The
Higher
Education
Academy

# Reward and recognition of teaching in higher education

A collaborative investigation

Interim report

The Higher Education Academy and
GENIE Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning,
University of Leicester

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# Contents

# Preface

High quality, inspiring teaching is the lifeblood of higher education and the student experience. A major role for the Higher Education Academy is to raise the status of teaching in higher education. We intend to do this by applying an evidence-based understanding of factors associated with the recognition and reward of teaching as a fundamental component of academic work.

This report is the first of two derived from an investigation which we carried out jointly with the GENIE Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at the University of Leicester.

The project examined UK higher education institutions' policies for recognising teaching and how these policies are being implemented. It also looked at the extent to which academic staff believe that their institutions recognise and reward teaching effectively; into staff perceptions of the relative value of a number of national initiatives as a means of raising the esteem in which teaching is held; and into academics' views about how teaching might be more effectively recognised and rewarded.

This part of the report focuses on academic staff perceptions. Its conclusions are preliminary. Part 2, to be published subsequently, will examine institutional policies and practices and draw conclusions based on the results of the entire study. It will compare academic staff perceptions with the policies and practices articulated by higher education institutions. It will also present proposals for how the findings of the investigation might be addressed by institutions, agencies and funding bodies.

I would like to acknowledge Malgorzata Kulej, Adam Child, Dr Sean Walton and Rachel Segal at the Academy, and Professor Annette Cashmore and Dr Jon Scott at the University of Leicester for their work on this report. I would also like to thank all those who took part in the survey.

*Paul Ramsden*
*January 2009*

# 1.  Introduction and background

Higher education in the United Kingdom is widely acknowledged to be excellent. It produces well-trained graduates who are highly employable. They are valued both for their knowledge and for their capacity to think independently and solve new problems.

These outcomes reflect the exceptional quality of teaching in UK higher education. Over eight out of ten undergraduate and postgraduate students are satisfied overall or describe their experience as having met or exceeded their expectations. There is a keenness to innovate in all aspects of the student experience among many UK academics, and there is an inquisitiveness about better teaching that is most likely related to the long-established idea that university teaching should be associated with research in the disciplines. Teaching would seem to be held in high regard across the higher education system's academic staff – and by the universities and colleges that employ them.

Such an interpretation would be consistent with the relatively recent ascent of research as a central function of higher education institutions and with the assertion by Philip Altbach that 'The defining characteristic of the academic profession is teaching. From the beginning, professors have taught' (Altbach, 1991).

Nevertheless, it has been argued for some time that the teaching function in higher education, both in the UK and overseas, has become unrecognised and unrewarded in comparison with research. Research tends to dominate teaching in international league tables and to be perceived as a principal source of individual academic status. Fairweather found that research performance had become the dominant predictor of faculty pay in the USA, while Court identified a uniform, two-tier career structure in academia that transcended the supposed diversity of individual preferences and disciplinary backgrounds (Fairweather, 1996, 2005; Becher 2001; Court 1998, 1999; Gibbs and Habeshaw, 2003; Palmer and Collins 2006; Greenbank 2006; Ramsden and Martin, 1996).

The Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997) is widely recognised as an important starting point in the UK government's long-term attempts to re-assert and focus attention on the nature and quality of teaching and learning in higher education. Subsequently, the government published a white paper called *The Future of Higher Education* (2003). It was in part an expression of the government's commitment to supporting and improving standards of teaching in higher education institutions. It was also an attempt to redress the balance of reward and recognition between research and teaching activity. It promised to promote good teaching and those who provided it:

> *Teaching and learning are central to the purpose of higher education. We are committed to understanding better where and how good teaching and learning take place and to take steps to ensure that standards are high and continually improved, and that best practice is effectively shared. All students are entitled to high quality teaching, and to the best possible information to help them make the right choices about what to study and where. And those who teach well are entitled to have their success rewarded properly.[1]*

And it asserted that teaching was not properly recognised by universities and colleges:

> *In the past, rewards in higher education – particularly promotion – have been linked much more closely to research than to teaching. Indeed, teaching has been seen by some as an extra source of income to support the main business of research, rather than recognised as a valuable and high-status career in its own right. This is a situation that cannot continue. Institutions must properly reward their best teaching staff; and all those who teach must take their task seriously.[2]*

*The Future of Higher Education* presents an outline of the measures that the government will implement to ensure that teaching standards are improved and that teachers receive adequate reward:

> *To underpin reform, we will support improvements in teaching quality in all institutions. Additional money for pay will be conditional on higher education institutions having human resource strategies that explicitly value teaching and reward and promote good teachers.[3]*

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1        DfES (2003), p 46.

2        DfES (2003) p 51.

3        DfES (2003) p 46.

Since 2003, unprecedented levels of resource have been deployed to raise the status of university teaching as a profession and to provide reward mechanisms for those who engage in it. Examples include the creation (in 2004) of the Higher Education Academy and HEFCE's Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) initiative (2005), the single largest teaching enhancement initiative ever implemented in England and Northern Ireland.

The present report focuses on academic staff perceptions. The questions addressed are the extent to which academic staff believe that their institutions recognise and reward teaching effectively; their perceptions of the relative value of a number of national initiatives as a means of raising the esteem in which teaching is held; and their views about how teaching might be more effectively recognised and rewarded. A second report, to be published subsequently, will examine higher education institutions' policies for recognising teaching and how they are being implemented.


## Earlier international studies

Comprehensive international studies of the reward and recognition of university teaching include a detailed study in Australia conducted by a team including the author of the present report (see Ramsden, Margetson, Martin and Clarke (1995); Ramsden (1995); Ramsden and Martin (1996)). It examined Australian universities' processes for rewarding and recognising good teaching and collected staff opinions about how well it was rewarded and recognised.

The methodology used in the Australian project comprised:

—  a survey of institutions (replies were received from 32 universities) focusing on existing policies and practices

—  a literature review

—  consultation with academic staff (via a survey and case studies) on tentative proposals made for recognising and rewarding good teaching across the university system, based on existing models of good teaching and ways of recognising it

—  a comparison of the findings from the case studies, staff and institutional surveys with original tentative proposals about how to recognise and reward good teaching

—        a revision of the tentative proposals in light of the above comparison

—        final recommendations for implementation and dissemination of findings.

The Australian research revealed a difference between what university policies said about rewarding and recognise teaching and what actually happened within universities. It also showed that teaching was not accorded the status that academics think it should be. Ramsden says:

> The results of this study demonstrate two important discrepancies: between what universities and their senior managers say they do to recognise good teaching, and what the staff themselves perceive they do; and between the value that staff would like teaching to be accorded, and the value which they believe that it is in fact accorded. The general picture is of a higher education system that is making progress towards greater recognition of teaching but whose component institutions have yet to develop a comprehensive approach, consistent with best practice, to reward their academic staff.[4]

Respondents to the Australian survey were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt research and teaching *were valued* and *should be valued* in their universities. The size of the gap between the extent to which staff believe teaching (and research) is and should be valued can be interpreted as an indication of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with current arrangements for recognising teaching (and research). Some 90% of staff said that research should be highly valued by their university; and 84% agreed that it was highly valued. By contrast, while 95% said that teaching should be highly valued, only 37% agreed that it was.

The Australian research suggested that higher education institutions did not recognise and reward teaching as consistently or as often as research. The following principles were specified as the basis for successful schemes seeking to reward and recognise teaching (Ramsden, 1995):

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4        Ramsden (1995) p 14.

