role is supported by policy and practice at Brown University. One suggested that there is an inherent dichotomy between teaching and research that is not recognised by the institution:

it's both naïve and utopian that there is enough time for an individual to be good at doing research and good at teaching. But the messages that are coming out from the institution don't support this notion that you can be one of the other.

The second identified a conflict between the perceived institutional requirement for research to be inherently fund attracting, and the personal value that research for its own sake was of more value:

I think the Department and the University want us to spend all our time writing grant proposals, and doing administrative work, and all this kind of stuff... But I think it's not necessarily what you should be doing as an academic. I think if you spend all your time writing grants, rather than really enjoying what you're studying, and really kind of getting to grips with it, and loving the ideas and all that, then you're kind of missing a lot of the point of being an academic.

At least one respondent identified the desire to have a more focussed role as a means of providing clarity of identity for them:

By specialising in something I think I have a certain amount of control in that sense about the overall profile of what I do.

The perception here seems to be that the institutional definition of the academic role does not permit engagement with single facets of what elsewhere have been presented as three key areas: teaching; research and administration. From this perspective therefore the institution requires high standards in all three aspects of the role, but the respondent is presenting a case for the general
acceptance of specialist teachers, specialist researchers and specialist administrators.

In summary there was a clear indication that across the Department the plurality of the role of an academic is perceived as being one that in principle is entirely valued and understood. Whilst variations on the weighting of individual activity are manipulated through the Department workload setting procedures, and some acknowledgement that some academics are better placed to engage the bulk of their working activity in one facet of engagement in preference to another, it does seem clear that the ideal engagement of academic practice presented by the interviewees as the ‘view of the Department’ should include aspects of research, teaching, revenue generation and administrative duties. What is also clear, and perhaps not unsurprising, was that all of the academics interviewed agreed that the requirements for each of these activities require the individuals to be selective in what function they serve most since there is a level of expectation from the institution that cannot be meaningfully engaged with due to lack of time.

**Commonality**

The third facet of the role definition theme to consider is the extent to which the academic roles within the Department are seen to be held commonly between individual members of staff. In previous chapters the characteristic of a professional body have in part been defined by a commonality of role and purpose that defines the profession. Whilst the scope of academic roles in the Department in the main was accepted to include aspects of four functional requirements of the academic role – teaching, research, revenue generation and administration, what is very clear from the interviews was that there is not the same acceptance of the way that practice and procedure are seen to have any degree of commonality across the Department.

Much is made by respondents of the compartmentalisation of roles across the Department, with a significant amount of disquiet expressed about the
apparent inability of the Department to establish clear and evidenced notions of how much work is done by ‘others’. Workload issues will be considered later in this chapter, but from the perspective of commonality of role it does seem to be clear that there are delineations between research and teaching that are problematic for the Department.

Respondents were in the main focussed on the professional requirements that they placed upon their own role, and often identified how their own requirements of themselves were distinguishable from the perceptions of roles adopted by other members of the Department, and very little comment was made about any commonality of function. A number of comments very clearly identified a perception that the Department is fractured, in that there are research academics and teaching academics:

*So someone who does research, but might not do as much teaching, they’re happy with that. Whereas if someone does a lot of teaching and maybe not as much research, they’re also happy with that.*

*For me, by focusing on this one aspect [research] it has allowed me to have a profile where I spend more time doing that in the end.*

*Maybe it is reinforcing what I said earlier on, which is that if you’re good at research, you’re not necessarily that particularly engaged with teaching*

*But I suppose we in [research centre] probably have quite different values than are the values of the Department, if you know what I mean.*

*At department level it is about managing and delivering teaching and obviously research, but that is individually driven.*

*They [academics in the Department] are not the sort of people who want to be managed. They just want to do their own stuff. They are motivated to do what they do, and they will go and do it.*
One respondent even discussed the impact of perceived differential practice that falls out of this delineation of roles:

_There is one interpretation I could lay on that, which is there is a perception of differences of treatment. In other words, differentiation in the way academics are treated, which, if you like, creates, for choice of a better word, jealousy. I think there is some evidence that the management of staff is moving more towards, if you like, their natural abilities. I think the exception, however, is that teaching and admin appear to go together but research, teaching and admin don’t._

IP5

This respondent even went further expressing anger at the apparent differentiation between research staff and teaching staff:

_Put bluntly, those that have an international reputation doing research don't appear to do a lot of teaching or admin. Given that I f***ing hate admin, it makes me feel quite bitter about that._

IP5

What seemed generally accepted was that the academic staff in the Department do not have a commonality of role definition. All participants were aware of the importance of all facets of the role, but their personal preferences for one function or the other was clearly evidenced, and whilst not explicitly supported by institutional policy this approach does seem to be accepted as the mode of operation at the department level, as one respondent summarised:

_I think our department's interpretation of an academic is predominantly focusing on people who do a lot of research, bring in a lot of external income generation, but also, looking at people doing teaching as well. But as far as the message I get from the Department is, I don't think you have to do them both. So long as you excel in one area, then that's enough for the Department to class you as an academic._

IP1

Although most respondents seemed to be happy with the differentiation of practice and the allocation of departmental functions based upon segmentation by ability, most acknowledged that the growth of the Department in recent years almost demanded this form of differentiation:
I’ve seen exponential growth in the Department, in terms of staff numbers, students, just general activity. There’s been a lot of changes happened in that time. Mostly for the better, because it seems to be - I wouldn’t say it’s a perfect distribution of who’s responsible for those activities, but there’s a lot of people involved, so that’s good. Not everybody’s going to engage with all aspects, because not everybody’s good at doing that sort of stuff so you’ve got to understand, yes. But there’s definitely a lot more activity for the better, for the positive for the Department.

In summary there is little in these interviews to support the notion that the academic role in the Department is one that is shared by academic staff. There is a general acceptance of the fact that some staff whose desire is to be researchers and some staff who prefer to be teachers and an acceptance of the fact that the Department when viewed as a whole, presents an external picture of doing all things well even if individuals within the Department do not. What is not evident however is a shared view of the worth of each of these activities, either in their inherent calculable worth to the Department, or in terms of the level to which a parity of workload and reward can be evidenced. This will be further considered in the Conflict section of this chapter.

The values evidenced for the Role Definition theme in the Department are summarised in Table 16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Definition Manifestation</th>
<th>Characterisation of the Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandate</td>
<td>Largely institutionally driven through policy imposition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low level of consultation with academic staff in policy creation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High degree of disguise in demonstrating adherence to policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some worth granted to measurement of performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>Clear identification of the need for plurality of academic function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General acceptance of Institutional requirement for plurality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal values largely driven by desires for more focussed work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonality</td>
<td>Functions across the Department are highly focussed and differentiated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional requirement for universal plurality is understood but subverted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General acceptance of specialisation of function.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 Role definition summary
Accountability

Classical notions of professionalism presented in Chapter One point to accountability as a key aspect in the practice of individuals within a profession. The extent to which workers are accountable for their own practice, both in terms of the toolsets used to engage in professional practice, and in terms of the degree to which situational decision making is left to the individual forms one of the means to define the professions.

The thematic evaluation of the interviews identified two significant strands in the area of accountability for the members of the Department. The first, and most often cited area was in the level of autonomy or control that was felt to exist in the hands of the individual in managing their own work patterns and how these compared to the workload requirements that are provided to them by the Department. The second aspect was the extent to which individual practice is driven variously by adherence to policy and practice norms as provided to individuals, compared to the oft cited ‘earlier’ periods when work practice was left to individuals to make judgements about relevant courses of action.

Workload

Much of the interview respondent’s comments about their ability to define and manage their own workload identified changes in institutional and departmental requirements that have been evidenced over recent times. Participants presented numerous negative comparisons of the ‘now’ in comparison to previous engagement:

*I can certainly remember it being a 9:00am to 5:00pm job. You’d never even dream of reading emails when you got home, never mind answering emails and writing documents and all that kind of stuff. Nowadays you have to do that in order to keep on top of even the most basic stuff.*

IP8

*What’s noticeable over the last 10 years, for me working as an academic, is how much more time the job takes in order to be successful.*

IP7
To be a perfect academic in the eyes of the institution these days? Well first of all you’d have to work 24 hours a day.

If you want to get EPSRC funding say and you’re not prepared to put those hours in outside of 9:00am to 5:00pm, it’s just not happening, because you can guarantee down the corridor there will be people putting those hours in in these other institutions and people will be doing that. Without putting those hours in you just haven’t got a chance nowadays, which is a problem for individuals in terms of their work life balance. It’s a lot worse than it used to be.

The notion that institutional demands on practice through the requirements of administrative processes are viewed to have negative impact upon workload was clearly evidenced:

There just isn’t enough time in the day because admin tends to swamp – I’m busier now when I’m not teaching than when I am.

The issues I have is some of biggest time sinks (are caused by) internal processes.

You’re basically wasting my time trying to do this (admin). I could have got on with something that’s a lot more worthwhile.

I think the Department and the University want us to spend all our time writing grant proposals, and doing administrative work.

Primarily because the higher up the slippery ladder you go the less you’re hands on and the more you are pushing bits of paper around and evidencing correct procedures and filling in the right bits of paper. That has never been me; I’ve never really enjoyed that.

The general consensus was that it is institutionally imposed work activity that drives the work requirements of academic staff and the application of targets often cropped up in comments pertaining to the drivers for practice. There does seem to have been a general acceptance of the fact that targets are part and parcel of the management process:

I think the way that all institutions, particularly this one, deal with managing academics is basically to set them particular targets, that perhaps map on to institutional level targets.
The obvious bureaucratic way of looking at that is to say to meet that target we aggregate the work of lots of individuals. If we’ve got a £10 million income generation target for the [name of Faculty], then we divide that by the number of academics in the Faculty and everybody has to bring in £30,000 or something.

However there were instances where the requirements of workload models are seen as unrealistically aspirational:

You know we get told a lot of things that we should and we shouldn’t do. If you added up all the things that I am supposed to do, that is about four people’s jobs

If you listen to what you are asked to do, and you add up the time required to do those things, it is much more than 24 hours a day.

And one respondent went so far as to suggest that the application of institutional workload targets are purposefully set higher than can be achieved when they commented:

They don’t actually expect you to achieve all those things, because who can?

The concerns about how workload is managed by the institution was not limited to a single type of academic, both teaching and research staff identified how the use of achievement targets impact upon workload. A research active member of staff pointed to the desire to do research for its own sake and to write interesting academic papers, but felt that the institutional drivers for research did not encourage this sort of activity since targets for research engagement are couched almost entirely in terms of the immediate revenue that the outputs of research generate:

You can follow what the University wants you to do, which is to do horrible things like writing word packages on European funding grants, which is just not fun. I suppose the soul-destroying thing, and the reason why I try and avoid doing it, is because there’s such a small chance of success. You can spend your entire life writing these things and never get anywhere.
Whilst a teaching member of staff hinted at the importance of turnaround times on student feedback where an institutional directive states that all students can expect feedback on their assessment work within 15 working days of submission, and highlighted that the Department has implemented semi-automated systems to mark work that generate feedback in a timely fashion to meet this deadline, but have impacted upon the quality of what students receive:

There is now a huge conflict between quality of ‘marking’ and quality of ‘feedback’. What we’ve done is developed computer-based systems that give the impression that we create some good feedback and students love it. Students respond to it. Maybe, that’s all that’s important; if a student feels good about their feedback and we have met the turnaround target then that’s all that’s important.

One respondent when referring to workload issues identified that the changing nature of the role of the academic makes identifying workload patterns difficult, and also implied that setting notional hours of work against given functions is problematic since it is rare that this allows comparison of like with like, either between different staff members or for the same member of staff across different academic years:

One thing about being an academic as I mentioned earlier it is constantly changing. What I have done every year has been different from every year prior to that.

They concluded with a further reference to the manipulation of role through subversion of institutional drivers when they said:

I am trying to evolve the role and trying to do more of the things I like and cut out the things I don’t like.

Whilst these negative comments about the means by which workload is measured were relatively common through the interviews, the degree to which the academic has flexibility and control over their ability to define work patterns was much more positive:
Being a faculty member where I can now be in charge of my own research, autonomously manage that - that’s what the attraction of being in academia is, it’s being more in control of what you’re actually doing in the day-to-day activities, being able to shape what your research is in. I can see that I’m given charge of modules to teach, I’m given charge of some particular research to do, and a lot of that is autonomous on my part as well.

IP2

[If you can manage your time well] this job is an opportunity to just spend every day doing things that you choose to do yourself.

IP7

In summary the academics in the Department at Brown University were largely dismissive of the management processes that drive workload in the institution, and often expressed a degree of conflict with regard to the balance of ‘preferred work’ to ‘required work’ activity but to a large degree there was a level of understanding as to why workload does need managing. There is a general acceptance of the fact that the institution expects far more than can be delivered in most cases, but in the main the respondents felt that they have retained some autonomy in the construction of working patterns, even if in some cases this was achieved with a degree of manipulation when it comes to evidencing practice.

Adherence to standards

The extent to which academic practice is driven by personal values of what constitutes that practice compared to how much of current practice is engaged with as a consequence of the application of departmental and institutional policy and standards on practice was a second component within the accountability theme. A clear theme ran through the interviews around the notions of management practice and policy being presented largely through the imposition of performance targets. These targets are largely manifest in evaluations of teaching practice as evidenced in three key measures – NSS scores, percentage of Good Honours degrees awarded (First Class and Upper Second Class degree awards), and through module evaluations:
there is this review of modules, maybe, it's not measured and then said, "You'll get less salary or you'll be fired." But at the same time, it's done in such a way that you wouldn't like to get the low response in your modules that you deliver.

IP3

So the major issues, I think, yes, pressures from ye on high. So further levels up saying, "Oh, our NSS isn't good enough. We haven't got enough good honours." I think being managed by spreadsheet and managed by league tables puts me under a lot of pressure. If a student doesn't write anything in an exam booklet, how can you give them a good honours for it? You can't, but we're told, "But we haven't got enough good honours." Well, students aren't writing anything in exam papers. Surely, it's the students' fault. Is it our fault? Why is it our fault?

IP1

I think from a university perspective, the notion of good teaching is embedded within NSS.

IP5

I think there is pressure now to give half of our students a First or 2:1. Fine if that is what we all agree should be the distribution of marks but that is definitely an inflation. Certainly when we went to university I think it was 25% of students maximum would have got Firsts and 2:1s. So this drive towards good honours therefore is another one of those things that is dictated practice in our Department.

IP6

The requirement for the quantification of performance through targets was generally accepted as a necessary evil:

Because there's a lot more management going into universities now than there used to be, so there's all these managers whose job it is to check whether people are doing things or not. So you need to quantify things, don't you? It's that drive to quantify everything.

IP8

The workload model facilitates or enables us individuals and department groups to make us move up those league tables.

IP2

Obviously we need to cover our costs, and there are obviously targets for research income generation and all that.

IP7

As soon as you have to measure something and make comparisons you have to commit to some kind of metrics or measurements.

IP6

I think at national level, it is very much spreadsheet orientated. It's process-driven and it's about auditable and evidential systems.

IP5
I think being managed by spreadsheets and managed by league tables puts me under a lot of pressure... but I understand it.

So the key information sets, whatever, are massive in terms of attracting students. There’s a lot more placed on those stats, the quantification of how good the university is. So then you can understand the drive to try and improve the stats.

And as was evidenced in the Role definition section earlier, only one participant welcomed the influence of standards and performance mechanisms since this provides a means of evidencing self-justification:

So my contribution is everywhere and it’s in these systems that people can actually see. So that makes me feel better about that, because if somebody asks what you’re doing then you can actually find it. I’m not just saying I’m doing this when I didn’t do it... it’s there somewhere and there is evidence of that, apart from me telling you that I did that.

But there was little to suggest that academics have faith in the quantifications that happen across the institution and little faith expressed as to the veracity of management processes that rely on targeting of individual practice:

Yes, I think most people to be honest would see that as a box ticking exercise. We have all got to get this so let’s tick the box, let’s do the minimum that we need to do to get it. Is it valued in itself? I don’t know.