—    the gap between senior management policy and employee perceptions should be narrowed. Demonstrating support for teaching staff and action by senior staff are more important than rhetoric about rewarding university teaching

—    use rewards for teaching that academics understand. Promotions and confirmation of appointment are the most important aspects of reward. Teaching awards and similar reward schemes are of minimal significance when compared with appointment and promotion

—    a definition of good teaching should be in place. Many institutions still do not provide a definition of what good university teaching consists of. More valid methods of assessing teaching should be used. Describing teaching achievements and assessing them fairly typically involves more time and preparation than is recognised by universities

—    prepare committees properly. Members of decision making committees on teaching should be properly trained

—    make university teaching a profession. Making a university teaching qualification a prerequisite for tenure and promotion is the single most effective method of signalling to staff the seriousness with which a university treats the profession of teaching

—    embed the evaluation of teaching in everyday academic work

—    "Go with the flow". Credible and effective methods for rewarding and recognising teaching will reflect and build upon existing academic values. Teaching should not be put into a destructive competition with research.[5]

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5    This recommendation is borne out by independent research findings (see Elan, Lindblom-Ylanne, and Clement, 2007) which indicated that academics in research intensive universities regarded engagement with research to be an essential component of being a good university teacher.

— the intrinsic rewards of teaching should not be overlooked. Rewards alone are not enough to promote good teaching. The correct institutional conditions need to be in place for best teaching practice to be shared.

— leadership for good teaching should be strengthened. Good leadership at every level should be exercised to support the reward and recognition of teaching activities.

— universities should be transformed into learning organisations. Staff at all levels should be collectively and continually improving their ability to produce valued outcomes and to adapt quickly to new demands.

— good teaching should be treated as a collective as well as individual responsibility

— use quality management levers to speed progress. The Australian study showed that coherence between a university's mission, its quality management process, and its strategies for recognising and rewarding good teaching was not always apparent. Formal monitoring of reward and recognition for good teaching practice via an institution's quality assurance processes is essential.

Ramsden *et al* (1995) suggested that universities which did not adopt these recommendations risked compromising their competitive edge and ultimately jeopardising their survival.

An influential North American study (Fairweather, 1996) concurred with many of the findings of the Australian work. Fairweather found that faculty pay, career structures, and status were heavily weighted in favour of academic staff who focused on research rather than teaching. He says:

> *Research, especially scholarly productivity, is very highly valued in pay for faculty in 4-year colleges and universities. Regardless of institutional type or mission and irrespective of program area, faculty who spend more time on research and who publish the most are paid more than their teaching-oriented colleagues…*

> *Teaching is either a negative factor in pay…or a neutral factor.[6]*

Furthermore, what is also similar to the Australian study is Fairweather's finding that there is a discrepancy between how academic departments say they will reward teaching activity and what actually happens:

> *Research and scholarship are more highly valued activities in all types of institutions. Pay, which in part reflects administrative values about faculty activities, does not follow the stated values placed on teaching by department chairs.[7]*

Fairweather concludes that the dominant academic culture in North American universities is responsible for the continued valuing of research above teaching and that this will make any kind of reform difficult:

> *Perhaps most ominous for proponents of a renewed investment in teaching, research norms are reinforced early in the faculty career through compensation. Assistant professors in each type of institution except doctoral-granting are encouraged to publish, teach graduate students, and generally spend as little time teaching as possible. In this context even modest attempts to revitalize undergraduate education by restoring some balance between teaching and research directly confront entrenched faculty reward structures which view research and publishing as the principal activity by which faculty should be judged.[8]*

In later articles, Fairweather maintained that pay and promotion were the most effective methods of rewarding and recognising teaching in North American universities but reported little or no change in institutional culture or policy towards recognising teaching (see Fairweather 2002 and 2005).

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6       Fairweather (1995) pp 67–68.

7       Fairweather (1995) p 69.

8       Fairweather (1995) p 69.

## UK investigations

Research into rewarding and recognising teaching was conducted immediately prior to the release of the 2003 white paper (Gibbs and Habeshaw, 2002). It was updated in 2003, following the publication of the white paper and HEFCE's strategic plan.

The Gibbs and Habeshaw report provides a useful synopsis of the extent and nature of reward and recognition practices in place in UK HEIs prior to the release of the white paper. Citing the institutional strand of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) as the major driving force for the introduction of institutional mechanisms to rewarding and recognising excellent teachers, Gibbs and Habeshaw (2003) reported a general increase in institutional practices for rewarding teaching between 1994 and 2000.

For example, in 1994, institutions reported (on average) making only 12% of promotion decisions primarily on the grounds of teaching excellence. Thirty-eight percent of institutions reported making no such promotions (Gibbs and Habeshaw, 2003). The report went on to describe how things had gradually changed:

> *Since then [1994] the picture has changed. The proportion of institutions including recognition and reward mechanisms in their learning and teaching strategy increased from 12% in 1998 to 65% in 2000 … and developments have been rapid and varied.*[9]

However, in other areas relevant to the recognition and reward of teaching in universities, there was yet to be any significant change. In 2001, institutions' human resource development strategies did not display significant evidence of reward mechanisms for excellent teaching. This was true even when such mechanisms were alluded to in the institution's learning and teaching strategy. Gibbs and Habeshaw report that:

> *At present [human resource development strategies] appear to be operating in parallel, rather than in synergy, with teaching improvement strategies.*[10]

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9        Gibbs and Habeshaw, 2003, p 1.

10       Gibbs and Habeshaw, 2003, p 1.

The Gibbs and Habeshaw research concurred with the conclusions of Ramsden *et al.*, arguing that the importance of promotion for good teaching was critical if the status of teaching were to be raised in universities. They say:

> … [T]he higher education sector must consider, not only how to reward excellence, but more generally how teaching is taken into account in promotion policies.[11]

Gibbs and Habeshaw found that institutions which led the way in rewarding and recognising teaching activity went beyond making adjustments to the existing career structure. They were also committed to:

—    taking teaching competence and potential into account at appointment

—    having tougher requirements for evidence of teaching competence at probation

—    introducing new, teaching focused career progression opportunities, particularly at senior level, that emphasised teaching achievements (Gibbs and Habeshaw, 2003).

Gibbs and Habeshaw maintained that some attempts to provide recognition for teaching within universities had had a detrimental effect. In particular, the introduction of teaching only posts such as "Teaching Fellow" might serve only to lower the status of teaching:

> … [T]hese [teaching only posts] almost always involve lower pay, poorer conditions of service and fixed term contracts and therefore have much lower status. Such teaching only posts probably achieve the opposite of what recognition and reward schemes achieve. Academics are likely to orient their behaviour so as to avoid the possibility of a career stuck in

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11          Gibbs and Habeshaw, 2004, p ii.

*such inferior posts, by emphasising their research rather than
their teaching.*[12]

Gibbs and Habeshaw's findings are consistent with those from earlier studies (see Court, 1998 and 1999) which found that many university staff felt that the emphasis on research and publication in determining career prospects was excessive.

The general conclusion from the Gibbs and Habeshaw research (again, in a similar vein to the research conducted by Ramsden *et al.*) was that there had been improvements in institutional policies and practices for rewarding and recognising teaching, but that the improvements had been inconsistent across institutions and would benefit from greater embedding within everyday practice and the sharing of good practice.

More recent studies have argued that the perceived status of teaching as a component of academic work does not appear to have increased significantly and remains lower than the status accorded to research (see Young, 2006). Young points out that the issue of reward and recognition for teaching provoked more emotion and consensus than other questions put forward in interviews. Thirty-four of the 46 interviewees felt, unequivocally, that their institution did not reward effort for teaching (Young, 2006). Interviewees were sceptical of the effectiveness or even relevance of promotional routes that centred on or included teaching excellence. One interviewee in an 'old university' said that an academic who was a great researcher but a moderate teacher would be promoted much quicker than a colleague who was a great teacher but a moderate researcher. Some interviewees similarly suggested that where teaching was one of various criteria for promotion, 'teaching competence was only required to reach a minimum acceptable level'.

Promotion to senior academic positions is still weighted in favour of academics who focus on research over teaching activities, according to Parker (2008). However, the research by Parker demonstrates that there has been some movement towards recognising teaching excellence in formal career progression. Universities have, by and large, adopted 'formal parity' in promotional criteria (research and teaching weighted equally) for promotion to senior and principal lecturer. However, Parker found that senior academic positions were reserved for the more research-active academic staff and that post-1992 universities were more likely to recognise research and teaching uniformly.

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12          Gibbs and Habeshaw, 2004, p 2.

The principal conclusion from these various studies is that some progress towards the formal recognition and reward of teaching as a component of the academic work of individuals appears to have taken place, most notably at more junior levels of appointment.

However, there still appears be a discrepancy in staff perceptions of the extent to which teaching, compared with research, is and should be rewarded – a substantial gap between formal processes and institutional rhetoric, on the one hand, and staff experiences, on the other. It is also unclear whether academics believe that the various national initiatives which have been put in place over the last ten years have had an impact on raising the esteem of teaching.

The Higher Education Academy is committed to developing a clearer understanding of policy, practice and perceptions concerning the reward and recognition of teaching in higher education. This report provides part of the evidence base for this understanding, and for subsequent actions to improve the status of higher education teaching as part of our responsibility to enhance the quality of the student experience.

# 2.        Methods

The project used a number of different approaches to collecting information.

## Previous research

A thorough search of existing literature on the reward and recognition of teaching staff in higher education institutions was conducted. The literature examined included policy documents, 'grey' literature, and peer-reviewed journal articles.

## Promotion policies and their implementation[13]

Data on the promotion policies of HEIs were obtained in two ways. Where available, information was taken from university websites. When the information did not appear on websites, we requested it from university human resource departments. In this way, the promotion policies of 104 institutions were collected: twenty-two pre-92 universities; 46 post-92 universities; 19 Russell Group universities; and 17 1994 Group universities.

Data about the implementation of promotional policies (i.e. numbers of academics promoted according to which criteria) were also obtained through university websites and through requests to human resource departments. Only one institution had such data available on its website. In some cases, the information was ambiguous; in others, the information did not appear to be collected by the institution.

In total, data about the implementation of promotional policies were collected from 46 institutions: eleven pre-92 universities; 26 post-92 universities; five Russell Group universities; and four 1994 Group universities.

An account of the results of the survey of promotion policies and their implementation will appear in part 2 of this report.

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13          This part of the study was undertaken by the GENIE CETL at the University of Leicester.

## Online survey of academics

A questionnaire based on previous surveys (especially the one by Ramsden *et al*, 1995) was developed and tested with a small number of respondents. Comments were sought from academic staff about the nature and structure of the questionnaire. Modifications were made to the questionnaire in light of these comments and initial responses.

The final questionnaire was delivered as an online survey distributed to HEI staff involved in teaching who appeared in the Higher Education Academy's database – an email with the survey link was sent to approximately 26,000 contacts. The survey was administered between 4 March 2008 and 16 of May 2008 and during this time 2,768 replies were received (a response rate of about 11%).

It is important to be aware that the sample of 26,000 (unlike that in Ramsden *et al*, 1995) was not drawn from the population in a controlled way. It was essentially an opportunity sample. Nor do we have any check on whether the respondents are representative of the whole sample. The results may reflect the views of staff who have had some contact with and interest in the Higher Education Academy rather than the views of UK academics as a whole.

In an attempt to gauge the extent to which the replies reflect the population of UK academics, we mapped selected demographic variables against HESA data. The survey respondents were broadly representative of the four nations and the discipline groups (except Medicine and Dentistry, which is moderately underrepresented in the responses). Females were slightly overrepresented (49% versus 42% nationally) and full-time academics were very overrepresented (85% versus 67% nationally).

Academics from pre-92 institutions were moderately underrepresented (42% versus 59% nationally) - in particular academics from the Russell Group HEIs (21% versus 32% nationally). Academics from 94 Group HEIs are fully represented in the sample. Similarly, academics from new institutions are overrepresented (48% versus 35% nationally). It is essential to bear in mind these sample limitations when looking at the survey results, and because of the underrepresentation of older universities we have reported most of the results by type of institution.

Respondents were asked questions about institutional learning and teaching initiatives, whether they were aware of them, had an experience with them and what impact they may have on raising the esteem of learning and teaching. They were also asked to express their opinion on how important research, teaching and course administration is and should be in recruitment and promotion in their institutions. The questionnaire also included questions on national learning and teaching initiatives like CETLs, NTFS and the

Higher Education Academy and questions on criteria used for assessing teaching.

Respondents were also invited to add open comments. A full list of responses to the open questions, sorted by theme, is available on request.

## Academics' perceptions: interview data

We carried out a series of interviews in order to collect further information about academics' perceptions of university policy, national and local initiatives, and more general attitudes to teaching as an academic activity. Initial interviewees were suggested by senior advisers at the Higher Education Academy. After contact was made with this first tier of interviewees, respondents suggested additional colleagues as other possible interviewees. Using this method, 31 interviews were conducted in total.

The sample contained members of academic staff from all levels of the career ladder, from teaching fellow to professor. The sample included one vice-principal, two heads of department, one head of postgraduate studies, and a director of educational development. Of the 31 academics interviewed 15 were female. The respondents came from institutions in England and Scotland.

A semi-structured questionnaire was developed for use in the interviews. Where possible, interviews were carried out face-to-face, but most were conducted by telephone.

## 3.        Survey of academic staff

Our survey of academic staff opinions was designed to:

—        explore respondents' awareness and experience of a series of initiatives, both institutional and national, devised to recognise, enhance and raise the esteem of teaching in UK higher education

—        examine views about processes for raising the esteem of teaching, as suggested by previous research in this area

—        investigate perceptions of the importance of research and teaching in appointments and promotions

—        examine views on methods for assessing and rewarding teaching.

The survey was delivered online between March and May 2008.

We should emphasise that the characteristics of the sampling process mean that the representativeness of the responses cannot be assured (see chapter 2). Nevertheless, the responses broadly reflected the structure of the full-time academic staff population, with the major exception that universities and colleges not part of the Russell and 1994 groups were overrepresented. As a result, we present most of the findings broken down by three separate groupings: Russell Group universities, 1994 Group universities, and those not part of either the Russell or 1994 Groups. This third grouping consists mainly of staff in post-1992 universities and colleges of higher education.

### Awareness and experience of initiatives

We asked respondents about their awareness and experience of a series of institutional and national initiatives designed to enhance the quality and esteem of teaching and learning in higher education.

Tables 1 and 2 show the results of the questions about institutional schemes by type of institution. We see that there is little variation between institutions, except that respondents in the 'other' category (mainly post-1992 universities) are more likely to have experience of learning and teaching strategies and professional

development, and respondents from 1994 group universities are least likely to have experience of an accredited programme in teaching. Levels of awareness of accredited programmes, professional development and learning and teaching strategies are high across the sector.

Respondents were less likely to say that institutional initiatives had had a positive impact on the esteem of teaching. The highest perceived impact was reported by staff from the 'other' group of institutions. Less than half the respondents from Russell and 1994 Group universities believed that institutional initiatives had had a positive impact.

Table 1. Awareness and experience of institutional initiatives by type of institution

|  | Russell | 1994 | Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aware of L&T strategy | 88 | 84 | 90 |
| Experience of L&T strategy | 71 | 66 | 80 |
| Aware of central support | 82 | 82 | 81 |
| Experience of central support | 69 | 67 | 71 |
| Aware of accredited programme | 92 | 89 | 89 |
| Experience of accredited programme | 56 | 43 | 55 |
| Aware of professional development | 85 | 86 | 90 |
| Experience of professional development | 69 | 71 | 81 |

Table 2. Perceived impact of institutional initiatives on the esteem of teaching and learning, by type of institution (% some or considerable impact)

|  | Russell | 1994 | Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| Some or considerable positive impact in own institution | 45 | 41 | 57 |
| Some or considerable positive impact in own department or faculty | 40 | 46 | 54 |

There was no difference between the views of female and male respondents about the impact of institutional initiatives on the esteem of teaching and learning.