The University is about outputs, it’s not about process. It’s about results not the means to achieve them. It’s about having pieces of paper that say that you’ve done something irrespective of whether or not it’s actually happened.

I think the University’s got a bit blind-sided about how they can improve themselves in league tables. From a Government perspective, it is about teaching focused, getting more good honours, getting more students through university, and that kind of thing. But I’ve never been to a talk where the VC has spoken highly of a particular person who’s done good teaching. It’s always, “We’re hiring good researchers. We’ve just employed a load of researchers who are doing this and doing that. And our research is doing this.”

[Requiring all academic staff to have a teaching qualification] is one of the worst examples of the university operating by some metric or other. Then in order to meet this target it is devolved down to the individual and then we add it all back up again when we meet it. It’s easy to
chase an individual than to alter a bigger strategy, so, “Okay, [name of Participant], you haven’t done this. What are you going to do about this in the next 12 months?” It’s pretty easy to do that.

IP8

It does feel sometimes that you are being constantly monitored.

IP6

The emphasis on teaching targets, I believe, doesn’t come from a desire to do good teaching. It, actually, comes from a desire to give the right impression to students that what we’re doing is giving them a good experience.

IP5

And much to suggest that once targets are put in place then the rational response of the academic is to perform in such a way as to demonstrate adherence to the standards:

Then everybody starts optimising their behaviour to perform well on the metrics. Everybody does really well because they have been optimising on the metrics and then they will have to change them to something else. There is always a certain element of artifice in all of this that there has to be some artificially designed criteria

IP6

People will say the right things in order to get the best scores.

IP8

If the University feels that [targets] are important and nationally they appear to be seen as important then I just play the game with them.

IP5

However in some cases participants did suggest that engagement driven by their own personal values were the primary motivating factor, although it is interesting to note that even here there is an acknowledgement of responding appropriately to institutional targets:

So for me, NSS isn’t my primary driver. For me, what I do, I hope the emerging feature of that is an improvement in NSS.

IP1

Standards of practice by the academics within the Department were almost universally couched in terms of adherence to targets, both institutionally and directed by the Department. The notions of standards of practice as value
norms was almost never discussed, instead the practice of individuals was seen as responding to measures that define norms through measurement and comparison to targets. Some evidence of personal values directing practice was presented, but in the main these values were presented as a sub-set of factors that contribute to the institutional and departmental goals and measurement processes. There was some evidence to support the notion that personal histories of research and teaching practice have engendered personal values in these areas that are still important to the individual, but there was little evidence to suggest that the Department actively promotes or encourages debate in the development of academic values, instead it seems the Department is more actively engaged in demonstrating adherence to institutional standards and targets. From an individual perspective there was a general acceptance of the need for, and importance of, target setting as a means for evaluating personal practice, and many of the participants acknowledge that demonstration of adherence to these standards is occasionally done as a consequence of personal values coinciding with institutional requirements, but predominantly achieved through a process of manipulative artifice in the construction of reports that are returned to senior management.

The values evidenced for the Accountability theme are summarised in Table 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Manifestation</th>
<th>Characterisation of the Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>Workload requirements of the institution are largely unrealistic and unachievable. General acceptance of being the recipient of workload mechanisms of control. Autonomy is not evidenced in terms of practice requirements, but almost solely in the personal control of patterns of work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adherence to Standards</td>
<td>Institutional standards are articulated solely through the application of performance targets. Personal values are largely subsumed by Departmental and Institutional measurement. Action is directed to evidencing good practice and adherence to standard. Presenting evidence on practice seen as an unproductive administrative function.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 Accountability summary
Development of worth

The third of the five themes that fell out of the interviews conducted for this research was focused on the mechanisms for the development of their own self-worth, either through the means by which they were motivated to engage in self-improvement; or the extent to which their role currently provided them with personal satisfaction. The first and last questions asked in each interview – “what do you think made you become an academic?” and “do you think you will retire as an academic?” were primarily directed to garnering an understanding of the motivations of the participants to enter academia and to establish whether the desire to stay in academia is as strong as the initial motivations to enter the profession. In many cases these questions provided insight into the professional values held by the individual since the motivations to perform, improve and stay within the educational industry were predominantly answered with a degree of passion. This passion was manifest both in the positive – in terms of demonstrating a desire to perform well, but also in the negative – through identification of where pressures on practice were seen to be areas for concern that may impact upon the likelihood of continuing within the industry.

Motivations

This section will identify the motivations to engage in the role of an academic in the Department. It includes indications of personal reflections on participants own motivations to professional engagement, and also statements where the motivations of others are discussed.

Whilst the profile of the participants suggests that there are three types of academic role in the Department – teaching focussed; research focussed and a hybrid of teaching and research, it was interesting to note that in all cases there was no clear motivation to become an academic or a particular type of academic at the outset:

So it was never an intentional thing; ‘I’m going to become a lecturer. I’m going to become an academic. I’m going to stay at university.” It was literally just circumstance.
I graduated and didn’t know what to do. I was applying for jobs and I ended up doing a research job. It’s definitely for sure that I had no plans obviously to come into academia, I just stumbled into it.

Whilst it is clear that none of the interview participants set out to be academics, they are all motivated to become better at what they do:

I would like to spend more time on scholarship and doing the really academic stuff, reading the papers, producing the knowledge and disseminating the knowledge.

Where my skills or where my expertise lie, I think, are more in the teaching side of things. And what it’s done is it’s made me think about ways in which I can improve my practice, ways in which I can bring novel stuff into what I do, to make me, as an academic, stand out above the rest, and say, "[name of respondent] does good stuff, [name of respondent] does interesting stuff."

I think a lot of my job is to try and transfer that enthusiasm, and it’s to try and inspire people to go out and find out stuff for themselves.

There were some indications that there are altruistic notions of academia in the Department:

I think [altruism] comes naturally from your enthusiasm because it’s like when you do your job, when you do research, when you try to actually share what you know with others.

So I would probably say that that’s my goal as an academic is, [to be] somebody who knows more about things than other people, and loves to teach it and pass on that enthusiasm... So I kind of feel I’m someone who actually appreciates the value of higher education, and what it can do for society.

What an academic should be is, someone who is collegiate, supportive, not motivated by either money or status. Who does research because they think it is important, that research is important or worth doing in some altruistic way. That’s my personal view of what an academic should be.
Although some pointed to less altruistic motivations to be involved in the research side of the academic role:

But actually I think most academics are personally motivated. I think people who are academics who do research, primarily either need or want some kind of personal recognition or public recognition for what they have achieved. So they want some validation. If you are altruistic you could go and work doing medical research and go and work for a company that does medical research, or go and work in the NHS, maybe and develop some equipment or machines or drugs or whatever. But you would never get any recognition for that. Whereas if you are an academic, everyone knows this is your work that you have done. You get recognised. Sometimes you might not have done it or whatever, but you have been involved in it, there is a lot of personal recognition involved in that. 

[In most cases] we're not really doing what you're supposed to for society. My problem is to make sure I have research papers that are really high quality.

Whilst not primarily indicated through statements concerned with personal motivations, a number of statements were made concerning the perceptions of the motivations of others and the bulk of these pertained to self-promotion through research activity and a lack of motivation to be involved in teaching activity:

There is a strong bias to promote yourself. I think most people perceive that that research is the easiest way to be successful.

We can clearly see that you get promoted by getting grants in and stuff like that. So if that is what you want to do, if you want to move up to Reader very quickly and stuff, then getting grants in is obviously what you need to do.

So you've got a lot of academics who do see the bigger picture about wanting to do teaching, wanting to engage students, wanting to develop the Department. And then you see academics who are just interested in doing their own research, and don't want to do anything else. Those academics have no teaching skills, no [desire] to do teaching, but they're brought in because of their research.

I am quite driven by the research side of things so I have put a large amount of effort into trying to be really good at that. I know that means in turn I enjoy and I see teaching as being the central part of my role but I don't want to do too much of it. For me, by focusing on this one aspect it has allowed me to have a profile where I spend more time doing that in the end.
By specialising in something I think I have a certain amount of control in that sense about the overall profile of what I do.

In summary, whilst the initial career motivations of all participants did not identify initial desires to become members of an academic community, there is a clear desire to fulfil the societal requirement of educating subsequent generations and promoting learning through scholarly activity. Self-improvement and enhancement of personal performance is a clear driver for the academics interviewed and statements of personal values clearly evidenced a desire to improve teaching practice both through improvement in personal teaching practice, and through engagement with research. When considering the motivations of others however, it was clear that self-improvement is also engaged with as a means to enhance promotion possibility and where this was most evident was in the utilitarian approaches towards maximising research output in part through the minimisation of engagement with teaching.

Satisfaction
By asking each interviewee if they envisaged themselves being an academic until the end of their working life it was hoped that a general level of satisfaction with the role of the academic at Brown University could be gained. The substantive responses were positive about remaining in academia for the foreseeable future, a small indicative sample of comments include:

I don’t normally look that far into the future, but yes. I see myself being in a similar role. I couldn’t tell you what that role might look like, because we’re not going to be in charge of what that role is going to look like. But there’s two things that are still going to happen; there’s still going to be teaching and there’s still going to be research. That’s the way I would see it, so yes, so long as my mind is still agile enough to be in the Department of [name redacted], I still see myself as being here, sure.

Given everything I’ve said to you in this interview, fundamentally, the answer to question – what is [the overall satisfaction question in the NSS]? Question 23? Yes the answer to Question 23 is I am content as an academic. I can’t imagine that situation changing.

Some however presented caveats to these generally positive statements:
If I was sat here in five years’ time and I am still doing exactly the same thing as I am doing now I probably wouldn’t be happy.

IP6

Yes. Not necessarily here, but yes. If I thought I wouldn’t be then I should be looking for another career.

IP4

Interestingly other than IP6, nobody expressed any requirement to have either a significant change in role for the remainder of their academic career, or highlighted career enhancement as a pre-requisite for continued engagement in academia. Two respondents did not commit themselves to careers at Brown University, with one specifically identifying their future as lying in another institution, but none expressed any desire to change career to something outside of academia.

Where there were concerns expressed about satisfaction in the future, these were couched in various terms including concerns about increasing administrative functions, personal health issues, stagnation of role, and potential moves to more vocational educational practices, but there were no consistent issues raised with regards to the potential for future satisfaction and a general indication to suggest that all participants were satisfied in their current engagement. There were no statements pertaining to the sustainability of the UK HE sector during the perceived duration of each of the careers of the participants, and whilst one participant did allude to the potential for Brown University to fail to present sustainable employment in the long term, this was not considered to be a likely outcome.

The values evidenced for the Development of worth theme are summarised in Table 18.
The fourth theme identified in the interviews conducted was concerned with the broader contexts under which the individuals operated; their perceptions of the institution they work in and the extent to which they contribute to a collective notion of professional engagement. The pilot interviews suggested the need for a change from a less directed question about how the individuals viewed themselves in a broader context to a more directed set of questions that tried to explore the professional engagement with others that were not limited to immediate colleagues. The responses received broadly fell into two categories: statements about the various degrees of connectedness, from Departmental, Institutional and Professional perspectives; and statements concerned with identification of conflict, primarily between the individual and immediate work colleagues, but occasionally between the values of the individual and those of the institution.

**Connectedness**

When questioned about the degree to which they felt connected a number of participants identified that their immediate connectedness was manifest in a functional grouping that they almost apologetically defined as not pertaining to the Department or the Institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development of Worth</th>
<th>Manifestation</th>
<th>Characterisation of the Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivations</strong></td>
<td>Universal lack of initial desire to be an academic tempered by consistent motivations to self-improvement.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Altruistic tendencies with underlying utilitarian drivers for personal improvement.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>General acknowledgement of the value of teaching.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perception of others predicated upon engagement with self-promotion through research activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td>Universal satisfaction with the academic role.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General acceptance that academic practice is sustainable to retirement.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual worth not predicated on career enhancement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No generalised rationale presented for exiting the profession.</td>
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</table>

Table 18 Development of worth summary
My connectedness is more through peers from outside the institution. Through the relationships with the people we work on in research projects that we work with. Definitely, yes. We are part of an international academic community.

I'm definitely very connected to our research group. I think I've got much more of a connection with the research group than the Department. More so than people who teach [in another field] in [Brown University], who I have very little in common with to be honest.

I don't see 100% of myself as taking the university forward. I see half of me taking my research community forward.

Actually as an academic I would consider my close colleagues to be other people who are researching in my field in other universities.

Some did identify directly with the Department in which they operate and saw the benefits of departmental communication in the provision of good practice:

Yes, so a lot of our day-to-day activities are driven by our group in terms of what we're going to teach. For example, a new unit's come up, what we're going to put in that unit. There'll be a group meeting on that from us because we're the ones, the central group, that's going to be in charge of delivering that unit. We all sit down and say, “It's got to be like this, it's got to have that,” and what resources do we need? So that's not something that would just be, “Definitely want to do that, you have to sort that out.”

Okay, so do I feel connected to the Department? Yes, I do. I have good communication with the Head of Department. I feel I can go upstairs, and go and talk to the Head of Department about any problems, any issues. I feel connected in that way.

I quite like the people in the Department on a bigger level. So I feel that, for example, that I can influence things in our Department. Maybe, that's quite illusory and maybe just — but somehow I've got the feeling that if you've got some ideas and you really want them, they somehow solidify and they happen eventually.

From my perspective the Department is not just the academics, it is the admin staff, it is the students as well. The good of the Department for me is the good of everybody that is in there.
For some the Department was seen as one side of a symbiotic relationship such that the reputation of the Department reflects well on the individual:

So try and get recognition outside of your own immediate area. To get your research recognised internationally by others I think that is one of the pressures, one of the main issues. I feel it is important for the Department to have a good reputation and it is part of my role to ensure that what I do is good quality and gives the Department a good reputation.

But identifying myself with [Brown University] is probably not the first thing I would say. It’s probably either at the department level or the research centre level. It’s the most that I identify myself with. So, you could say it’s insular in terms of a research centre, but … we tend to work together [as a department] on quite a bit of activities.

But for some the notions of connectedness prompted more comment about disconnectedness and disquiet than it did about beneficial relationships or notions of shared experiences:

I don’t feel in any way responsible for what happens with the university.

Do I think the Department as a whole is connected? I know that’s rewording your question. So in other words, do I feel connected to other people in the Department, rather than just the Department as an entity? No… it seems like there are sects within the Department who are at war with each other. It really does. That’s the impression I get.

My view of the department has changed I think, considerably in the last one to two years. I no longer see it as a contiguous whole, I now see it as a group of different factions, therefore I feel connected with only a part of it.

Whilst none of the participants identified themselves solely as individuals operating in isolation, and all acknowledged the importance of connectedness in their practice, most suggested that the functional groupings imposed by organisational structures of Department, Faculty and Institution were not where their own connectedness was predominantly manifest. Instead the functional groupings of practice and role in cognate subject teaching groups and the often cross-institutionally-formed research groups seem to be where most instances of connectedness were identified. Whilst most participants did
acknowledge a connectedness to the profession in which they operate, none identified any connection with the historical foundations of higher education for education’s sake without a prompt from the interviewer. In the main participants were content that their relationship with the profession of education was the basis for a solid foundation of practice, but the multiplicity of role definitions were evident in presenting a selective connectivity to the profession that was equally diverse. As has been identified elsewhere in these findings, the formation of professional connectedness does seem in most cases to be formed to suit the needs of the individual rather than collectively shared to the benefit of all.

Conflict

The notions of connectedness to the Department, Institution and Profession discussed above also provided a number of comments from participants about the nature of collective experience and particularly brought out indications of conflict between academic staff. To some these conflicts were evidenced in their comments on the competitive nature of current academic practice:

If I wanted to be really successful I would be trying to screw other people over to further my own aids. But I wouldn’t want to work with people who are like that, because that means that I get screwed over. It is quite competitive.