In the last few years a number of schemes have been introduced nationally to enhance the quality of teaching in higher education. Some of these (such as the Higher Education Academy) are UK-wide; others are confined to particular nations (e.g. the Student Participation in Quality Scotland scheme, or SPARQS, in Scotland).

We invited staff to say whether they were aware of these initiatives, whether they had been involved in them, and what impact they thought each had had on the esteem of teaching and learning. Table 3 shows that levels of awareness, except for NTFS, vary little by type of institution, but that staff from the Other group of institutions are generally more likely to have had experience or involvement in them. The Higher Education Academy is the initiative that has the highest levels of awareness and involvement, but this is probably because of the nature of the sample, which was drawn from staff who had had some kind of connection with the Academy, however minimal.[14] Low levels of awareness and involvement in some other schemes do not imply that these are ineffective.

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14      The questionnaire erroneously separated the Academy (which includes the Subject Centres) from the Subject Centres.

Table 3. Awareness and experience of national initiatives, by type of institution

| | Russell | 1994 | Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aware of CETLs | 78 | 80 | 86 |
| Experience of CETLs | 40 | 39 | 44 |
| Aware of Higher Education Academy | 96 | 90 | 97 |
| Experience of Higher Education Academy | 77 | 67 | 82 |
| Aware of Higher Education Academy Subject Centres | 62 | 63 | 65 |
| Experience of Higher Education Academy Subject Centres | 56 | 43 | 55 |
| Aware of NTFS | 58 | 62 | 75 |
| Experience of NTFS | 17 | 17 | 23 |
| Aware of TQEF | 43 | 36 | 52 |
| Experience of TQEF | 20 | 12 | 27 |
| Aware of FDTL | 32 | 40 | 38 |
| Experience of FDTL | 13 | 14 | 17 |
| Aware of Quality Enhancement Themes | | 67[1] | |
| Experience of Quality Enhancement Themes | | 45[1] | |
| Aware of SPARQS | | 26[1] | |
| Experience of SPARQS | | 11[1] | |

*For CETLs, NTFS, TQEF and FDTL, includes England/NI respondents only (N=2122).*

*For Quality Enhancement Themes and SPARQS, includes Scotland respondents only (N= 252).*

*[1]For all respondents from Scottish HEIs (numbers too small to report by type of institution)*

Table 4. Perceived impact on the esteem of teaching of national initiatives, by type of institution (% some or considerable impact)

|  | Russell | 1994 | Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| CETLs (England/NI respondents only) | 34 | 32 | 44 |
| Higher Education Academy | 45 | 37 | 59 |
| Higher Education Academy Subject Centres | 28 | 26 | 37 |
| NTFS (England/NI respondents only) | 26 | 27 | 40 |
| TQEF (England/NI respondents only) | 21 | 16 | 30 |
| FDTL (England/NI respondents only) | 13 | 13 | 20 |
| Quality Enhancement Themes |  | 34 |  |
| SPARQS |  | 9[1] |  |

*For Quality Enhancement Themes and SPARQS, includes Scotland respondents only (N=252)*

*[1]For all respondents from Scottish HEIs (numbers too small to report by type of institution)*

In relation to perceptions of impact, the Academy (across the UK), CETLs (England and NI), and Quality Enhancement Themes (Scotland) were regarded as having had the largest influence on the esteem of teaching (Table 4). For the UK-wide and England/NI initiatives, staff from the Other group of institutions (ie. neither Russell nor 1994 Groups) were most likely to assign positive impact.

Perceptions of the importance of teaching in appointments and promotions

Respondents were asked to assess the importance they believed their institution attached to research and teaching in recruitment and promotion; and also to say how important they thought research and teaching *should* be in recruitment and promotion.[15] These results derive from the perceptions of academic staff; they do not necessarily mirror actual promotions and appointments procedures.

Table 5. Perceived importance of research and teaching in promotions, by type of institution (% somewhat important+important+very important)

|  | Research | | | Teaching | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Russell | 1994 | Other | Russell | 1994 | Other |
| Should be | 88 | 89 | 74 | 89 | 90 | 90 |
| Is | 96 | 94 | 74 | 32 | 39 | 44 |
| Gap | -8 | -5 | 0 | 57 | 51 | 46 |

Table 5 and Figures 3 and 4 present staff perceptions of the extent to which they believe teaching and research are recognised in promotions at their institution. The results[16] are shown separately by 1994 Group, Russell Group, and Other universities.

15    These questions reflected those in Ramsden *et al* (1995), who asked about the 'value' that was accorded and should be accorded to research and teaching in the respondents' universities.
16    Shown as the percentage of respondents who said that each activity was of some importance, important, and very important.

## Figure 3. Importance of research in promotions

*In your department or faculty, to what extent are the following regarded as important for promotion? How important do you think they should be?*
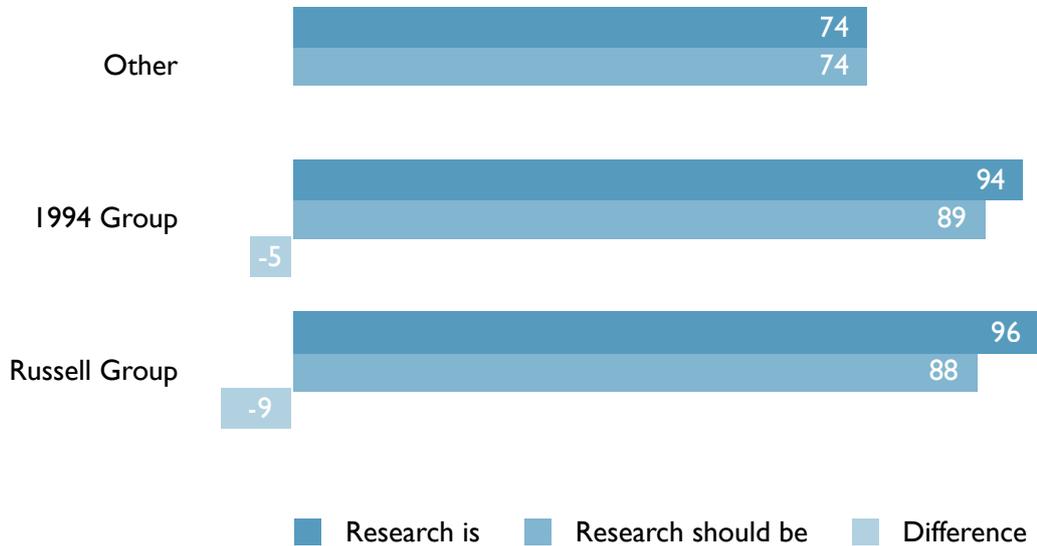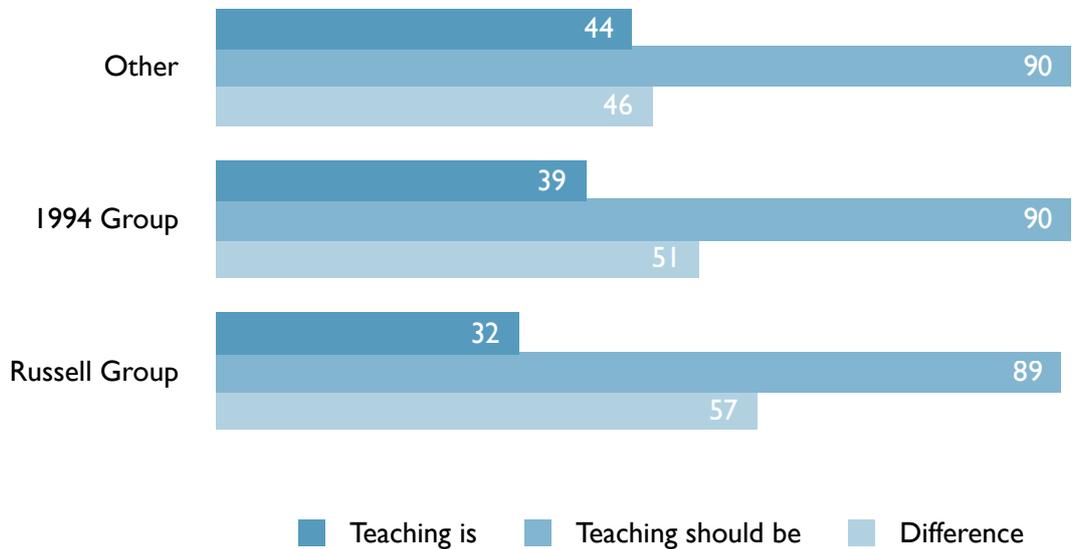