IP4

Some identified conflict between institutional requirements and departmental and personal engagement:

I don’t always agree with what it is that we’re being asked to do a lot of the time, and I don’t always agree with the way things are done and what the universities decide to do.

IP8

[The University] has quite different values than are the values of the Department, if you know what I mean.

IP7

But for most participants the questions about connectedness drew out clear conflict between members of the Department that were considered to be research active and those that were teaching focussed:
So you've got a lot of academics who do see the bigger picture about wanting to do teaching, wanting to engage students, wanting to develop the Department. And then you see academics who are just interested in doing their own research, and don't want to do anything else.

IP1

This obsession about making everyone research active. I think this is not to the benefit of the institution. I think this indicates to me that there is no clear view what an academic is on the institutional level.

IP3

[Research staff] don’t see it as a problem reading your lecture notes ad verbatim off the slides or talking in a monotonic voice, staring at the podium screen in front of you, not moving - glued to your spot, not being a bit animated. You don’t notice any of that, you don’t think there’s anything wrong with that; these students are here to learn, they should learn the subject.

IP5

Most participants commented in variously emotive terms about the extent to which the Department is disconnected and whilst the cause of the perceived conflict was not explicit, there was an implication that this split between teaching and research was likely to be the foundation for conflict:

I think it’s really fractured, our Department is very fractured. It seems like there are four or five different sections in the Department, all working independently, and conflicting with each other. You don’t see people very often, and cliques form. It seems like there are sects within the Department who are at war with each other.

IP1

It probably would be good if there was more communication between us, if we were talking, but what would we be contributing together apart from validation of Department programmes? That’s when you can see the conflict between some people, even at the group level, so you can see that sort of dynamic going on there.

IP2

My view of the Department has changed I think, considerably in the last one to two years. I no longer see it as a contiguous whole, I now see it as a group of different factions, therefore I feel connected with part of it. Yes, so I don’t really feel connected with the Department, but I feel connected with part of the community within the department.

IP4

Whilst there were no indications of the Department becoming dysfunctional, there was a general acceptance of a disconnection in the Department and a general acceptance of the differences between institutional and individual values. The extent to which the Department has, through recent growth
become identifiably diverse was commented upon by nearly all participants, although, as was presented in the *Role definition* section of these findings, there does seem to be a general acceptance that the changing nature of the demands on the academic role requires that this diversity of personal values is inevitable. Participants acknowledged that in the main their working relationships are not formed by the structural impositions of institutional hierarchy, but are predominantly formed through functional practices in their particular field that were often cross-departmental and occasionally extraneous to the institution, and the levels of connectedness which they subscribed to were often manifest through the desire to maximise external perceptions of self-worth.

The values evidenced for the Organisation theme are summarised in Table 19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manifestation</th>
<th>Characterisation of the Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Connectedness | Connectedness does not match organisational structure.  
|               | Shared values driven by selective diversity.  
|               | Functional connectedness pervades through shared practice in research or teaching. |
| Conflict      | General failing in understanding the work demands of ‘others’.  
|               | Pervading antipathy between research and teaching staff.  
|               | General acceptance of diverse values between Institution and Department.  
|               | Broad identification of a disconnected Department. |

Table 19 Organisation summary

*Governance*

The final theme identified in the values expressed by academics in the Department was that of governance – the extent to which individuals valued the need for them to contribute through personal practice to the improvement and for the benefit of the institution and the profession in which they operate.

*Institutional Engagement*

Perhaps oddly the first component of this theme – engagement with institutional governance was not universally identified as an important aspect
of working practice for the participants in the interviews. Only participant IP8 identified the importance of engagement with institutional governance:

_Every year I say to the people who I do the appraisal for, I say, “Okay, that’s your research and teaching, what else are you doing?” 9 times out of 10 it’s just a total blank look, even though every year I say, “Well if you’re looking for a promotion then if you haven’t got that third thing, then you’re stuffed”._

IP8

And later followed up with:

_It’s massively helpful, I think, for an individual to see that and to be part of [those institutional processes] and to see the bigger picture._

IP8

The same participant identified the failings of other colleagues to engage in broader institutional improvement:

_Occasionally the university will run these programmes or focus groups to look at the strategic direction of the institution. People don’t engage well with those kinds of things either._

IP8

In the main the remaining participants in the interview process identified some considerable comfort in being removed from higher level engagement in issues of governance:

_So I’m actually not probably aware of most of what goes on in the Department, because we’re kind of insulated from that._

IP7

And here it should be acknowledged that a number of participants identified the Interviewer as the member of staff who at least in part provides that insulation from broader institutional issues by largely fulfilling the departmental role of governance on their behalf:

_[Institutional administration] is the least challenging thing that we have to do, apart from you [the interviewer], because you have to deal with committee structures and stuff._

IP4

_Institutional admin – no I don’t – you [the interviewer] do that!_
In general most participants identified no desire to engage in broader institutional activity that fell outside of the local area of activity they were predominantly associated with. Most were content, if not happy that a very small selection of staff within the Department ‘dealt with’ institutional committee structure requirements, leaving them to concentrate on the parts of their job that provided most satisfaction and allow them to continue to engage in work practices that are deemed to be productive.

Professional Engagement

When questioned about their perceptions of the profession of higher education the bulk of participants espoused a general degree of pride and acceptance that the broader context under which each of them operated is for the greater good of society, although interestingly this was often couched in phraseology that mapped onto previously articulated notions of role definition that were either teaching or research focussed:

I also don’t see my role in academia as necessarily being wholly connected to the institution. I would hope that most academics see themselves as part of the bigger community in the sector, whether that’s part of a research community or part of a teaching community, or part of something else trying to take the sector forward.

[Professional engagement] is more through peers from outside the institution. Through the relationships with the people we work on in research projects that we work with. Definitely, yes, we are part of an international academic community.

I have quite a lot of responsibilities in the profession, actually. I’m on programme committees on conferences, like international conferences, and I do a lot of reviewing of papers, and planning of events, and all that kind of stuff. So I definitely think I feel responsible for driving things forward in the right direction in the profession, definitely. Well, in my research discipline.

Although one participant admitted to giving no thought to the notion of professional engagement:
I don't know [if I feel connected to the profession]. I've never really thought about it like that. I've never really thought about it in that kind of aspect.

IP1

It was also noticeable how some participants used their response on connectedness to their profession to articulate disquiet with institutional views of what being an academic is about:

I still think [management] completely ignore the fact that we're supposed to be scholars and academics, and they try way too hard to control our time, and they're undermining our whole point of our profession.

IP7

I think no matter which institution you go to, all they're concerned about is research and bringing in research, and bringing in grants, and bringing in money, and doing good research, and having good researchers.

IP1

Generally the recipients espoused the classical notions of academic professionalism as a means to promote scholarship, although the means by which scholarly activity is manifest typically varied according to particular personal practice. Professional engagement for most is therefore an extension of their personal practice and mitigated through interactions with functional groupings that are driven by personal definitions of role. Where expressed the institutional expressions of values were largely seen to be at odds with the values of the broader profession.

A summary of the organisation theme is presented in Table 20.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Characterisation of the Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Engagement</td>
<td>General disdain for institutional governance and broader political engagement. Tacit acceptance that governance is done by 'others'. Personal work practices seen as productive whereas governance is unproductive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Engagement</td>
<td>Professional engagement is defined by functional groupings. Scholarship is classically recognised but manifest through personal interpretation. Professional values are seen to be largely at odds with institutional values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20 Governance summary
Professional vs market values

As was discussed in the introduction to this Chapter, the initial investigative approach to codification of the interviews for this research pointed to a broad categorisation of comments made by the participants that were subsequently developed into the five themes discussed above. These broad categorisations pointed to two general notions in the responses to the interview questions – ‘Notions of Self’ and ‘Notions of Other’ and these were identified as corresponding to the perceived shift from Professional to Market values as presented in the *External and internal pressures on academic engagement* chapter earlier in this work. As a coda to the findings therefore here are a selection of quotations from interview participants where the underlying message seems to reinforce the notions that personal expressions of personal values are in conflict with the espoused values of the institution:

*I think that what I have learnt is that if I judge myself by the institution’s value set, then I am just going to probably end up on sick leave with stress.*

IP4

*What do I think are important or what we’re told are important? We are told: good honours, low attrition rates, good attendance, good feedback, good NSS scores. Yes, that sort of thing; good student engagement, good reflection on student experience, good research. I think from a university perspective, the notion of good teaching is embedded within good NSS! That’s about what an academic should be doing to them. Do I think that’s compatible with what the institution is driving academics to do? No, because the university is about outputs, it’s not about process. It’s about results not the means to achieve them.*

IP5

Some respondents identified the prevalence of administrative requirements from an institutional perspective that seem to serve solely to provide evidence for national metrics as the embodiment of the priority for marketization over professionalism:

*I think once you start using metrics and things to make comparisons then there is naturally an overhead. You have to have some mechanisms to achieve that and ultimately the easiest thing is usually to make a new form for everything. We just end up with more and more forms to fill.*

IP6
And one participant even went so far as to insinuate that Brown University actively works to present a more palatable face to the market than is internally justifiable:

*What the university says publicly is clearly for public consumption. You should read some of our press releases!*  
_P4_

Perhaps the clearest indications of where personal values were most often challenged was in expressions of concern about the increased influence of financial drivers:

*We’re starting to move to the business models and processes of being no longer a fully public funded body anymore. So we’re going to start taking on different characteristics and if you can’t adapt to that, well, there’s going to be problems for you personally.*  
_P2_

**Summary of findings**

This chapter has identified through the thematic codification of interview transcripts the values of academic staff within the Department under investigation at Brown University. The evidence provided in this Chapter identifies that five major themes form the basis for identification of the professional values of the staff: role definition; accountability; development of worth; organisation and governance. A tabular summary of the characterisation of these themes is presented in Table 21.

Whilst there was no direct motivation to enter academia expressed by any of the interviewees, and no indications of a formally applied inculcation of professional values other than a passing on of values from their own experiences of university as both undergraduates and post graduate students and researchers, there was a pervading view that the role of the academic is primarily focussed around the promotion of knowledge and its delivery to the next generation of scholars. Through an acknowledgement that plurality of the academic function is important the participants did recognise different facets of the academic role, however in the main they were content to operate in such
a way as to present evidence of collective competence to the wider community rather than endeavour to personally excel in each of the facets of research, teaching, revenue generation and administration.

Autonomy was clearly identified as a key component of the participant’s value set, but those with longer service histories expressed the concern that this autonomy has been restricted through institutional policy from what was once seen as autonomy of working practice to what is now perceived to be an autonomy of working patterns.

Some early career academics welcomed the clearer definition of institutional expectations on academic practice which have brought about changes to autonomy, and were comfortable in presenting workload calculations as an evidence base for their own self-worth. Almost all participants identified that the foundation for standards on practice and process were almost wholly provided by institutional performance measures, and whilst the administrative function was seen to be important to the academic role, all identified that the growth of institutional performance reporting was creating a significant increase in administrative work that was deemed to be both time consuming and in many cases counter-productive.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Manifestation</th>
<th>General Characterisation</th>
<th>Characterisation of the Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Definition</td>
<td></td>
<td>Largely institutionally driven through policy imposition.</td>
<td>Low level of consultation with academic staff in policy creation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High degree of disguise in demonstrating adherence to policy.</td>
<td>Some worth granted to measurement of performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>Self-imposed through to institutionally directed/imposed</td>
<td>Clear identification of the need for plurality of academic function.</td>
<td>General acceptance of Institutional requirement for plurality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broad through to narrow</td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal values largely driven by desires for more focussed work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonality</td>
<td>The extent to which roles are differentiated within the Department</td>
<td>Functions across the Department are highly focussed and differentiated.</td>
<td>Institutional requirement for universal plurality is understood but subverted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>General acceptance of specialisation of function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Level of autonomy or control in defining work patterns</td>
<td>Workload requirements of the institution are largely unrealistic and unachievable.</td>
<td>General acceptance of being the recipient of workload mechanisms of control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy is not evidenced in terms of practice requirements, but almost solely in the personal control of patterns of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adherence to Standards</td>
<td>Influence of standards, policy and practice norms on personal engagement</td>
<td>Institutional standards are articulated solely through the application of performance targets.</td>
<td>Personal values are largely subsumed by Departmental and Institutional measurement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Action is directed to evidencing good practice and adherence to standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Presenting evidence on practice seen as an unproductive administrative function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Worth</td>
<td>Altruistic through to Utilitarian driven self improvement</td>
<td>Universal lack of initial desire to be an academic tempered by consistent motivations to self-improvement.</td>
<td>Altruistic tendencies with underlying utilitarian drivers for personal improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>General acknowledgement of the value of teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perception of others predicated upon engagement with self-promotion through research activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivations</td>
<td>Level of personal satisfaction in terms of role and position</td>
<td>Universal satisfaction with the academic role.</td>
<td>General acceptance that academic practice is sustainable to retirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual worth not predicated on career enhancement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No generalised rationale presented for exiting the profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Degree to which individuals are connected</td>
<td>Connectedness does not match organisational structure.</td>
<td>Shared values driven by selective diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Functional connectedness pervades through shared practice in research or teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Impositions on practice from other individuals and/or functional groupings</td>
<td>General failing in understanding the work demands of ‘others’.</td>
<td>Pervading antipathy between research and teaching staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>General acceptance of diverse values between Institution and Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broad identification of an disconnected Department.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Broad identification of an disconnected Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Degree of contribution to institutional well being</td>
<td>General disdain for institutional governance and broader political engagement.</td>
<td>Tacit acceptance that governance is done by ‘others’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal work practices seen as productive whereas governance is unproductive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Engagement</td>
<td>Definitions and perceived importance of the profession</td>
<td>Professional engagement is defined by functional groupings.</td>
<td>Scholarship is classically recognised but manifest through personal interpretation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professional values are seen to be largely at odds with institutional values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21 Summary findings from thematic codification of interviews

In most cases the participants recognised the importance of national and institutional performance indicators, and all acknowledge why these have become the drivers for institutional evaluation of departmental performance,
but few value either the parameters that are measured as a meaningful representation of academic performance, or the mechanisms by which the Department is seen to respond to the institutional reporting requirements. Almost all present concerns that these mechanisms present a market driven approach to education that is inappropriate and not helpful to good scholarly activity and counter to their professional values.

Perhaps the most striking identification of personal values expressed throughout these interviews was in the degree to which performance that is focussed on enhancing the career prospects of the individual over-ride, and often subsume the enhancement of institutional performance. Whilst it is perhaps not surprising that as the HE sector becomes more market-focussed so the practices of academic staff are likely to become increasingly competitive and fellow staff may become viewed as competitors for promoted status as much as they are viewed as colleagues and collaborators. The degree to which market-values in personal practice are either actively embraced, or adopted subconsciously remains open to question, but it was surprising to the author how explicit the statements supporting this notion were. Engagement in professional activity was regularly cited as a career enhancement strategy but this was primarily directed towards activities in the area of research. Whilst the importance of institutional engagement was talked about as an important facet of academic life by a small number of interview participants, in the vast majority of cases the interviewees were content to relinquish responsibility for this particular professional activity to a select few.

Interviewees have largely presented clear indications of conflict both between Department and University, but also most worryingly between functional groupings within the Department. Further discussion on these conflicts will be presented in the next chapter, Analysis of findings and conclusions.
Chapter 5

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The previous chapter presented an evaluation of the professional values held by academics within the Department at Brown University which resulted from a thematic analysis of interview transcripts from eight academic members of staff. The analysis concluded that the value characteristics of the staff in the department largely fell into five themes – role definition; accountability; development of worth; organisation; and governance. Each theme was manifest through a number of characteristics and these were presented in summary in Table 21. This chapter will evaluate the extent to which the values expressed throughout the interviews can be seen as compatible or in conflict with the espoused institutional values that were established through investigation of the internal and external pressures on HE practice in Chapter 2 of this work and which were presented in summary in Table 12.

The evidence presented in Chapter 2 suggests that Brown University, like most in the UK HE sector, uses predominantly competitive and performative mechanisms to influence practice that are largely directed toward enhancing reputation and marketability as espoused by university league tables at both national and international level. Chapter 2 concluded that local policy adoptions are a natural reaction to global market pressures and Government policy and practice that are primarily driven through NPM strategies that seek to shift the financial burden of teaching and research increasingly toward private sector funding. The evaluation concluded that Brown University values in four out of five characteristics were focussed upon market values rather than classical professional values, and in the remaining characteristic the institutional policy and practice suggested a mix of both professional and market values.

This chapter will use the evaluations of the institutional value characteristics from Chapter 2 and cross-reference those against the personal value
characteristics from Chapter 4 to answer the main research question of this thesis – to what extent the professional values held by academic staff in the Department are compatible with current pressures. The analysis is structured such that each of the five themes of personal value characteristics are mapped against the institutional values at Brown University.

By cross-referencing the personal values of academic staff within the Department against the identified values of Brown University a sense of the extent to which individual values are compatible with current pressures can be established. A tabular summary of these findings, which requires some explanation is presented in Table 22 below. This table takes the form of a mapping of Brown University values (colour coded in grey) against the value characteristics of the individual academics within the Department (colour coded in yellow). The intersections of each of these values are summarised through a colour coding mechanism where a general match between the institutional values and those held by academics within the Department are presented in dark green; a partial match is presented in light green; a neutral or not applicable identification is presented in blue; identifications of partial conflict are presented in pink; and where there is evidence to support a general conflict between values of individuals in the Department and those of the Institution these are presented in red.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Indicator</th>
<th>Individual performance</th>
<th>Collectivism / Competition between Institutions and Students</th>
<th>Collectivism / Competition between Institutions and Students</th>
<th>Education of students seen in relation to costs and outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Conflict together with performance through time: consuming performance reporting</td>
<td>Conflict and lack of acceptance of performativity as a demonstration of self worth</td>
<td>Conflict and lack of acceptance of performativity as a demonstration of self worth</td>
<td>Conflict surrounding use of POS and unit evaluations as a driving force for performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>Conflict together with performance through time: consuming performance reporting</td>
<td>Conflict due to increased reliance on staff time in order to private effective student support</td>
<td>Acceptance of need for plurality but conflict in personal desire for more focus</td>
<td>Conflict due to increased reliance on staff time in order to private effective student support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonality</td>
<td>Acceptance of need for plurality but conflict in personal desire for more focus</td>
<td>Acceptance of need for plurality but conflict in personal desire for more focus</td>
<td>Acceptance of need for plurality but conflict in personal desire for more focus</td>
<td>Acceptance of need for plurality but conflict in personal desire for more focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>Conflict results from unrealistic workloads</td>
<td>Focus of academic business does not allow sufficient time to attract students or to perform at the level of expectations of those clients</td>
<td>General acceptance of performativity as a demonstration of self worth</td>
<td>General acceptance of performativity as a demonstration of self worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adherence to Standards</td>
<td>Acceptance of institutional performance measures but conflict around the associated increase in administrative workload</td>
<td>Research and enterprise revenue targets seen to be unrealistic and generated without consultation</td>
<td>Acceptance of institutional performance measures but conflict around the associated increase in administrative workload</td>
<td>Acceptance of institutional performance measures but conflict around the associated increase in administrative workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivations</td>
<td>Predominantly utilitarian drivers for good performance</td>
<td>Coalescence of motivations to improve institutional reputation</td>
<td>Universal value placed upon students</td>
<td>Universal value placed upon students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>General acceptance of need for performance both for the institution and for the self</td>
<td>Client focus offers sustainability of employment, tempered by own ambitious targeting</td>
<td>General acceptance of value of teaching tempered with motivations to reduce the volume of it to enhance promotion prospects</td>
<td>General acceptance of value of teaching tempered with motivations to reduce the volume of it to enhance promotion prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convictions</td>
<td>Shared values in cognate groups do not map institutional structures</td>
<td>Functional connections suggest client focus works for research and enterprise but not for teaching</td>
<td>Performativity processes increase the level of marginalisation of individuals</td>
<td>Performativity processes increase the level of marginalisation of individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>General feeling is understanding the work demands of others</td>
<td>Students as clients create conflicts in expectations</td>
<td>General acceptance of a fractured Department that demonstrates a cohesive front to students and the institution</td>
<td>General acceptance of a fractured Department that demonstrates a cohesive front to students and the institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Engagement</td>
<td>Acceptance that the Department is seen to perform at institutional level if only through a small number of participants</td>
<td>Some disquiet at student participation in some academic functions</td>
<td>Institutional engagement is largely seen to impact upon productivity</td>
<td>Institutional engagement is largely seen to impact upon productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Engagement</td>
<td>Professional engagements are defined by functional groupings not institutional ones</td>
<td>Institutional requirements for professional engagement at odds with personal values</td>
<td>Institutional requirements for professional engagement at odds with personal values</td>
<td>Institutional requirements for professional engagement at odds with personal values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Colour Coding**

| General match between Individuals and Institution | Partial match between Individuals and Institution | Neutral / Not Applicable | Partial conflict between Individuals and Institution | General conflict between Individuals and Institution |

Table 22 Value cross-reference summary
Whilst it has to be acknowledged that no numerical significance can be attributed to these intersections since they are not equally manifest in terms of pressures, it is perhaps significant that of the 41 intersections where a link was identified, 28 represent areas of partial or general conflict and only 10 present suggestions of some sort of match in values.

Each of these value themes will be considered in turn with the findings presented in the form of ‘fuzzy generalisations’ (Bassey, 2001) which present a warranted view of what the findings seem to suggest without arguing that the view of the world presented here is the only way the world could be viewed. Where appropriate the analysis points to exemplar references in the Presentation of findings Chapter of this work as evidence points to support the analysis. In all cases the references take the form (page number: Interview Participant number) and where multiple comments are recorded from a single participant on the referred page a suffix is applied. For example the reference (p116:IP1(ii)) refers to the second quotation presented on page 116 of this work made by Interview Participant number 1.

Role definition and institutional values

In most cases the academics interviewed acknowledged that their role was mandated almost exclusively from institutional policy pressures and not from their own personal values (p122:IP6,IP7; p123:IP5,IP7; p154:IP1; p156:IP4, IP5). However, it was clear that academics were aware of the external pressures that are the drivers for these institutional policies and were generally accepting of the institutional requirement to respond to these external pressures in a meaningful way that ultimately has impact upon their role (p122:IP8,IP4, p123:IP7, p124:IP6(ii), p126:IP1; p138:IP1; p156:IP2). Thus the expectations placed upon both the Department in terms of recruitment and revenue targets, and upon academics through individual performance measures are not necessarily in accord with individual values, but academics are generally accepting of the need for them and do conform to the evaluation and reporting mechanisms that are presented to them by the institution (p124:IP7,IP6(iii)).
There is a universal belief that the time it takes to report, and in most cases to reflect upon performance measures is time that could be more meaningfully spent on core activities, and policies pertaining to reflections on practice in particular are viewed with a degree of cynicism (p124:IP7,IP8; p125,IP5,IP8; 156:IP6,IP4).

The institutional values that are manifest in the increasing value placed in individual performance and the narrow assessment of worth based on performativity are similarly accepted as a natural consequence of the shift towards a market-driven HE sector (p122:IP5,IP4; p156:IP5). Academics did not generally embed significant meaning in the measurements that are used to currently evaluate and in some cases enumerate their performance, and many identified significant disquiet in those measures that are based upon student-based identifications of academic performance – unit evaluations and the National Student Survey (p138:IP1; p156:IP5; p140:IP1). It was interesting to note that some academics did express a tacit acceptance of these measures as a means to demonstrate their own self-worth, and cited the outputs from these evaluative mechanisms as potential sources of supporting evidence to demonstrate personal worth to the Department and the Institution (p125:IP5,IP8; p122:IP5).

Similarly, those staff who are research active were predominantly concerned with the quality of their research as a means to further their knowledge and interest in the subject area and were largely dismissive of, or occasionally confused by, the mechanisms of the REF as a means to provide a meaningful measure of the quality of their research (p127:IP5; p143:IP4; p144:IP7). Research staff often cited their belief that Brown University placed value in research predominantly in financial terms (p134:IP7,IP8,IP4; 135:IP7), and whilst there was evidence in institutional policy to support this notion to some degree, the institutional principles of research informed teaching and Student as Creator do provide evidence to suggest that institutional values in this area are broader than academics suggest. Whether this implies that research active
staff do not consider their research to have influence and impact upon their teaching practice and therefore is at odds with the institutional values on research as a consequence is open to question.

What was perhaps most significant was that most academics acknowledged that much of their day-to-day practice cannot be meaningfully represented in the statistical reporting mechanisms that are required by university management (p124:IP2; p125:IP8; p139:IP6,IP5,IP8; p140:IP6,IP5). These reporting mechanisms are predominantly seen as reductionist interpretations of workload requirements and performance measures that are not based in reality (p140:IP6(ii),IP8,IP5). However, whilst not being discussed explicitly by all, there is an implicit acceptance that management through performance measurement at departmental level grants individuals within the Department the opportunity to present a view of their own personal performance in a successful department in such a way as to allow the personal maximisation of benefit (p139:IP2,IP5). There was a general acceptance that the department in which they work is seen as a well performing department institutionally, but where there are variations in individual performance and capability within the Department this is generally not picked up by statistical reporting at the institutional level (p131:IP1,IP2). What this is seen to present is opportunity to others within the Department to present internally acceptable translations of their actual day-to-day practice which are based upon personal definitions of acceptable practice which are not universally applicable, into a form of performance measure that is aggregated through departmental reporting into a form that is seen as acceptable to senior management (p134:IP5, IP4; p138:IP1; p138:IP6(ii),IP5, IP1; p156:IP4). This translation of practice measurements that are personally acceptable into evidence that is institutionally meaningful is a recurring theme throughout these discussions.

For most of those interviewed, the increase in administration that is required as a consequence of the need to provide evidence in support of institutional performance monitoring was identified as time consuming and in some cases
the work involved in demonstrating good practice was identified as eating into the time available to do good practice (p133:IP7, IP5, IP6; p134:IP2,IP7). Some expressed concern that the shift towards a more administratively heavy workload was evidence to support the notion that the academic role is becoming increasingly mandated through performativity measures in preference to a more traditional broader educational needs-based mandate (p122:IP6(i),IP5; p134:IP4(i); p123:IP7). It should be noted however that for at least one early career academic this aspect of mandate definition through performativity measurement presented some degree of comfort and provided opportunity to present personal justifications for self-worth that may otherwise have been lacking and was therefore seen as a positive aspect of current managerial practice (p125:IP2).

Where personal values pertaining to role mandate were most often seen to be in conflict with institutional values was in the embodiment of the value of pedagogy. For the academics the primary engagement in the education process is predominantly vocalised by reference to the value of learning (p123:IP4; p124:IP6; p126:IP5), whereas the evidence presented in Chapter 2 suggests that the institution largely views education in relation to costs, revenues and outputs. Increasingly the institution is seen to place great stead in NSS and KIS data and this, for many academics it seems, drives practice to give students what they want in preference to what they need. In terms of mandate this was most clearly evidenced in the Departmental reflections on practice whereby module evaluations, student feedback at Subject Committee, and most significantly in NSS returns were regularly cited as the drivers for directing, defining and in some cases enforcing changes to academic practice.

The second characteristic of the Role Definition value theme pertains to the scope of the academic role. The University promotion routes clearly present the requirement for a pluralised academic role to be evidenced for promotion to be considered, and in principle all academics acknowledged that a good academic would ideally be competent in a multi-faceted range of functions that
largely reflect the institutional requirements in teaching, research and entrepreneurship (p127:IP5(ii), IP1, IP8). However, a number of respondents identified that in practice a pluralistic academic role is not sustainable because the performance-led demands on practice in each of the three core areas of academic activity are such that specialisation in one particular aspect is an inevitable consequence (p127:IP5(ii); p128:IP6; p130:IP4,IP5,IP7,IP6; p144:IP1). One interviewee even went so far as to suggest that successful academic pluralism is no longer achievable in current university contexts (p128:IP5).

What was also clear from the interviews was that the research function is seen as most valued by the institution and there were many suggestions that this has led to an apparent fracturing in the Department between those who teach and those who research (p151:IP1,IP3,IP5; p144:IP4,IP1). Teaching staff typically identified that general working demands and administrative requirements inhibit their ability to appropriately support students, and research staff typically cited teaching demands as inhibiting their ability to engage in research (p130:IP6,IP1; p131:IP2, IP1). As a consequence, academics seem to be actively engaged in manipulating workloads to provide what they see as a working pattern than maximises the potential to achieve their most marketable academic capital as proposed by Slaughter and Leslie. Currently at Brown University following a predominantly research-based career path is perceived to be that that is most identifiably beneficial to career enhancement, and as a consequence it seems that much effort is focussed upon attempts to minimise departmental teaching requirements since these are seen by many as presenting barriers to effective research (p143:IP1,IP4; p144:IP7).

This aspect of professional engagement in the Department also suggests that the third aspect of role definition - that of professional commonality - is not prevalent. The academics interviewed largely acknowledged that the Department presents a holistic view of competence, and often excellence, in all aspects of academic activity (p130:IP4; p131:IP1,IP2). However, most
acknowledge that this holistic competence does not evidence excellence in practice that is common to all members of staff in the Department. There is an acknowledgement that the Department designates a number of key institutionally facing roles, for example in representing the Department on key University committees or those roles that are deemed to be strategically critical, to a very small number of individual academics who have particular skills in this area (p130:IP1,IP5,IP4; p152:IP7; p153:IP4,IP5). The Department is thus seen to take advantage of the functional specialisation of individuals in order to maximise the potential for presenting the Department in the best light at an institutional level. This has resulted in highly differentiated roles across the Department which maximise the utility of those seen to be competent, and hide those that might not necessarily present such an acceptable picture to those outside of the Department. There were a number of interviewees who suggested that this creates tensions because the institution is seen to present the most significant rewards to those that excel in research as compared with those that excel in teaching or in roles that support institutional governance, and some see in ‘others’ a manipulation of their role such that they minimise engagement with those aspects of academic pluralism that are deemed to be ‘personally non-productive’ (p152: IP8; p130:IP5).

Accountability and institutional values

The accountability theme was expressed through two characteristics, workload and through adherence to standards. The evaluation of academic values suggests that the demands put upon the individual in terms of workload are largely in excess of what is seen to be achievable (133:IP8(i),IP1,IP8(ii),IP5). A number of those interviewed presented unrealistic workloads as a justification for not engaging in all areas of professional academic work, the most regularly cited being the intrusion upon research time that either teaching or administration present (p134:IP7,IP4(i),IP3,IP4(ii); p135:IP4,IP7; p136:IP6,IP2,IP7). Interestingly however, the institutional value of favouring individual performance over individual needs does seem to present opportunities for academic staff to argue for a more tailored workload that suits
their preferred mode of operation since this presents them with a mechanism to justify revised work patterns as a means to more readily allow the Department to evidence success in adherence to standards (p139:IP2, IP6, IP1). The general acceptance of narrow institutional performance measures as providing the evidence and underpinning for changes in practice that will lead to enhanced institutional reputation thus is seen at the individual level as further narrowing the scope of professional engagement and to present opportunities to academics to provide supporting evidence in their quest to maximise the type of work that is seen to be of primary personal benefit (p138:IP8, IP2, IP6).

The institutional value placed in attracting clients, both in terms of research and teaching activity also presents a conflict between institution and academic values. For teaching-focussed staff, dealing with increased expectations from a student body that is increasingly engaged in client-like behaviour that seeks to maximise the value of their investment in education is seen as problematic (p138:IP3, IP1; p138:IP6). The institutionally supported requirement to provide high quality support to students through personalised feedback that is provided in a timely fashion, together with increased demands on academic time to provide support to students outside of formal delivery sessions are seen as largely impossible to achieve due to the administrative demands of the institutional workload model (p135:IP5; p138:IP1; p138:IP6, IP7). Similarly for research active staff the requirement to produce measurable research performance in the form of research work that is of high REF value, and simultaneously to engage in research that has an implicitly targeted revenue value is problematic since the targets are seen to be beyond the scope of an academic working a ‘normal’ workload (p133:IP8, IP6; p134:IP8).