| | Research is | Research should be | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Other | 74 | 74 | |
| 1994 Group | 94 | 89 | -5 |
| Russell Group | 96 | 88 | -9 |

Research is    Research should be    Difference

## Figure 4. Importance of teaching in promotions

*In your department or faculty, to what extent are the following regarded as important for promotion? How important do you think they should be?*



| | Teaching is | Teaching should be | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Other | 44 | 90 | 46 |
| 1994 Group | 39 | 90 | 51 |
| Russell Group | 32 | 89 | 57 |

Teaching is    Teaching should be    Difference

We see that a very high proportion of staff (about 90 per cent) think that teaching should be important in promotions. There is little difference between staff in each group; this suggests that academics in research intensive institutions are as concerned as their colleagues in teaching focused ones to see teaching rewarded through promotion.

However, only a minority of staff think that teaching is important in promotions. The average gap between 'is' and 'should be' is around 50 percentage points. There is, moreover, a discrepancy between the groups of universities. The gap between 'is' and 'should be' is 57 points for the Russell Group, 51 points for the 1994 Group, and 46 points for the others. It seems that the more research-intensive the university, the more likely academics are to think that teaching is insufficiently rewarded through promotion.

These results appear to echo the diversity of our higher education sector. Institutions that are more focused on teaching are perceived to recognise teaching more in promotions. Another way of putting this is to say that academics in more research-focused universities are less likely to be satisfied with the importance their institution attaches to teaching in promotion decisions. Nevertheless, a gap of 46 points for the post-1992 and other academics between 'is' and 'should be' still reflects a high proportion of staff in these institutions who are dissatisfied.

There is a contrast between these findings about teaching and academics' perceptions of the importance that 'is' and 'should be' accorded to research (Figure 3). The gaps are much smaller (and even slightly negative in 1994 Group and Russell Group universities – indicating that respondents feel that research is given rather too much prominence in these institutions). In contrast to teaching, there is no evidence of major dissatisfaction with the process of promotion through research.

Similar results were obtained for perceptions of the importance of research and teaching in the *appointments* process. The gaps between 'should be' and 'is' for teaching were also large (35 points for Other respondents, 48 points for the 1994 Group, and 54 points for Russell Group. See the appendix for the tables). Over 90 percent of respondents felt that teaching skills should be important in making new appointments. Not surprisingly, research was thought to be more important in Russell Group and 1994 Group universities (where 88 percent, compared with 74 percent in the Other institutions, said it should be important).

Table 6. Differences between staff categories in perceptions of the importance of teaching in promotions (% somewhat important+important+very important)

|  | Lecturer | Senior Lecturer | Principal Lecturer | Reader | Professor | Senior Manager (PVC, VC etc) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Should be | 91 | 92 | 96 | 90 | 89 | 96 |
| Is | 31 | 38 | 46 | 42 | 58 | 82 |
| Gap | 60 | 54 | 50 | 48 | 31 | 14 |

Table 6 shows differences in perceptions of the importance of teaching in promotions by type of appointment. All categories believe that teaching should be regarded as important in promotions. The more junior the staff member, however, the more likely they are to say that it is not important in promotions. The gap between 'is' and 'should be' varies from 60 points for lecturers to 14 points for senior managers.

There were no differences between women and men, or between staff with more and less experience in higher education, concerning perceptions of the importance given to teaching in promotions.

These outcomes demonstrate a strong sense among the staff in this survey that teaching, both absolutely and in comparison with research, is under-rewarded through formal personnel processes in UK higher education. The differences between types of institution are consistent with the results presented by Parker (2008), who found a 'distinct and significant difference between promotion criteria in pre and post-1992 universities, with the post-1992 universities much more likely to recognise research and teaching equally'.

The differences in perceptions between categories of staff present a challenge for changing institutional strategies to transform the importance given to teaching in promotions and appointments. The differences in 'dissatisfaction' with the rewards for teaching are greater for lecturers and senior lecturers than readers and professors. There is in fact a consistent gradient from lecturer to senior manager in the size of the difference between perceptions of whether teaching 'is' and 'should be' important in promotions. Those in the strongest positions to make change happen are apparently the

least likely to see the need to do so.[17] These results are exactly comparable with the findings of the 1994 Australian survey.

## Processes for raising the esteem of teaching

Ramsden *et al* (1995) asked their respondents to indicate whether each of 41 processes that had been suggested as ways of recognising and ensuring good teaching in higher education would have an effect on improving it.

They found that the most strongly approved items were 'Removing obstacles to enjoying teaching, such as excessive workloads', 'Taking greater account of teaching in the promotions process', and 'Creating a working environment in which staff can gain intrinsic satisfaction from teaching'. Similar items, together with questions about appointments and funding, were included in our survey, in which the question was 'In your own experience, how important do you feel the following could be in raising the esteem of teaching and learning?'

Table 7. Importance of processes for raising the esteem of teaching and learning by type of institution

|  | Russell | 1994 | Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| Change in culture to recognise teaching | 92 | 92 | 92 |
| Institutional promotions strategy | 91 | 88 | 90 |
| Removing obstacles to enjoying teaching | 83 | 84 | 88 |
| Taking more account of teaching in appointments | 80 | 79 | 81 |
| Additional funding for teaching | 78 | 77 | 83 |
| Changes to RAE to include pedagogic research | 71 | 66 | 80 |
| Technical support for e-learning | 62 | 63 | 70 |
| Workshops on discipline-specific teaching | 61 | 55 | 70 |

17          These results are exactly comparable with the findings of the 1994 Australian survey.

Table 7 shows the results. The most strongly and least strongly endorsed processes are almost identical for each group of institutions. The most strongly endorsed processes include issues concerned with formal reward through promotion and issues related to the environment for teaching. This exactly replicates the results of Ramsden *et al.* The least important processes are related to technical support, discipline-specific workshops, and pedagogic research in the RAE.

The results emphasise the need for attention to the culture or environment in which university teaching occurs. They also reaffirm the critical importance of formal institutional reward systems.

## Views on methods for rewarding teaching

We asked respondents to consider a range of criteria and methods for rewarding teaching in their institutions. They were:

— student views

— pedagogic research (research into teaching and learning in higher education)

— good teaching (reviewed by peers)

— high teaching contact hours

— national profile (e.g. NTFS).

In each case, staff were asked to say whether it was used in their institution and, if it was, to give an opinion on how important it was as a criterion.