The application of standards to monitor and influence research engagement is largely seen as unachievable and is viewed with some degree of cynicism not least because the targeted values are seemingly based on institutional requirements per capita of staff member and have been arrived at with little consultation (p133:IP8). Research staff often referred to the desire to engage
in research for the joy of learning new things, but felt that the institution removed this from them by attaching revenue targets at a Departmental level that are often articulated in terms of revenue generating expectations of individual members of staff.

Where the academic values of accountability presented the most obvious conflict between personal and institutional values was in relation to the institutional value whereby student education is viewed largely in terms of cost and outcomes. Workloads relating to teaching practice were regularly discussed in terms of presenting unachievable aspirations of support for students. Almost none of the interviewees presented any comment on the number or duration of lectures they were required to provide, however most expressed concern pertaining to the time it takes to engage in marking and quality assurance procedures associated with support for units of study (p133:IP7,IP6; p134:IP2,IP7; p135:IP5). Further conflict was identified in the application of performance targets as institutionally accepted standards, and whilst staff understood the institutional desire to improve reputation by enhancing key league table measures of practice, there was evidence to suggest that pushes to improve ‘Good Honours’ and ‘Value Added’ measures seem to be viewed with a considerable degree of cynicism and are accompanied by an implicit suggestion, that it must be stated has never been explicitly articulated in any institutional communication, that academics should reduce academic integrity in favour of reputation enhancing grade inflation (p138:IP1; p138:IP5,IP6).

Throughout all of these factors, the overriding conflict in terms of workload was that the increased administrative workload associated with all aspects of the academic role has placed an increasingly difficult burden on all academics.

*Development of worth and institutional values*

The development of worth theme identified two characteristics in the identification of personal values – motivations and satisfaction. In the context of the institutional move towards valuing individual performance in preference
to individual need it seems that there is an underlying belief in the altruistic nature of education in the academic staff which indicates some degree of conflict (p143:IP1,IP4ii). However, it was noticeable that these altruistic notions did generally seem to be subsumed by a drive for personal improvement. The level of satisfaction with the academic role did suggest that individuals present a general acceptance of the need for performance improvements both for the benefit of the institution and for the benefit of the self (p143:IP3,IP7,IP4).

The institutional value of attracting clients seems in general accord with the individual motivations as expressed by academic staff. Staff were clearly motivated to improve institutional and departmental reputation and revenue through excellence in research and success in student recruitment. Whilst the performance measurement of some aspects of a client-focused approach present some issues with what are seen by many as the application of over-ambitious targets, the use of market-driven practices to attract clients does seem to be accepted as the way things have to be and in the main academic staff seem happy to be motivated to operate in this way (p142:IP6; p156:IP2). It should be noted however that the continued success of the Department that has been experienced in recent years could be a contributing factor to the general acceptance of this client-based approach.

Where the institutional and departmental values seem to be most in agreement with personal values was in the collectivist approaches in managing the relationships between staff and students. All academics expressed a clear commitment to the value of the student, and most cited the Student as Creator principles as a key defining feature of both personal and institutional practice (p143:IP7(i),IP1, IP7(ii),IP4). There was some disquiet expressed concerning the somewhat utilitarian approaches adopted by some students, but in the main academics seemed happy with the institutional values pertaining to student engagement.
There was some identification of potential conflict however when the interviewees passed comment on the perceived motivations of ‘others’. Here there were indications that the general acceptance of the value of teaching was tempered by the motivations of some to reduce the volume of teaching in order to enhance research-driven promotion opportunities (p144:IP4,IP7,IP1). The narrow assessment of worth therefore was seen to provide the means for others to follow personally motivated career plans that are not necessarily institutionally focussed (p144:IP7,IP6). There was general acceptance of the use of performativity measures to set personal targets through the annual appraisals process as both a mechanism to ensure personal practice is in line with institutional and departmental goals, and to enhance self-worth and prospects for promotion. However, many expressed concern that the actions of others in this same process were largely predicated upon career enhancement strategies (p143:IP1,IP4).

Whilst most academics cited more classical professional motivations for teaching as a means to inspire future generations, it was generally accepted that the cost benefit analysis of the means to provide this provision is a necessary part of the institutional drivers for students to be viewed in terms of costs and outcomes (p156:IP5,IP6,IP2). There was some disquiet that staffing increases due to Departmental success are too slow in arriving, but in most cases the successes of the Department through the adoption of institutional values in relation to costs of students is seen as beneficial on a personal level since the continued success of the Department in particular, is seen to present increased possibilities for employment of the individual until retirement (p123:IP6; p125:IP2,IP1).

Organisation and institutional values

In terms of organisation, expressed through the attributes of connectedness and conflict, there is clear evidence to suggest that the institutional value of individual performance over individual need is in conflict with individual values, and also is viewed as the key mechanism that impacts upon the
connectedness of the individual academics within the Department (p148:IP6,IP7(i),IP8,IP7(ii); p150:IP8). Those interviewed do not on the whole feel connected to their institution (p149:IP2,IP7,IP4), nor to a lesser degree, to their department and have largely formed connections within cognate subject groups or inter-institutional research groups that are outside of the institutional structures in which academics typically operate (p148:IP8,IP7(ii); p149:IP6,IP2). This has promulgated a general failing across the Department in understanding the work demands of others and as a consequence there is a pervasive antipathy between research and teaching staff on the one hand, and between different research centres on the other (p149:IP1,IP4; p151:IP1,IP2; p151:IP4; p154:IP1). There were suggestions of feelings of marginalisation for some, which seem exacerbated by performativity assessment processes which are seen as presenting opportunities to others to manipulate teaching and administrative workloads to their own advantage (p130:IP5; p150:IP8; p151:IP1(i),IP5). The degree to which individuals feel connected to their colleagues is thus impacted as a consequence of the perception that there are some staff who are more adept at this manipulation, and who are seen to act in self-interest rather than in the interest of the Department (p151:IP1(ii),IP2).

There is a general acceptance that the Department is to a large extent, fractured from the perspective of the academics within it. However, it is interesting to note that despite this, most of the individuals interviewed see that there is collective value in the presentation to those external to the Department of a competent and fully functioning academic community (p148:IP2,IP1,IP3,IP4). Whilst many of the interviewed academics espoused the departmental promotion of academics and students co-existing in a shared academic community with a shared interest in their field, it was noticeable that a number of those interviewed articulated concerns with recent increased expectations of students. These increased student expectations are seen to have arisen largely from the students-as-clients values of the institution and the government, and for some this presents an area of conflict that is becoming increasingly problematic (p138:IP1; p138:IP6; p156:IP5).
The general indications of conflict presented in the interviews are to some degree mitigated by the application of the same narrow assessments of worth based upon performativity that provided conflict in the definition of the academic role as discussed earlier. The market-driven institutional values whereby success is measured in concretised performance statistics seems to present the Department, and by association the individuals within it, opportunities to demonstrate levels of performance that regularly meet or exceed the minimum levels of acceptability that are imposed by the institution. Institutional reporting mechanisms therefore suggest that the Department performs well and the perceived conflicts in the Department are largely visible only to those internal to the Department.

Governance and institutional values

The final theme of governance referenced two areas as key to defining personal values in this area – institutional engagement and professional engagement. There was a general acceptance that academics within the Department are seen to contribute well to institutional engagement, but it is noticeable that a number of those individuals interviewed presented a tacit acceptance that this is largely done by others (152:IP8(i),IP7; p153:IP4,IP5). Institutional engagement was predominantly seen as an academic function in which most are happy not to have to engage. For most of the participants in this investigation, institutional activity was seen to have negative personal impact in terms of their ability to fulfil other aspects of their work that are more meaningful both in terms of personal satisfaction and in their ability to present evidence of worth to the institutional measurements of performance. As such most were content not have to contribute in a broader institutional context instead, concentrating their efforts on external academic groupings and collections (p152:IP8; p154:IP6,IP7).

In terms of professional engagement it was relatively clear that the foundations of professional values were largely seen to be at odds with institutional values in their broadest sense with many academics presenting generic comments
pertaining to mismatches between what they value and what they believe the institution values (p138:IP1; p138:IP7,IP1,IP5). This was similarly evident in the fact that most participants presented indications of their professional engagement not through institutional structural groupings, but predominantly through functional groupings that held more personal meaning (P153:IP8; p154:IP6,IP7).

Scholarship and the need for HE to provide societal improvements were largely demonstrable throughout the interviews conducted. Whilst it was evident that the institution valuing education of students in terms of costs and outcomes has not been explicitly subsumed into individual values, some academics have adopted personal interpretations of these institutional values and shaped them to both guide and provide means for evidencing self-improvement.

Conclusions
The investigations presented in this thesis have identified the extent to which professional values of academics in one department at Brown University are compatible with current pressures. Through evaluation of literature, the meanings of professionalism in an HE context identified that universities typically operate in a culture of social and financial accountability driven by NPM as a means to encourage efficiency which has significantly increased the marketization of higher education and promoted the commodification and consumerisation of the educational function. The writings of Ball, Kolsaker, Evans, Slaughter and Molesworth discussed in Chapter 1 suggests that the impact of sector marketization on academic professionalism has seen a pluralised form emerge that is simultaneously narrow, organisationally focussed and in which the pursuit of academic capital of the individual has become a significant force in directing academic activity. The tensions evidenced throughout this research between the academic desire for the university to practice as a focus for the creation of new knowledge, and to present unbiased critiques of society and practice which formed the historical basis for university engagement as discussed in Chapter 1, and the industrial and governmental
demands to have a cost-effective higher educational system that produces skills-oriented graduates are clear.

By evaluating the external pressures that impact upon Brown University from global and national policy and practice, and through investigation of key policy documentation at the institution the internal pressures that enact on academic staff was also identified. The evidence suggests that Brown University predominantly espouses market-driven values and uses competitive evaluative mechanisms to influence academic practice such that it maximises the potential for reputational enhancement and marketability by responding to key factors of performance measurement that together make up the evaluative frameworks of the national and international university league tables. Perhaps more importantly the perceptions and actions of academic staff suggest that what is demanded by institutional management is evidence to support improvements in a range of measures and targets that are largely perceived to have only minimal personal meaning; and which present significance in relative performance in comparison to other institutions (typically the competitor set) rather than in ‘real’ performance indicators. In this sense it is seen that it is not how good you are that counts, but how much better (or worse) you are than your competitors.

The findings suggest that Brown University policies place managerial value in two key areas – monitoring performance of academic staff, particularly in terms of the institutional utility of each of staff member; and managing student activity, particularly those activities that are seen to impact upon university league position. The findings suggest that management strategies concerned with each are clearly seen to be focussed on positivistic presentations of performance whereby measures are used in various contexts to show the institution in the best possible light, and where performance is reported consistently in positive contexts with an aim to maximise marketable utility. In monitoring the performance of academic staff this is achieved through performativity measurements that target academic staff engagement through
the development of revenue opportunities from research and entrepreneurial activity, and through implicitly targeted demonstrations of effectiveness in a number of core competencies for teaching and learning that are directly attributable to factors that influence league table position. In managing student activity the evidence suggests that the areas of assessment and recruitment are increasingly presented in terms of market values and are focused, through recruitment and retention strategies, on maximising the financial utility of each student and, through assessment regulations, on maximising those student performance indicators that have most impact upon recruitment – league table position and institutional reputation.

Investigation into the perceptions of academic staff within the Department identify conflict between personal professional values and those values perceived to be held by the institution. Whilst the academics interviewed were largely understanding of the need to move towards a more market-driven HE sector, many identified concerns about the outcomes of the consumerisation of the educational process and the impact that has on academic integrity. This was particularly evidenced in tensions surrounding teaching requirements which are increasingly becoming institutionally directed to what students want rather than what they need, to providing assessments that met the requirements of students preferences rather than those that are pedagogically justified, and in the application of policies on academic practice that increasingly respond to the student voice with seemingly little thought for the impositions on academic workload. Similarly, institutional drivers on research activity present clear tensions between the academic desire to further knowledge and the institutional need to generate revenue and the drive to enhance research reputation as evidenced by the REF.

Most of the participants identified changes to professional autonomy at Brown University where the performativity measurement and policy changes have shifted autonomy from the realms of working practice into the reduced aspect it currently holds through autonomy that is only demonstrable in the defining of
working patterns. In all cases the increasing administrative requirements of current academic engagement at Brown University was cited as detrimental to the pursuit of personal professional activity. The administrative burden that so many refer to as destroying the autonomy of the academic, is seen to be primarily responding to evidence demands to support performance indicators that are at odds with academic values, and which most significantly are used to support the reward mechanisms that the institution offers as incentive to academic staff. In this context the values of the institution seem to be seen to espouse not the joy of learning and the creation of new knowledge, but instead to ensure financial stability through manipulation of the factors that influence university league table placings that focus upon research revenue and teaching practice that is increasingly evaluated not by practitioners in pedagogy but by students – the consumers of the education process.

The primary research done to support this thesis suggests that academics have reacted to these tensions by concentrating efforts on demonstrating collective pluralistic competence at a departmental level, but have also become primarily concerned with removing personal engagement with academic activities that are seen to impede their pursuit of the aspects of their academic capital that have most obvious career enhancing benefits. Academic professionalism in the department is therefore seen to be pluralistically aware, narrow and individually focussed, and to some degree organisationally manipulative.

The consumerisation of higher education as discussed by Foskett, Furedi, Molesworth and others, and discussions on nature of the University as presented by Collini, Gibbs and Barnett suggest that the fabric of the University is changing. Worryingly, change appears to be driven not by considered discourse into educational values that are espoused by highly motivated professionals, but rather by the increasingly entrenched powers of consumer demand and producer competition which are forcing action at the individual level that is beginning to subvert professional values. What is perhaps the most worrying aspect of the research conducted in this thesis is that academic staff
seem to have no desire to fight against the tensions that are presented to them as a consequence of the changes to institutional values. Instead academic activity seems to be increasingly directed to fulfilling the managerial requirements of performance measurement and thereby academics are contributing to the changing nature of the institutions in which they work that they paradoxically seem to be at odds with. The adoption of NPM strategies in public sector HEIs seems firmly entrenched and unlikely to change in the near future, so changes in managerial style at Brown University are equally unlikely. At Brown University academic tensions seem culturally engrained throughout all levels of the institution, and even those that feel angered or threatened by the shifts in the nature of the university that they bring, seem to have a general acceptance that tensions are inevitable in the current economic climate and ultimately it would seem that academics are equally entrenched in maximising the possibilities of promoting self-interest which is presented to them by those same performance measurement approaches that cause tensions.