Table 8. Opinions on use and importance of methods of rewarding teaching in the respondents' institutions (percentages)

| | Russell | 1994 | Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student views | | | |
| Used | 64 | 65 | 44 |
| Importance | | | |
| Pedagogic research | | | |
| Used | 47 | 33 | 48 |
| Importance | 40 | 28 | 36 |
| Good teaching (reviewed by peers) | | | |
| Used | 53 | 54 | 52 |
| Importance | 42 | 50 | 50 |
| High teaching contact hours | | | |
| Used | 28 | 16 | 18 |
| Importance | 30 | 17 | 25 |
| National profile (e.g. NTFS) | | | |
| Used | 68 | 55 | 62 |
| Importance | 56 | 43 | 58 |

*Importance: % who responded that the criterion was of some importance+important+very important*

Despite some differences between the groups, the general picture is that the most often used methods are national profile, student views and good teaching (as reviewed by peers). They are also regarded as being the most important.

## Responses to open questions

Respondents to the survey were asked to comment on criteria for rewarding teaching, learning and teaching initiatives at national and institutional levels, and factors that might be important in raising the esteem of teaching.

The most frequently-made comments are shown in Table 9. The most common concerned leadership for promoting a culture that values teaching, imbalance in the relative value accorded to research and teaching, the importance of rigorous processes for assessing teaching quality, and the need to ensure that schemes for rewarding teaching are relevant and effective. Examples of these comments are shown in Table 10. Many of these issues re-appear in the data from the interviews of academic staff (chapter 4).

Table 9. The most common issues mentioned in the staff survey open comments

| Type of comment | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Comments about the importance of leadership in universities and colleges to promote a culture that values and rewards teaching | 200 |
| General comments about research being valued more than teaching | 182 |
| Comments about the importance of having rigorous processes in place to assess the quality of teaching | 102 |
| Comments about the need to ensure that reward and recognition schemes (both national and institutional) are relevant and effective | 96 |
| Comments that teaching is not held in high regard by colleagues | 55 |
| Comments that there is a general lack of support and/or resources for teaching activities in higher education | 39 |
| Comments that excessive workloads have a negative impact on the quality of teaching | 38 |
| Comments about it being important that academic staff take time to develop their teaching skills | 29 |
| Comments that current national teaching awards are valuable | 26 |
| Comments that female teaching staff are at a disadvantage (for promotion) in comparison to their male colleagues | 12 |

## Table 10. Examples of the most frequently made comments

### Comments about the importance of leadership in universities and colleges to promote a culture that values and rewards teaching

— *I think that a strong message needs to come from the top of an institution [about the importance of teaching] and be backed up by firm, and verifiable commitments.*
— *There should be teaching quality drives that Heads of Department should not be able to get out of. All too often Heads of Department can escape their own leadership responsibility in teaching by ignoring it or delegating.*
— *I would like to see senior management acting as if teaching/ learning is important rather than just talking about it as such.*
— *Much depends on leadership from the top down, reinforcing the message that research and teaching are of equal value*
— *My major concern relates to many senior managers paying lip service to the value of teaching*
— *Management culture says research is all; teaching is for those who can't do anything else.*
— *The Dean and Associate Dean of my Faculty have no regard for teaching and certainly no regard for their teaching staff.*

### General comments about research being valued more than teaching

— *Promotion in our institution is linked to research not teaching.*
— *As long as promotion is almost exclusively tied to research output, teaching will continue to be held in low esteem.*
— *The balance between academic activities needs to be addressed - it is very much biased towards research even in a teaching and learning based institution such as my own.*
— *Stop (really stop) promotions based on research outputs alone.*
— *The change in culture needs to be a rebalancing of priorities - too many colleagues (mid to senior) are only interested in research and teaching isn't really taken seriously.*
— *Try to get old universities to not see 'teaching' as a dirty word that gets in the way of research.*

### Comments about the importance of having rigorous processes in place to assess the quality of teaching

— *Linking annual appraisal more closely to evidence about and consideration of teaching would help raise the standard of attention given to teaching and learning.*
— *Recognition is currently given to teaching in name only. There is no reliable and quantifiable metric for providing input into the promotions process.*
— *Alternative qualitative means of assessing and evaluating quality of teaching that does not rely so much on quantitative assessment of outcomes [is needed].*

### Comments about the need to ensure that reward and recognition schemes are relevant and effective

— *National initiatives are generally unimportant to someone who is both highly motivated and at the cutting edge of any aspect of learning and teaching. They are generally too little too late and reinforce already known practice rather than visionary exploration.*
— *The plethora of schemes and the difficulty of using them prevents them being much use at all.*
— *As an NTF my Institution appears to now ignore me – I am not considered for further reward and a proper balanced career view for academic staff would help.*

## Summary and conclusions

These results show that academics feel strongly about the importance of the teaching function in higher education. It is notable that about nine out of ten respondents in all types of higher education institution believe that teaching quality should be important in academic appointments and promotions. The survey results, however, reveal a discrepancy between academics' opinions of the degree to which teaching *is important* in making appointments and promotions and the degree to which it *should be important*. The gap between ideal and actual is wide, in spite of efforts made to change promotions and appointments processes to give more weight to teaching in recent years.

The largest gaps between 'is' and 'should be' are for staff working in more research intensive environments, and this finding is consistent with the results which will be described in part 2 of this report, as well as with the work of Parker (2008). Moreover, senior staff are less likely to perceive a substantial discrepancy between ideal and actual in the importance of teaching for promotion, posing a challenge for how to change current processes.

Academics' views about which methods are important in raising the esteem of teaching should be seen in the context of the differences between perceptions of the ideal and actual importance of teaching. It is important to note that the most strongly endorsed processes are almost identical for each group of institutions. They include issues concerned with formal reward through promotion and issues related to the environment for teaching. The significance of this combination is underlined in the results of the interviews (chapter 4)[18]. Over 90 per cent of academics in the present survey think that both formal rewards and 'cultural' changes are important ways of increasing the regard in which teaching is held. Respondents said that evidence of a national profile, student views and good teaching (as reviewed by peers) were important criteria for assessing teaching performance.

Although there seem to be high levels of awareness of initiatives such as accredited programmes, professional development and learning and teaching strategies across the higher education sector, respondents were less positive about the impact of these institutional initiatives on the esteem of teaching and learning. There were also mixed views about the effects of national initiatives: only the Higher Education Academy (across the UK), the CETLs scheme (in England and NI), and Quality Enhancement Themes (in Scotland) were regarded as having had much influence on the esteem in which teaching is held; and even so, less than half the respondents agreed that they had had 'some' or 'considerable' impact.

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18          The two sets of issues were also identified as the most important ones by academics in Australia (Ramsden *et al*, 1995).

# 4.        Interviews of academic staff

The third phase of the project involved 31 interviews with a range of academic staff engaged in teaching activities in UK higher education institutions. The interviews were conducted between March and May 2008. This chapter is organised into sections reflecting themes that emerged from an analysis of the interviews.

## i.        Formal reward and recognition

Formal reward schemes for teaching and learning activities were regarded by all the interviewees as being important for recognising teaching and rewarding it appropriately. Interviewees (with two exceptions) reported that they enjoyed their teaching duties and believed that intrinsic rewards from teaching, such as 'making a difference' to students lives and 'getting the opportunity to give something back' were important. However, they also said that staff engaged in teaching should be formally rewarded and recognised for their endeavours.

### *Promotion*

Respondents said that the single most important aspect of reward and recognition for teaching was the opportunity for promotion. This is consistent with a number of earlier studies. However effective the interviewees thought that other reward and recognition processes might be, their comments were almost always in the context of how these contributed to the likelihood of an academic's promotion. In fact, at the early stages of an interview, many interviewees simply took the phrase 'reward and recognition' to be synonymous with 'promotion'.

There was a general feeling that there had been a gradual improvement in promotion prospects for academics who chose to focus on teaching (as opposed to, say, research or administrative and managerial responsibilities) but that these changes were overdue and continued to be slow in materialising.

Three respondents (from different institutions) reported that their institutions had recently introduced separate career paths for university teachers (i.e. a career route that does not require an academic to be research-active but involves more teaching duties). All these respondents regarded this to be a positive development. One said:

*It has worked [introducing a teaching only career path] in that it has promoted people from university teacher to senior university teacher and from this to professor and so on. It seems to be raising the profile of teaching.*

There is also evidence that at least some academics take the teaching career path seriously and respect the commitment it takes to pursue such a career. One interviewee stated:

*People [on the teaching only career path] can get to senior university teacher and they could get to professor. The criteria are very tough – you have to have an international reputation in the advancement of education.*

As an alternative to teaching-only career paths, some respondents reported that their institution had a promotions policy that incorporated three strands: teaching; research; and administrative duties. In these institutions it is possible in theory to be promoted for excelling in any two of these areas (and performing satisfactorily in the third). Interviewees who had experienced these systems regarded them positively and thought that they were at least partly responsible for a change in promotional culture. There was some frustration with the length of time these schemes were taking to become embedded. Comments included:

*It seems to me that there are quite a few people who are getting promotion for their teaching work; who's move up the promotional ladder would not happen if the caricature that research is the only thing that was rewarded was actual.*

And:

*I think there has been a massive culture change here for the better. I think that the policy [promoting people for teaching excellence] is still being worked through and in practice you still need a strong research bias if you are to be promoted. Getting through the departmental process and the faculty is difficult as there is bias towards research. At the university level it's even worse! To gain recognition on the basis of teaching is even*

> *harder. The policy doesn't seem to be filtering through yet. In*
> *the whole university there are only around seven professorial*
> *teaching appointments.*

Many respondents felt that it was a struggle to achieve promotion by focusing on teaching activities even when three-pronged promotion policies and alternative teaching career paths were on offer. Interviewees tended to blame an academic culture that values research over all other activities for the limited impact of promotion schemes that allow advancement through teaching activities:

> *I think that there needs to be a complete change in attitude and*
> *culture so that teaching is not considered inferior to research.*
> *This is quite a task but we could start by allowing more lecturers*
> *[as opposed to researchers] on to promotion panels.*

One interviewee thought that teaching activities were not given fair weighting in the promotion processes:

> *There are cases where promotional criteria have not been*
> *consistently applied or followed through. There are more*
> *members of the research community on the promotions panel*
> *than lecturers so there is already an imbalance there. It gives*
> *the message that research is more important than teaching.*

Further expressions of scepticism about being rewarded for teaching activities in institutions which include this as promotion criterion include these comments:

> *I've been promoted several times over the last ten years so I*
> *would have to say that I am well recognised and adequately*
> *rewarded. However, I suspect that had I not been involved in*
> *research I may not have been promoted to this level.*

> *In principle you can achieve promotion on the basis of teaching*
> *but it rarely happens. So I think that we need to implement the*
> *policy [of promoting people for teaching excellence] with an eye*
> *on numbers of promotions that are actually made this way.*

There is evidence from the interviews that teaching only careers paths and career paths that allow teaching activities as one of a number of criteria are slowly starting to have an impact with people reporting their own promotion via such mechanisms. On the other hand, there is a degree of mistrust with such schemes, with some interviewees being of the opinion that a far safer route to promotion is through research activity.[19]

The interviews suggest that teaching career paths within universities do not have the same status as their more research-oriented analogues. In a prior study Gibbs (2003) noted that 'teaching only' posts that have been introduced in some universities almost always have:

*…lower pay, poorer conditions of service and fixed term contracts.[20]*

The interview data suggest that the lower status that is often accorded to teaching only posts (and teaching only career paths) persists even when pay, conditions, contracts etc. are brought in line with standard lecturer posts.[21] One interviewee (from an institution that offered a teaching-only career path) reported:

*We now have a career structure on our website for "university teachers", but it is seen as a second-class thing. One of the*

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19    A recent study by Parker (2008) provides some evidence to support these views. Parker's study shows that universities have largely adopted formal parity for teaching careers with promotion to senior and principal lecturer but that promotion beyond this is heavily weighted in favour of researchers. Parker also notes a distinct difference in promotional practices between pre and post 92 universities, with post 92 universities being more likely to reward teaching excellence through promotion.

20    Gibbs (2003) p. 2.

21    Fairweather (1996) in a major North American study claims that there is symbiotic relationship between reward structures and the culture of academic faculties, with current practices (i.e. a greater emphasis on rewarding research) contributing to a lack of focus on teaching. According to Fairweather, institutional reward structures act as mechanisms to ensure the perpetuation of the dominant research culture. It may be too early to assess the extent to which academic culture will change in UK institutions following the recent introduction of teaching-only career paths.

*things that can happen is that if someone is not as research*
*active as a lecturer or senior lecturer, they'll get moved sideways*
*to university teacher.*

Similarly, an academic from a different institution with a teaching-only career path said:

*Quite a lot of people have been appointed to the position of*
*university teacher. But some people have been moved into that*
*category. If people feel that they are no longer able to maintain*
*a research profile then they can move to this career path with*
*promotion prospects exactly the same as they are for lecturers.*

Comments such as these suggest that the lower status often accorded university teachers is the product of deeper factors rooted in academic culture and not simply caused by monetary rewards and types of contractual agreement – although these things may contribute to the problem. Even though 'university teachers' are paid along the same lines as lecturers and have the same kind of contracts and can expect similar career progression, the perception still remains that teaching careers are for those who cannot quite make the grade as research-active lecturers.

*National schemes*

The best known national recognition scheme for individual teaching staff in universities is the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS)[22]. All but three of the interviewees had heard of the NTFS, and this scheme was generally held in high regard[23]. One respondent remarked:

*The NTFS is recognised by everyone I think! As an institution,*
*this is the award we encourage our staff to go for.*

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22          It should be noted that the NTFS operates only in England and Northern Ireland.
23          See Frame (2006) for a study showing that NTFS awards can be perceived as either a
            reward or a penalty depending upon the degree of institutional support for winners.

Other comments included:

> *I think that the NTF award is wonderful and we are very proud*
> *to have a National Teaching Fellow in our department. I think*
> *that this award sends a message that teaching is important*
> *and that if you are a good teacher you will be recognised and*
> *rewarded for it.*

And:

> *One thing that has transformed us as a school has been the*
> *NTFS. This is absolutely brilliant.*

However, there was also some scepticism about the NTFS scheme, with one interviewee saying:

> *Right at the top [in terms of status of award] there is the NTFS,*
> *but this strikes me as having nothing to do with teaching. People*
> *who secure massive grants for establishing Centres for Excellence*
> *in Teaching and Learning or similar things get awards like an*
> *NTF. This is regardless of whether or not these people are any*
> *good at teaching…I don't think that being awarded an NTF and*
> *being a good teacher is necessarily connected. So I don't see how*
> *the NTFS raises the profile of teaching really.*

Similarly, a National Teaching Fellow remarked on the distance that teaching awards sometimes create between the recipient and those that would benefit from their teaching skills:

> *It's very interesting because the more teaching awards I get the*
> *less teaching I seem to do!*

The Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) and the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) – these are initiatives that operated in England only – were also mentioned. Nine interviewees had heard of the TQEF and eight had heard of the FDTL. These schemes were thought to be worthwhile in their own right but not held

in such high esteem as the NTFS. Interviewees were only aware of the generalities of these schemes (unless they had been directly involved in a related project). None of the interviewees offered direct examples of how these schemes had impacted on the reward and recognition of teaching within higher education.[24] However, it should be noted that there are difficulties in comparing the NTFS with TQEF. TQEF funding was provided to institutions as part of their block grant, with minimal reporting requirements. In contrast, the NTFS is a high profile national scheme aimed directly at academics.