What seems evident is that with such clear identification of areas of conflict between academic values and the current pressures that are enacting upon the HE professional, there will inevitably be a future full of change. Recent developments in the HE sector at the time of writing this conclusion seem to be suggesting that there are likely to be more changes to HE funding regimes which could bring more pressure on the sector. There are also strong indications that there could be the introduction of a REF-like evaluation mechanism for teaching standards to be used in favour of the current QAA means of evaluating quality, which in some circles is already being referred to as a potential TEF to sit alongside REF as the two primary mechanisms for evaluating university performance. Since the current perceptions of academics in the department seem to place greater stead in research than in teaching, this dual approach to evaluating institutional quality could have significant impact upon both institutional and academic perceptions of professionalism in the very near future.
At the outset of this work the author expressed concerns that the shift to market-driven HE might contribute to a de-professionalization of the academic akin to that identified to have impacted upon the compulsory education sector at the turn of the Century. What seems evident from the investigation of espoused professional values of the academics within the department is that the marketization of HE has encouraged academic staff to reluctantly reshape their values through their engagement in increasingly competitive activity that is seen to provide utility on a personal level in preference to activity that has institutional utility. There is a general acceptance that where these two perspectives have congruence lie the best opportunities for career enhancement, and the mechanisms of performativity used by the institution to measure the worth of departments and individuals have come to be seen as an opportunistic and sometimes deceptive means for the demonstration of excellence and competence. To present an analogous conclusion – Brown University and the academic members of the Department both appear to be engaged in the identification of excellence in practice through the provision of evidence in key performance measures that are increasingly seen as acceptable to both. This evidence is increasingly presented through institutional targets and expectations in one direction, and performance reporting in the other direction, that are typically aggregated at the departmental level in the form of spreadsheets. The problem is that whilst these spreadsheets are understood by both, the language spoken by each is different – the spreadsheets offer a translation of values in both directions that offer mutually-deceptive views of a reality that both are happy to present to the external world.
Post Script: Reflections and Recommendations

At the conclusion of this research it seems appropriate for the author to present recommendations to Brown University as to how it might benefit from changes in practice and policy in response to the findings presented here. It may also be useful to offer some indications as to how the results of this research will offer triggers for changes in personal practice, and to present indications of where future research to follow on from this work might be conducted.

Recommendations for the HEI

What this research has identified is that there is a clear mismatch between the values of academic staff and the perceived values of the institution in which the academics operate. The external pressures of globalization, national policy adoptions and institutional responses to these factors have resulted in a management culture at Brown University that is seen to maximise the utility of academic outputs through the application of performance controls over those factors of University activity that have direct impact upon university league table positions.

If the findings of this research are generalisable, then the dilemma faced in UK HE would seem to be firmly established in the managerial desire to be seen to improve things, and through that desire to increasingly measure things that many academic professionals either see as unmeasurable, as using mechanisms for evaluation that use metrics that have no shared meaning, or see as providing opportunities for presenting evidence to support their own career enhancement possibilities. The personal frustrations of the author are embodied in this dilemma since the soul of the university, the reasons why universities came about, the collegiate desire to promote learning for the good of society, falls victim to financially motivated activities of a market-focussed management perspective on the one hand, and the financially motivated performance
manipulations of academic staff on the other. The difficulty in making recommendations to resolve this situation is that the practices of both management and academics seem culturally engrained and have their roots firmly entrenched in pragmatism at the expense of idealism.

The external pressures on HEIs do not look like changing in the short term and NPM management strategy is seemingly unlikely to change. Similarly it seems that the actions of academics are likely to either continue to be entrenched in self-interest as performance pressures from management force engagement in aspects of research that are revenue bearing and/or teaching practice that is driven by assessment results and student evaluations; or to be marginalised as their pursuit of excellence in teaching and research, and maintenance of academic rigour are seen to be increasingly out of step with key performance indicators. Recommendations that the author would like to make, but which are not meaningfully realisable in the current climate would therefore be centred on maintaining the function of Brown University as an institution to instil the joy of learning and the pursuit of knowledge. In order to do this performance monitoring of teaching and research staff needs to be allowed to exist outside of the factors that have an immediately quantifiable impact upon league table positions, this might be achieved by:

- promoting a culture of innovation in research that is recognised as career enhancing even if it is not revenue bearing;

- promoting a culture of innovation in teaching which is supported by a workload model that reflects meaningfully the time taken to construct innovative approaches to pedagogic excellence.

Similarly unrealisable in the current climate would be the recommendation to allow academic staff to engage predominantly in the education function, be that in the form of teaching practice or in research activity. This could be achieved by:
• refocussing the role of the academic to minimise the administrative overheads currently associated with the academic process.

One final recommendation that is also unachievable in the current climate, but which would go some way to improve the ability of the university to maximise the educational potential of its academic staff would be:

• to allow the down-grading of staff who do not meet minimum standards in teaching and research.

This is of course contentious, but HEI culture is typically not good at dealing with poor performance and Brown, like many others, seems to have a tendency to disguise, and hide poor performers from external scrutiny. In the department investigated here this is clearly evidenced by the processes which staff acknowledge presents the department (and not individuals) as being holistically competent. The practice creates antipathy in departments and leads to disproportionate workloads as those deemed ‘trustworthy’ or ‘capable’ are inevitably burdened with extra work. Discussions around what constitutes minimum standards of engagement, and how performance might be measured are the inevitable consequence of this recommendation, but the impact of ‘poor academics’ should not be underestimated.

Given that the recommendations presented above have been identified as largely untenable in the current academic climate, it seems prudent to present some more pragmatic recommendations that fall out of this research that would be culturally acceptable to Brown University but which acknowledge the limitations presented by the current culture within the institution. Here it is likely to be the case that recommendations will be focussed upon Brown University maintaining financial sustainability and furthering its desires for improving league table standings.

The academics interviewed in this research clearly see that research activity, but perhaps more significantly the revenue that research activity attracts, is the best
route to career enhancement at Brown University. Research academics clearly value research for the furtherment of knowledge in their subject, but largely feel that their research activity must be directed to funded research of high financial value if they are to satisfy institutional demands on their outputs, and therefore to benefit from their research endeavours. There are hints in the interviews that the apparent fracturing in the department is in part created by some staff pursuing career development through funded research at the expense of teaching, and in some cases using strategic means to minimise teaching requirements in order to allow more time to engage in grant application writing and seeking potential revenue bearing research opportunities. In order to counter this and to some extent alleviate the tensions between what might be termed classical educational values and the utilitarian institutional values, it seems that HEIs, and Brown University in particular, should look towards offering a more tangible promotions path through academia that rewards both good teaching practice and excellence in research that is not measured in terms of financial value. Brown University has a teaching route in its Grade 9 promotions policies but it is interesting to note that there are no formally recognised career paths beyond Grade 9 for any but those with recognised research profiles. In order to enhance teaching practice it seems prudent to introduce Professorial promotions for demonstration in excellence in teaching and not just, as is the case at the time of writing, for excellence in research.

It will be interesting to see if the currently mooted Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) will, as suggested, direct Universities into becoming equally teaching and research focussed. It could be that if the TEF operates in a similar way to the REF that institutions become even more involved in evidencing good performance than they are in actually improving performance, and the ‘illusion’ of performance enhancement through the provision of statistical responses to targets may continue to present perceived gaps between academic professional values and institutional and governmental values.
The importance of university league tables looks to be an ever stronger driver in determining the success of UK universities, and with a potentially decreasing student demographic by 2020 and no prospect of increased government funding for HE it would seem that some UK HEIs are likely to face tough financial times ahead and possibly even closure. Successful universities will probably be those that best use their academic staff to inspire learning and to engage in meaningful research, but also those that significantly diversify their revenue streams so as to minimise the importance of university league table positions. Brown University seems well placed at the moment to maintain performance in student recruitment and research activity, but a cultural change is required if it wishes to solidify its financial position and achieve its aim of being a sustainable Top 40 UK HEI. The university is not as geographically well suited as some UK HEIs to exploit a vast array of local corporations as those located in for example the London M4 corridor, but entrepreneurial activity is going to be increasingly important so the institution should seek to expand and maintain partnerships with local, national and international industry partners. Seeking to employ industry specialists could be key in this activity.

The key recommendations that should be adopted if the findings from investigation into one department at the institution are applicable across all departments in the institution can therefore be summarised as:

- instigate Professorial promotion routes for best practice in teaching;
- look to minimise the financial dependency on student recruitment and research output (and thereby the dependence on University League position) through increased industrial engagement and entrepreneurial activity;
- create a recruitment strategy for new staff that places greater emphasis on the importance of appointing high quality teachers and industry specialists.
In addition it is worth identifying that the increasing importance of the student voice in HEIs and the marketization of HE is likely to increase the strategic importance of managing student expectations. With the good work that Brown University have done in the adoption of the Student as Creator initiative, it seems pertinent to add one final recommendation:

- continue the work done through the Student as Creator initiative but also use this initiative as a means to manage student expectations.

Recommendations for personal practice

As was highlighted in the Motivation section that opens this thesis, the author of this work operates in an academic institution at a level of engagement whereby both the creation and application of policy form almost equal part of the annual workload. Interestingly this makes the author both the recipient and creator of a number of the types of spreadsheets that are referred to in the conclusions of the thesis. It has to be acknowledged that the institutional demands under which the author works do indeed create pressures to ensure that institutionally acceptable measures of performance are reported on a regular basis, but rarely do the reporting mechanisms require much in the way of qualitative statements in support of the statistical returns. In order to enhance personal practice therefore it would seem pertinent to consider the meaning behind much of the statistical reporting that forms a major portion of work for the author. Qualitative evaluations on practice are typically seen as more time consuming to conduct, and generally require reflective skills that are not always easy to master, but if personal practice is to be improved then it cannot be just done to provide statistical evidence of it, the enhancements have to be meaningful both in terms of personal satisfaction, but also to those who are the key recipients of the practices engaged with by the author. Three key recommendations for personal practice therefore will be adopted:

- engage more regularly with the process of reflection on personal practice;
actively promote best practice in areas that are not immediately transferable into institutional statistical reporting;

• openly seek regular feedback from colleagues, managers and students outside of the formally adopted institutional evaluative processes.

These practices will be beneficial in the contexts of the normal working activities of the author described above, but if adopted outside of those contexts will also help to promote improved teaching practice, research activity and general engagement in the field of work.

Reflections on research practice

With regard to research processes there are two areas that are worthy of comment. The first is in the use of supporting technology in the writing of academic research. This thesis was written using Microsoft Word as the main text editor, with Microsoft Excel used to format supporting tables. Starting the write-up phase with a full commitment to using headings, styles, appropriate identification of sections and tables and cross-referencing has made for relatively easy document management; but the addition of the RefWorks plug-in to Microsoft Word has meant that considerable effort has been saved in the maintenance and formatting of references in this work. Storing references in the web interface of RefWorks and then using write 'n' cite to incorporate source references in to the main document has been extremely helpful. This is particularly important if the style of referencing needs any slight adjustment since a small change to the RefWorks template is immediately implemented throughout your working document without the need for hours of editing and checking.

The second supporting technology that has proved very useful in the construction of this work, but one which had the capabilities of it been known at the outset could have been even more useful was the QSR NVivo package. Having never used NVivo previously, it was only adopted here based upon
recommendation of a colleague who delivered a training course on thematic evaluation mechanisms. NVivo was therefore used in this research purely as the means for encoding transcripts of interviews. However, having used the software solely for this purpose here, it became apparent that the enhanced storage and tagging capabilities of the software offer the researcher a considerable opportunity to manage research papers and identify quotations and sources of information that can be used to great effect for current and future research projects. Practice for this thesis was to download research papers and keep a local file store in folders and to highlight within papers any sections of interest that might be useful. Had the tagging capabilities of NVivo been known at the outset then this practice would have been changed to one whereby all papers were imported into NVivo, read through the NVivo interface and then pertinent sections of papers tagged and encoded. Had this been done at the outset, when a reference was needed to support a particular notion, the interface would have presented a searchable research portfolio that allowed instant recall of pertinent sections. The time saved by not having to remember which paper talked about which topic, and scrolling through sources to find the citations used would have been considerable. For all future academic reading this importing and tagging mechanism will become the *modus operandi* of the author of this work.

The second area of research practice that warrants some reflection here is in the conduct of interviews. The use of a dummy interview session with a trusted individual who fell outside of the target population was an extremely useful process to undertake. There was significant advantage here in using an individual who had recently undertaken their own research thesis and who was from a field (Sociology) which offered a different perspective and insight into the likely responses and potential interpretation of meanings that might be placed upon the questions asked. This individual gave extremely good advice on setting the scene for interviews, on how to open and close the process and most importantly aided in creating questions with a clearer focus, and that were presented in a better order than had been first proposed. The use of test
interviews, whilst initially seeming to be time consuming and non-productive has significantly enhanced the ability of the author to produce rich and meaningful insights into the values of academic staff.

Further research

Now that this work is finished there are questions that still remain that will probably form the foundations of future research. The first area of interest and an area that offers the most immediate opportunity for enhancing the research undertaken here would be to use the investigative processes conducted here to investigate other HE institutions. By replicating the research in a number of other institutions, if the findings were in line with those established at Brown University then a more generalised view of the perceptions of academic staff in UK HEIs could form the foundations for a more generalised theory of personal, departmental and institutional change.

As was discussed in the conclusions section of the analysis of findings chapter, the early messages from the recently elected Conservative government seem to be pointing to changes in the means by which UK HEIs are evaluated, and if reports of the introduction of a lighter touch QAA and the introduction of a TEF mechanism to report on the teaching quality of UK HEIs are implemented then this could further increase the market-driven nature of HE. These innovations could also prompt a significant shift in institutional values which may drive academic staff to reconsider their perceived stance of placing higher value in the academic capital of research than of teaching. Teaching could be seen to be of significantly more import in the very near future and it will be very interesting to conduct research in the next five years that tries to establish if there are indeed changes to institutional policy and academic values as a consequence.


Chester, J. and Bekhradnia, B. (2008) *Funding higher fees: Some implications of a rise in the fee cap*. HEPI.


Jacques, K. (2006a) *Global and National drivers for the standardisation of Higher Education in the UK.*


APPENDIX 1 – SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Context

Each interview was conducted using the template below as the guide for the questions asked. As each interview progressed additional probing questions were asked and clarifications sought as appropriate. The section headings identify the main area under investigation at each point.

Section 1 - Ethical information

Statements pertaining to research purpose, right to withdraw, permission to record, right to redact, methods of storage and deletion, anonymisation confirmation. Sign-off of consent forms.

Section 2 – Motivations to enter academia

Q1 What was it that brought you into academia?
Q2 Any particular reason why you are in the discipline you are?

Section 3 - Academic Values

Q1 Paint me a picture of a perfect academic
   a. Is there a department view of one?
   b. Is there an institutional view of one?
   c. What about a national view of one?
   d. Do you think any of these pictures have changed recently?

Q2 Reaction to questionnaire responses:
   a. Personal
      i. 73% Enthusiastic and Motivated
      ii. 18% Reflexive
      iii. 18% Pedagogy
   b. Educational
      i. 45% Teaching, Research, Subject Specialism
      ii. One person said Teacher training (is this in line with Institutional drivers)
   c. Least Confident
      i. 73% cited Administration does this surprise you?
      ii. Nobody cited either research or teaching in this response – what do you think that says about the role of the academic?
   d. Major Issues facing academic practice
      i. 36% Relationships with Colleagues
      ii. Most responses here were insular and antagonistic to National and Institutional drivers why do you think that is?
Section 4 - Educational context of professionalism

Q1 At an institutional level what do you think the key drivers for policy are?
   a. How do these manifest themselves?
   b. Do they reflect national drivers
   c. How are they applied at Department level?

Q2 Do you think that these fit with your own values and drivers?
   a. Is there a conflict between Department and personal values and drivers?
   b. Is there any potential conflict between Institutional and department versions of these?

Q3 Do you feel connected to your Department, Faculty, Institution, Profession?

Section 5 – Closing the loop

Q1 Do you think you will be happy to be an academic at the end of your career?
In order to preserve anonymity, the full transcripts of all interviews are not presented in this thesis. However, the following, culled in sections from different interviews, is presented to give the reader an indication of the interview style.

START INTERVIEW

Interviewer: So thanks for agreeing to do this. So let me start with a bit of a general introduction. Give me some indication of what it was that first drew you, first made you become an academic.

Respondent: Right, I didn't have a particular strong academic career in my tertiary education; I wasn't particularly inclined, in you like, academically. I was very much more practically inclined. The consequence of that was that, as soon as I possibly could, I ended up getting a job in order to get money. The job happened to be in *redacted* and my career, if you like, developed around the *redacted* industry. My first, and main job, was in *redacted*. Career-wise, I progressed through that in terms of development and promotion and what have you to a point where I was running my own subsidiary company. I enjoyed in tremendously. Technology, in the era, was still the domain of the few. Of course, it was long before PCs were ever invented. I, basically, had a great time playing with computers, getting paid shed-loads of money and I enjoyed it. There came a point in my life when doing that sort of work stopped having the fun associated with it. Primarily because the higher up the slippery ladder you go the less you're hands on and the more you are a man pushing bits of paper around and evidencing correct procedures and filling in the right bits of paper. That has never been me; I've never really enjoyed that.
Colleagues of mine who were in higher education suggested to me, “Why don't you go and qualify?” So I went back to university and I did a diploma. I then did a Masters and MSc and then I did an MBA. I remember my first day at university, I felt like I didn't really belong here; I felt in awe of these academics, these great, thinking minds until...

Interviewer: Did you have a first degree?

Respondent: No. Very quickly I realised how misguided not only I was but many of them were. They were operating on, in many instances, outdated and old-fashioned principles. I was studying management; I'd been doing management most of my adult life and the theories that they were coming up with, all I could ever do was say that they never occurred in practice. So I felt that there were – if you like, the quality of teaching was poor on that basis. I felt that as a social engagement, many of the academics that taught me were lacking; in terms of their social sensitivities, they were lacking and in terms of communicating any theories, I felt that they didn't particularly operate very well with me. I also discovered, of course, that I had the ability to learn and do academic stuff. I thought it was never really my thing. I've always been a social person, I enjoy working with people; I always have. Teaching seemed to come naturally. It came naturally whilst I was a student in as much as when we went off and did things in groups, invariably, I'd talk and all the rest of the group would be making notes. I thought, “Hang on a minute, is this a lecturing role I'm taking up?” By the time I graduated, I'd made my mind up to jump careers and that's how I got in to teaching. Teaching, I have loved all the time I've done it; never 100% happy with what I teach, the way I teach and what have you but I really enjoy that part of the job.
Interviewer: Okay, it's not one of my original tasks to do a textual analysis now but I asked you what made you become an academic. Yet, interestingly, you haven't referred to it as being an academic; you've referred to it as actual teaching and doing teaching. So do you think those two things are synonymous; academia and academic teaching?

Respondent: For me, there are two aspects to an academic. One is about imparting their knowledge, their understanding, their thoughts, if you like, to a body of students who can then reflect on that and consider that knowledge. If you like, as a vehicle to develop their own learning. Also, if you like, to be involved in developing the subject of interest that they have. I guess, you would, generically, call that research. Yes, I could go on but I don't know how much time we're going to have.

Interviewer: Okay. Let me ask you to move a little bit away from you as an individual. If I was to ask you to paint the picture of what the perfect academic would be, what they would stand for, what they would engage with, how they would act. Do you have a..?

Respondent: How they would act? Are you talking about task orientated things they would do or the way they would do things?

Interviewer: I guess, both.

Respondent: Okay. Well, things they would do would be an element of involvement in administrative duties and involvement in developing their subject of interest and an element of teaching, educating, presenting, imparting knowledge to an audience that wishes to develop their own learning.
Interviewer: Okay. I want to attempt this at three different levels, if you will permit me. So to start with, the response you've just given me is about what, if you like, your view of what the perfect academic would be. Do you think there's a department view of what an ideal or perfect academic should be?

Respondent: The department that I operate in?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Of what I perfect academic is?

Interviewer: Mhmm.

Respondent: Yes, I do. I think the department has, potentially, two views not necessarily conflicting with, maybe, an element of symbiosis involved. Maybe. I know that not just the department but the university as a while places, and has placed, a large emphasis on developing a leading edge in specialisms through research and publication. I say developing a leading edge because we talk about, if you like, internationally renowned work in a particular field. So I think that's definitely high up on the agenda. What I, certainly, think has been happening over the years that recently there's been an acknowledgement, if you like, an over-acknowledgement that teaching has a role to play. A number of times, that's been verbalised; I've yet to see it actioned but it's been verbalised. So the emphasis on teaching as well. The emphasis on teaching, I believe, doesn't come from a desire to do good teaching. It, actually, comes from a desire to give the right impression to students that what we're doing is giving them a good experience. But it's their interpretation of a good experience rather than some notion of a benchmark about good education.
So, maybe, there is a bit of conflict in that case between what the department values, if you like, or what they purport. There also seems to be a huge emphasis on administration.

Interviewer: At the department level?

Respondent: Yes, at the department level. Like I said earlier on when I talked about how I got in to and what motivated me towards higher education, I came from an industry where I had a personal secretary. I didn't, actually, know – a bit like, earlier on, when you were talking about managing your passwords. You've no idea what your passwords are; somebody manages them. I was in exactly the same situation, if she wasn't there, I couldn't find anything. I would have to ask her to find me whatever it was I wanted and once I'd finished with it, I'd give her it back and it would disappear again.

Interviewer: You don't have that now, in your current role?

Respondent: Absolutely not. I'm a very expensive administrator; very expensive administrator. It means that the proportion of those activities that I alluded to earlier on in terms of teaching and research – there are other things other than teaching and research; outreach, marketing, that are not really mentioned. There just isn't enough time in the day because admin tends to swamp – I'm busier now when I'm not teaching than when I am.

Interviewer: Okay, so I'm going to come on to admin later. If I had to go up a level and say, “Okay, we've talked about your personal view about what an academic should be and we've talked about the department view of what an academic should be. Do you think there's an institutional view about what an academic should be?
Respondent: Yes, I think there is. I think the institutional view is more removed from plausibility and reality.

Interviewer: In what way?

Respondent: Well, let me tell you what I think it is and then I'll tell you why. I think the institutional view is that someone's a perfect research and a perfect teacher. You talk to anyone who's heavily into research and they'll say, “Teaching gets in the way.” You talk to anyone who's into teaching who'd like to do research, “Can't find the time to do it.”

Interviewer: Because?

Respondent: Well, because one or other makes greater demands or, at least, that's the perception of the individual that if they're going to do good research, they need a decent amount of time.

Interviewer: So does that mean that the institutional view is that there is enough time to do both, obviously?

Respondent: Yes, it's both naïve and utopian that there is enough time for an individual to be good at doing research and good at teaching.

Interviewer: Sorry, to labour a point but that's an institutional view?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: You don't think it's the department view?

Respondent: No, not as much. No, because at the department level, there has been an acknowledgement – there has been an institutional acknowledgement in that we were given the option to, if you like,
to – what's the phrase? To pin our name on a flag and to define whether we were focused in teaching or focused in research. So at an institutional level, there was that acknowledgement. But the messages that are coming out from the institution don't support this notion that you can be one of the other. They would like both. The practicalities; my experience is that, generally speaking – and I am being very general – if you're good at research, you tend not to be very good at teaching.

Interviewer: So in your career as an academic, do you think the nature of the job has changed in your time? In recent times?

Respondent: I’d have to cast my mind back, being a researcher. I’ve been a researcher since about 2009, been involved with the department as a researcher, so not a full faculty member. Yes, in that short space I’ve seen exponential growth in the department, in terms of staff numbers, students, just general activity. There’s been a lot of changes happened in that time.

Interviewer: For the better, for the worse, or are you perfectly happy either way?

Respondent: For the better, because it seems to be - I wouldn’t say it’s a perfect distribution of who’s responsible for those activities, but there’s a lot of people involved, so that’s good. Not everybody’s going to engage with that, because not everybody’s good at doing that sort of stuff so you’ve got to understand, yes. But there’s definitely a lot more activity for the better, for the positive for the department. Yes.

Interviewer: Taking some of the questions I’ve asked, the first question I asked was around what people thought were the educational qualities or the personal qualities that were necessary to be a decent practicing academic. I’m guessing it wouldn’t surprise you that in terms of the
personal context of what people responded was pretty much enthusiasm and motivation, were the key things from personal quality. I’m guessing that that wouldn’t be a surprise to you?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Would it be a surprise to you that out of the people that responded, only one person – and these were under the same people – only one person identified an understanding of the theory of teaching? That pedagogy was involved.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: Would that surprise you that nobody got – very few people – only one person – identified that?

Respondent: I thought the department had an agenda where most people would be encouraged to do the PG – is it PGC?

Interviewer: PGCE.

Respondent: PGCE, yes. Appropriate for other students. I thought most people were going through that process or already had the training for that, so I’m surprised. I thought you would have had a higher response from that. Yes.

Interviewer: The other thing that only got one response, which again I’m asking you whether you think it’s surprising, is a reflection back on practice, that people with – only one person said, “To be a good academic, you have to be able to reflect back on what you’ve done, how you’ve done it, and how you can improve practice.” The theory of what angle in terms of academia suggests that reflection and being self-critical of practice is an important process
of being academic, but what I'm getting back is that there doesn't seem to be that much of that process going on.

Respondent: Okay, yes. So a bit of stagnation if you think like that. It means that if you are teaching and if that's your attitude where you're not reflecting on what you're doing, how people are engaging with it, what's their reaction to that, you know, actually acknowledging what the students want, what they don't want, through surveys, questionnaires, talking to them about that. If there's no changes coming out of that, then there's no reflection. It really is as simple as that.

Or there is reflection, but I'm just not going to do that. That's more what for me – there's a few strands to that that could be causing that.

Interviewer: There's all sorts of suggestions as to how reflection practice is seen as a dangerous thing, because you're identifying weaknesses and all that kind of stuff. It just struck me as interesting that nobody suggested that that was a good thing. It seems to be.

Respondent: Well, in other discipline is nothing for example. It's that core model or framework ___ reflective practicing. You have to do it and they actually have to document it in a lot of cases, like nurses that are training; that's what they have to do to make you a better nurse, essentially. That's what it's for. So maybe some people are rejecting the notion that you might not be that good at something and you have to improve.

Interviewer: The other part of this, of course, is that I could completely be misreading person saying it could be that. It could be that everybody thinks, "Well, no; it's part of the job."
I think it's also, at a basic level, some people just don’t like to be told what to do and, “You’re not very good at that, you have to improve.” So you just see it as another level of, “I don’t have to do that really if I don’t want to do it.” Or, “What I’m doing is right and they're wrong.” (Laughter)

Yes, I'm sure there’s some of that going on as well. You mentioned the PGCE; interestingly one person said that it’s part of the educational requirements to be a good academic. Only one person said a teaching qualification.

Yes, I spoke to quite a lot of people about that, going through that course here in the university and everyone said it's a good thing. It’s improved the teaching directly, and so yes, going through that course really does help you to understand how to deliver content, how to engage. In a nutshell, just help people be better at delivering teaching. Not just teaching, but workshops as well, that it’s sort of one-to-one activities or group activities, being able to facilitate that. So it’s all round, just help them through that.

I shouldn't ask this; are you doing the PGCE? Have you done it, are you going to do it?

No, no. Yes, it’s part of my personal plan, but at the minute, yes, there’s just so many things happening. But it’s not something that I'm trying to avoid, it’s something that I’m trying to fit in because I want to do it, because I’ve seen first-hand through people that I know personally that it’s been a good thing.

The next series of questions I asked were around confidence, and how confident people felt in what they did they were confident in. One of the things was which areas of your role are you least confident in? 73% of the people that responded to that question
said, yes, administration; “The administrative part of the job is an area I feel least confident.”

Respondent: Least confident and not being able to do it, or…?

Interviewer: It’s an interesting one. Maybe that’s a failing of my question when I asked which you were least confident with and most comfortable with. Only one person cited administration as being the area they were most comfortable. Most people, as you might expect, were most comfortable either in teaching or in research or in dealing with students, whatever. But in the least confident, administration was definitely by far and away the biggest majority response.

Respondent: Yes, I wouldn’t say that I’m not confident in administration, but I find it difficult to understand some of it, in terms of the way it’s written, in terms of understanding its purpose. And duplicate, because you see things that are duplicated and then you have to understand that a lot of the times we are not the driving force behind that documentation, it’s coming from somewhere else for their purposes.

Interviewer: Can you see that there is a requirement for some of the stuff that we, if you like, have to do that nobody wants to do?

Respondent: Yes, of course I do, but it’s that age-old argument where people think, “It’s not my job. I’m not going to do this.” Sometimes it is justified, but somebody has to do it. I understand it may come from central department, may come from somewhere else, but it has to be done and it just happens to be that someone’s decided that you have to do it.

Then it’s that problem, you’ve got some dissonance already there, “Why am I doing this?” and that’s going to affect your ability probably to do a good job of that, filling out that form or doing a
documentation. Then you’re going to start picking it apart and looking at it, “Well, what do they mean by that, they asked that in question four?” Yes, it is a difficult area. But I wouldn’t say it’s about confidence, it’s about understanding the bigger picture of why you’re doing it.

Interviewer: Do you think you get enough as an institution to paint that bigger picture? To make academics, everybody, aware of the fact that this is for that, this is for that, we do this because of this?

Respondent: Not a lot of it, but I would say some of it’s probably word of mouth where you know somebody that knows how to do that form, where I might look round and see that that person works in an office with me, “Have you filled one of these out before?” And if he hasn’t I’ll go and check with somebody else; “Have you filled one of these out before?” and they might tell you an anecdote or a story that goes, “Ah, I filled one of them out last year. Nightmare.” Or they might sit you down and say, “Right, this is how you do it.” Then you’ll learn and then you’re adding to their story as well. Sometimes that grip polarisation, you sit down and you say, “This is terrible,” or, “Why are we doing this?” back and forward for a while about that particular piece of work.

Interviewer: Group think around the processes for doing administration.

Respondent: Yes, it does happen, so that happens and then it’s sort of devolved to folklore when that form’s about, and then another year passes and you might have to do that form again, you’ve completely forgotten about how to do it.

Interviewer: My perspective on some of this administrative comfort, if you like, or ease in which confidence exudes itself, is largely as a consequence of the fact that some of the things that we’re asked
to do are so rare, that whenever we do them they seem to be new every time.

Respondent: But because of that it takes up an inordinate amount of your time, because you haven’t really learned how to do this. But there might be some more justification on why you had to do that, so there might be more importance on it this year whereas last year there was not. Yes, so it can create a lot of confusion around how to actually do that properly.

Interviewer: Okay. The next question I asked was to ask academics what they thought were the major issues facing academic practice at the moment. Like I said, I don’t know whether you answered the question or not. It doesn’t matter. So answer that question for me. What do you think are the major issues that you, as an academic, are currently doing?

Respondent: Institutionally?

Interviewer: If you like.

Respondent: Okay. So the major issues, I think, yes, pressures from yee on high. So further levels up saying, "Oh, our NSS isn't good enough. We haven't got enough good honours." I think being managed by spreadsheet and managed by league tables puts me under a lot of pressure. If a student doesn't write anything in an exam booklet, how can you give them a good honours for it? You can't, but we're told, "But we haven't got enough good honours." Well, students aren't writing anything in exam papers. Surely, it's the students' fault. Is it our fault? Why is our fault? That kind of thing.
So that, to me, causes a lot of problems and issues. And an area of my job that I'm bothered about the most is I can go into a classroom and give a fantastic lecture, and I can go to another classroom and give a really bad lecture. And the two cohorts of students will achieve the same in an exam. What can you do about that, if it's apathy from students, or students see university as just something they must do, because the government tells us we've got to get 80% of all people as graduates?

So yes, I think at the minute, the worst part is this whole obviously, we're doing something wrong as academics, because our NSS isn't good enough. That, for me, is a major problem. And then, obviously, there are all the, "You must bring in this much research money. You must bring in that much research money every year," but not given the tools and resources to do that.

So for example, a lot of research money now, from Horizon 2020, for example, is going to consortiums, right? You've got to join up with other institutions, other universities, in order to bid for money to get a large amount of money, because it's not like £5,000, £50,000 there; it's all £2.5m for this project. And the only way to do that is to go to conferences and go to network meetings where other academics are going to be, to meet people, to discuss with people. And the institution doesn't provide support do that. I know it costs money, but you've got to speculate to accumulate.

And you to Head of department, who's obviously under financial pressure, and say, "There's a conference here I'd like to go to," or a network meeting, it's, "Well, we've got no money." So you're expected to pay for that out of your own research money, but you can't get research money because you haven't got those connections. It's a difficult one.
So the two areas; one is being expected to perform, and get all this money in. So the people who are getting money in in this department at the minute are people who have longstanding careers, who have had the ability to go off and do all this networking, because money was better, grants were easier to come by 10, 15 years ago.

So I think the thing is the department and the institution needs to speculate to accumulate. It needs to say, "Right, here's £1m put aside. Every academic can go to an international or a national conference once a year, providing they've submitted a paper and had a paper accepted," which they don't do. Because that would allow networking, allow people to meet people, allow people to find out what's going on.

So there's that, and this whole our NSS is bad; it's obviously the academics' fault. It's never the students' fault, because the students are paying their £9,000. It's the academics' fault. That's by our NSS is bad. So yes, there are lot of areas, I think, under pressures, and are bad.

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Interviewer: My next question was a kind of big but it was also very open. The question was, what do you think are the major issues facing academics now? I am intrigued to get your perspective on that. What are the things, the big ticket items?

Respondent: I think being in REF is really key for a lot of people. That is an artificial thing that has been imposed on us that is important in the UK context. I think internationally speaking now there is more emphasis again on metrics and things being quantified and measured. One
thing that people see as a measure of success in their research is the extent to which their work is cited by other people and there are metrics for that.

What is your h-index? That seems to be a key indicator now. So try and get recognition outside of your own immediate area. To get your research recognised internationally by others I think that is one of the pressures, one of the main issues.

Ultimately I guess it is survival. If you give people... 1980’s people would get lifelong contracts and not be able to be sacked. I think that is human nature in all walks of life. If you in a position that is totally secure it isn’t as motivating as when you have some threat of losing your position. I think this is a characteristic, although we have a permanent position it is not tenure in the old sense that you have got a job for life. There is pressure to achieve all these things and if you don’t achieve them... Just survival is big. It depends on a lot of these things being able to keep publishing, being able to hit all these agendas.

Interviewer: Survival is an interesting word. I understand it and I am with you on the fact that tenure doesn’t exist anymore. That there are pressures on departments, institutions and individuals to be able to perform and be able to do things. Do you think the view of what is important in terms of major issues is directed nations, institutions, government and university or do you think you do have some control over which bits of what they are interested in you can control? You said you can pick the academic you want to be. Does that mean therefore that you effectively subscribe to the requirements for survival in that particular area?

Respondent: Yes, to be good at something you need to be doing more than survive, you need to excel in it. I am quite driven by the research side
of things so I have put a large amount of effort into trying to be really
good at that. I know that means in turn I enjoy and I see teaching as
being the central part of my role but I don’t want to do too much of it.
For me, by focusing on this one aspect it has allowed me to have a
profile where I spend more time doing that in the end. By specialising
in something I think I have a certain amount of control in that sense
about the overall profile of what I do.

Interviewer: So the thing that you do and the way that you manage what you do
in terms of research is where you effectively get value from the
institution. I don’t want to say it is a protection mechanism but maybe
it is a protection mechanism. You are useful at the research, you are
good at the research and you have values at the institution in terms
of research. Maybe the notion of your perfect job is that the bit which
gives you the value in the institution is the bit that you like doing.

Respondent: Yes, absolutely.

Interviewer: One thing that did come out when I asked that question in terms of
the questionnaire. One thing that did interest me was quite a lot of
people cited… When I asked for major issues you were very clear,
international requirement with regards to institutional requirements
and with regards to the way that you paint your research. The way
that it is measured, the way that you make yourself valued to the
institution.

Quite a lot of the responses I got were not necessarily about issues
that face education, they were issues that face individuals. Now
maybe that is a natural thing to do is when you are asked, “What are
the major issues at the moment?” You start to be very insular. Yours
was less insular than most people’s responses.
Respondent: One thing that does worry me is this whole fees regime that it is now £9000 a year for students to go to university. This is a threat to us. I certainly worry about a lot of the students whether they are going to get that level of benefit from doing a degree. £50,000 worth of debt, leaving school and coming straight to university at 18 is that really knowing what you want to do and effectively saddling yourself with a mortgage before you have even started.

Interviewer: So what do you think are the things that the university's trying to achieve?

Respondent: I think it's improving the quality of research done at the institution. Well, I think you could then argue definitely, as an institution, there is this aspiration to be a Top 40 institution. But I think this is just looking at the league tables, I think this is more to get – how to say? Climbing up the league tables, I don't see this as the aspirational level because this contains all spectrums related to research, teaching and so on.

If we take it as a measure of the quality; so improving quality of research and teaching, I think, let's state it like that. I think it's pretty standard.

Interviewer: It is but the thing that seems to be the case from what people have been telling me is that this view that the institution has got this drive, as you quite rightly say, Top 40 institution is that what they're doing in terms of directing policy, in terms of directing practice, is to address the things that improve league position. Which, effectively, means things like better KIS data, better NSS response, better REF response.

Practice of the management of academics is driven by improving those performance criteria, is a perspective. That what
management are doing is directing everything towards, “Right, how do we get the REF up, how do we get the NSS up, how do we improve our grant application funding blah, blah, blah?”

Respondent: So there isn't really a vision in the sense of – I would say I would see a vision more like having the idea of what [Brown University] should be like because every institution probably does the same. You look at these different criteria but then you think it's almost like a student preparing for the exams. So they learn how to answer the exams but it's not to pursue the knowledge, the main goal. I think, probably, with [Brown University] it's the same. Well, university that the clear vision should be, “Which area we target? What's our locality? What are the businesses? What's the profile of the county?” How you develop in that direction because...

Interviewer: So are you saying that what you would rather see is that we had a management structure or strategic view that said, “Promote the [Brown University] way of being” rather than, “Do everything we can to go up the greasy pole”, so to speak?

Respondent: Well, I think both; you need to climb up the greasy poles as well a little bit. That should be definitely a way of addressing the issues, the red squares in the responses, yes? But, in a sense, I think vision – if you just concentrate on that you might lose, actually, the important things. If you want to be Top 40, or Top 30 and you want to be there forever or to retain that, you have to have something that makes you stand out.

This vision is about having some clear profile. It could be either discipline or the way we do – I think this is more important than...

Interviewer: Do you feel that your performance is measured or evaluated against things that are driven by Top 40 league placings?
Respondent: In some sense, yes, because like this REF stuff, it's definitely a way to measure your academic performance. I think maybe on the teaching side – well, there is this review of modules, maybe, it's not measured and then said, “You'll get less salary or you'll be fired.” But at the same time, it's done in such a way that you wouldn't like to get the low response in your modules that you deliver. I think it's – what to say? I think it's measured but it's presented in a way that's to encourage you to better, yes.

Interviewer: The next question I asked was, “What do you think are the major issues facing academic practice?”

Respondent: To me I think the big thing at the moment is just not being given enough time to read. (Laughter) At the core of everything we do is knowing stuff and keeping up with your discipline, about what's going on.

Not even your own discipline. I think at the moment, the way things are going, the grants come, and the big papers come, out of interdisciplinary research.

So it's a massive benefit being able to put some time aside to go and read something completely different, and try and draw something...

Whereas I think the university – I suppose it's the same for the entire sector. Because they try to account for all our time, so therefore where do you get the time to go and do something crazy, like go and read some philosophy books or whatever?
To me that’s core to the profession, and to drive things forward for your own career, to get in those really good papers, and getting the grants in, but it’s not in any way acknowledged.

Interviewer: Do you think that the university, the department, even the profession, doesn’t value that? Or do you think it’s just a natural progression to the way that things drive the...?

Respondent: Well, I think it’s just because it’s very hard to see. It’s hard to know whether somebody has spent five years studying Proust for some reason. (Laughter) Because the payoff is so delayed, I suppose. Because there’s a lot more management going into universities now than there used to be, so there’s all these managers whose job it is to check whether people are doing things or not. So you need to quantify things, don’t you? It’s that drive to quantify everything.

It looks like there are big gaps in what we’re doing, but actually we are filling it with academic stuff. It’s just very hard to explain to a manager what we’re doing, I suppose. (Laughter) I think that’s the biggest challenge.

This job really is about being an expert, and the reason why we have academics, I think, is that there’s people who are willing to spend absolutely ages being really pedantic about studying things that no-one else is willing to do, and to then act as the expert, to kind of filter that and tell everyone else.

But if we’re not given time to do those things then I think you’re not really useful. You’re not really doing what you’re supposed to for society.
The responses of the questionnaire, most of the responses were, as I guess you would expect, largely insular. They were about how things impact upon individual practice. I didn’t say, “What are your major issues?” I said, “What are the major issues in academia?” But I can sort of understand why they’ve become insular.

But quite a lot were antagonistic to exactly the thing you just talked about, which is quantification of everything, managerialism, managing things by spreadsheet.

There are quite a lot of comments around the issues relating to ticking boxes. That was a comment that came quite regularly. Do you think that happens too much? Do you think there is too much of that?

Yes. Well, I can understand this. People are trying to get value for money, at a higher up level in the university, [they say] “Oh, that person should be writing three grants here rather than one.”

And yet, because it’s so unlikely to get funded anyway, you’re actually probably better off writing the one for the entire practice.

Bigger numbers don’t necessarily mean better in a job that’s all about quality rather than quantity. If your job is to be an expert, to know things better than other people, not to know more stuff, or to have more grants, or have more students or whatever.

So do you feel like you as an individual are measured, targeted, things are quantified about your practice that you don’t feel comfortable with?

Well, I don’t know. I kind of understand. I suppose it’s the curse of being a psychologist. (Laughter)

So you know why it’s happening?
Respondent: Yes. I understand where they’re coming from. But also I suppose it’s a shame that the academics can’t have more of a say. You think that Academic Board should be stronger or whatever. There should be more input from the academics in the direction the university is going. Because there doesn’t seem to be that much influence from us. I think we’re treated like employees rather than experts.

There are lots of things that the universities do that are really funny. Say like they have experts in a discipline, and then they hire in consultants and do something that the experts know is wrong. Because the consultants are people who have just got a degree, and just get paid to be consultants or whatever, and just roll out whatever is the cheapest quote or whatever.

Whereas people in the university, who are absolutely experts that devote their life to studying a thing, “If you just asked us we could have told you how to do it properly.” (Laughter) There’s a lot of that as well.

I suppose they don’t really value us as experts. They kind of see us as employees that generate money, and do jobs for them, and tick boxes. There probably is a lack of seeing us as academics in that way. I don’t know. But yes, I suppose that probably explains a bit of it as well.

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Interviewer: My second to last question was whether or not, you said the word which was quite interesting, which is do you feel connected? Do you feel connected to the department? Do you feel connected to the institution? Then I was going to go further and say do you feel connected to the profession and the community. I think to a certain degree you’ve just answered that, you do feel connected.
Respondent: Yes, to all those things I think. I think you have to work at that. I don’t think you can sit at your own desk. A lot of that comes naturally. I think you have to go out and sit on committees and things like that to know more about the institution.

You’ll do this, so you’ll do appraisals each year for people and every year I say to the people who I do the appraisal for, I say, “Okay, that’s your research and teaching, what else are you doing?” 9 times out of 10 it’s just a total blank look, even though every year I say, “Well if you’re looking for a promotion then if you haven’t got that third thing, then you’re stuffed”.

Every year it’s the same answer, “Well I won’t even know what to do. What do you mean?” In fact there’s no easy answer to that - what do you mean? It is like, “You need to be part of the bigger community and take a bigger picture sometimes. That does mean doing stuff that you don’t necessarily get any credit for”. Eventually you can cash it in in terms of promotion and so on. For your own personal development and, as you say, feeling part of that community, I think it’s essential.

Interviewer: Do you think you can be a successful academic career wise and be unconnected, be that insular? Do you think it’s possible? Do you think it’s healthy?

Respondent: Successful do you mean?

Interviewer: What do you mean by successful?

Respondent: I think it’s very difficult. I don’t know how you would do that.
Interviewer: What you’ve just said in terms of appraisal seems to suggest that the level of understanding of some of our own colleagues around that is poor.

Respondent: Yes, I think it’s a problem.

Interviewer: How do we educate academics to value that engagement with the institution and the improvement of the general community? Is it you just keep waving the carrot and say if you want a promotion this is…?

Respondent: Yes, clearly that’s not working, is it I don’t think? It needs to be woven somehow. I think there’s a problem as well in that people see that stuff as administration.

Interviewer: Yes, and I think that’s definitely the case.

Respondent: Why would I want to do that when I can spend all my time on my research? Yes, it is tricky. Also as a relatively early careers academic, you’re sitting on those kinds of committees, I think it’s difficult to feel anything other than a fly on the wall I suppose in those settings. You’re very reluctant to say anything.

Interviewer: Yes, it takes a fair amount of confidence to engage in some of these committees.

Respondent: You’re very reluctant to comment on some of the stuff that’s passed around. It’s only that I’ve been to those things and sat there for three hours, not said a word and come out again. They probably feel they don’t get anything out of that. I think you do get stuff out of that, even though you feel as though you’re not saying anything. Just talking to even the odd person over their coffee beforehand and stuff I think is worthwhile.
Interviewer: Do you think the institution does actually, in reality, value that aspect of the connectedness of the role?

Respondent: The institution does?

Interviewer: Well, what we’re basically saying there is that the best way to get people involved in that sort of community level engagement is to wave the carrot. If the carrot is palpable and tangible and you can see if I do this, this and this, there’s more chance of me – I mean what it actually needs as a back of that is the institution’s promotion policy to reflect that. Do you think it does?

Respondent: I think when it comes to your interview for promotion I think that stuff is looked at. If you haven’t got that then it is a big hole in your profile. Certainly through that process I think it does value that. There are only so many of those roles to go around. Not everybody can go and sit on an academic board, so the question is what else to do.

Occasionally the university will run these programmes or focus groups to look at the strategic direction of the institution. People don’t engage well with those kinds of things either. It’s a good one, yes. I don’t know.

Interviewer: Okay. I’m conscious you need to be away by 2:00pm so last question. This might sound like an odd question but I don’t know when it’s going to be, I’m not suggesting it will be soon, I’m not suggesting it will be millions of years ahead but ultimately, do you think you’ll be happy, and I do mean the word happy, to be an academic for the rest of your career?

Respondent: Yes, I think so.
Interviewer: You don’t think there are dark clouds on the horizon that are going to make you do the same as you did with industry, think this is not for me?

Respondent: No, not at all. I don’t think I would cope in the real world again. Yes, I can’t see myself doing anything else unless there’s some kind of catastrophe in the entire sector.

Interviewer: Is that a utilitarian thing, I can’t see myself doing anything else because I can’t do anything else? Is that self-deprecating or is it I can’t see myself doing anything else because I like doing what I’m doing?

Respondent: I think it’s probably both. I don’t think I could cope with working for a corporation say, for a large organisation. I don’t think my working lifestyle fits in with that anymore. I think I’d find that too difficult to change. Whether I’d fit in in a more agile tech sector-y type place, maybe, but there’s too many risks there. I’m not one for taking massive personal, financial risks.

Well, there are lots of nice things about academia. It’s pretty secure compared to most other jobs. It is relatively easy to move about every, what, 130 universities in the UK now. Worst case scenario the university goes tits up. It’s not on that trajectory by any means, but 10 years ago when I started its success wasn’t guaranteed. The nice thing about academia is you can move around as well. It’s a big juicy thing that’s going to keep me sustained as long as you want really, I think. I can’t see myself doing anything else.

END INTERVIEW
ETHICAL PROCEDURES FOR RESEARCH AND TEACHING
IN THE
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

FORMAL NOTIFICATION OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Reference Number: PGR 14/15-228
Name: Kevin Jacques
Programme of Study: EdD Dr of Education
Research Area/Title: To what extent are selected professional values in one
department of a higher education institution compatible
with current pressures: the perceptions of academic staff.
Image Permission Form: not applicable
Name of Supervisor: Prof Mike Bottery
Date Approved by Supervisor: 31/03/15
Date Approved by Ethics Committee: 12/08/15

Faculty of Education Ethics Committee 14-15/1