Of other recent national initiatives to promote the status of teaching in higher education, the Higher Education Academy was the most widely known and cited as being worthwhile. Nine interviewees singled out the Academy and in particular its focus on discipline-related support for mention and, amongst these nine interviewees, the Academy was well regarded[25]. Typical comments included:

> *I think that the [Academy] Subject Centre network has had*
> *the most impact on raising the profile of teaching. The internal*
> *[initiatives] have no kudos outside my institution really, but the*
> *Subject Centres get taken seriously.*

And:

> *The [Academy] project officers are really excellent and very*
> *supportive. They are very realistic about what can be done*
> *to raise the profile of teaching. None of the other national*
> *initiatives have really had an impact at my university - I suspect*
> *partly because we are a research intensive institution.*

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24      Gosling (2004) presents evidence that the TQEF has contributed to a change in academic culture towards a context where teaching activity receives more attention. However, Gosling also notes the difficult nature of changing academic culture towards the valuing of teaching as an academic profession.

25      Rowland (1999) argues that university teaching is not a generic matter and that what counts as knowledge, and ergo what constitutes an appropriate form of teaching, varies across academic disciplines. That academics recognise this fact could go some way to explaining the popularity of the Academy's Subject Centres.

And:

> *I would keep the Subject Centres above all the other national*
> *initiatives as they represent an area for development [raising the*
> *profile of teaching] and they attempt to see how research can*
> *be structured into particular discipline areas for the benefit of*
> *teaching. They create more opportunity for scholarly work and*
> *they create an understanding in the scholarly community.*

The Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) initiative was also well thought of by those interviewees who had been involved with it[26]. Eight people mentioned the CETLs as having had some impact on raising the profile of teaching within HE. Comments included:

> *The CETL has been crucial to us. It has energised a lot of people*
> *almost to the point where we have gone into overdrive now.*
> *It has generated all sorts of initiatives and ideas and changed*
> *things for the better in lots of ways.*

And:

> *Having a CETL was a revolution! It helped us put in place things*
> *for teaching we had always wanted to do. This has been excellent.*
> *We've developed curriculum, had more resources, lots of stuff.*

One academic felt empowered through involvement with a CETL to take responsibility for the improvement of teaching conditions and to make teaching a more rewarding activity:

> *In terms of what we can offer locally at the CETL, I hope*
> *it is fit for purpose because that is in our hands. There are*
> *several prongs to what we do. One thing that has happened*

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26          The CETL initiative operates in England and Northern Ireland.

> *through the CETL is that as part of the capital statement*
> *we've been able to upgrade our facilities and every member of*
> *staff has benefited from this. Important things have come out*
> *of informal discussions held at the CETL. Also, the CETL has*
> *enabled staff to do what they want to do – colleagues with*
> *ideas have been able to implement them.*

However, there was little awareness of what the CETLs did, or what impact they may have had, from interviewees who had not been directly employed by one or worked on a CETL project of some kind.

## Institutional teaching awards

There was no consensus about the value of institutional award schemes for teaching. The form that such awards take varies greatly from institution to institution, as does their perceived value by staff.

Seven of the 31 interviewees either said that their institution did nothing to reward and recognise teaching activity or said that they were unaware of any awards or processes that were in place to reward teaching staff. Some staff were sceptical about their institution's attitude to rewarding and recognising teaching activity. When asked if they knew what their university's policy was for rewarding and recognising teaching, one academic responded:

> *We don't really have one. I would say that if you are a*
> *researcher here then you are backing a winner. We are a*
> *department that is rated five [in the Research Assessment*
> *Exercise (RAE)] and the emphasis is on this. The teachers*
> *here are overlooked because the department is chasing after a*
> *rating of five all the time.*

Five interviewees (from English universities) reported that their institutions had an award scheme that was modelled on the NTFS. These schemes were smaller in scale than the NTFS, but offered grants for teaching projects and conferred titles such as 'teaching fellow' on recipients in much the same way as the NTFS does. These schemes were well regarded, with one academic describing recipients of awards as having demonstrated "outstanding ability" as teachers. A further four interviewees

(from English universities) reported that their institution supported and encouraged applications for staff to apply for NTF status.

Perceptions of the value of institutional reward and recognition schemes varied. Some interviewees were positive. Comments included:

> *Within our award scheme (which is linked with the CETL) we've got excellent practice awards and developing excellence awards.*

> *It [the institution's award scheme] says that we have a very strong policy and it certainly gives awards for teaching quality for best practice.*

However, other interviewees were less impressed. One thought that the institution's reward and recognition policy did not contribute to the development of teachers or teaching practices in any direct way:

> *We do have a system of grants – learning and teaching awards. But they're not really rewards for teaching as such. They're research grants to push through an initiative to buy out time and so on. Our institution is keen on supporting innovative implementation. Pure pedagogic research wouldn't be supported through this award. But the award could be used for developing a new system, to buy a piece of software, or to buy podcasting equipment – that sort of thing.*

### Departmental awards for individual teachers

Reactions to departmental reward and recognition schemes for teaching activities were also varied. Ten interviewees reported that their department had no policies or procedures in this area. Typical comments about departmental policies included:

> *Our head of department says "thank you" at the end of every year for our teaching.*

> *What does our department do to reward and recognise our teaching? Probably not very much. You'd probably be able to find*

*something that it says it does on our website.*

Five respondents reported that although their department had no separate procedures from the institution as a whole in this area, they took the institution's award schemes seriously and supported and encouraged their staff to apply for these.

Other interviewees were more positive. The following extracts are from three individuals from different institutions:

> *From our own department's point of view, there are plenty of examples of people whose teaching is recognised.*

> *Yes, I think my department takes it seriously. I'm more recognised by my faculty than by my university.*

> *My department thinks that [as a teaching-only member of staff] I'm absolutely wonderful. The person that keeps bringing me back to do more teaching pays me very well now, so in that respect the department does reward me.*

The most detailed examples of departmental commitment to the reward and recognition of teaching staff came from two interviewees (from different institutions) whose departments had close ties with CETLs. Association with a CETL would appear to multiply the rewards that a department is able to deliver to teaching staff:

> *Departmentally, we are much more powerful than we might normally have been due to the CETL. This has enabled us to reward staff in all sorts of ways. It means that we have a local reward opportunity.*

> *Through the CETL, we have six senior teaching fellows appointed from within our department. These people have received a 0.5 percent increment rise to do department-related work with an award for pedagogic research.*

Although some individuals felt that they were appreciated by their department for their teaching activities, the interviews showed that there is little activity taking place

at departmental level (when compared with national and institutional levels). However, the above two quotes suggest that through working directly with departments, at least two CETLs are making a significant contribution to the perception of the reward and recognition of staff for their teaching duties.

<h2>ii.     Leadership</h2>

A theme that emerged from the interviews was the importance of good leadership at both departmental and institutional levels both for promoting the importance of teaching and for driving initiatives to ensure that teaching staff are rewarded for their activity. The degree to which teaching was seen to be rewarded and recognised depended to a large extent on senior management and strategic focus:

> *I think that a lot depends on how the university wants to steer its strategy. At the moment I suspect the focus is on research.*

There was optimism about the difference that senior managers and heads of department could make to the reward and recognition of teaching; much was thought to depend upon individual leadership style and personality[27]. Comments included:

> *The recognition for my teaching activities is due, in no small part, to our PVC who is really outstanding in this area. And to my own head of department who has been very supportive.*

> *We've had a change of vice chancellor in the last couple of years. He's made it a bit more of his mission to do something about that [promoting the reward and recognition of teaching].*

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27       Separate studies by Marshall *et al* (2000) and Warren (1998) show the inherent problems in trying to define academic leadership and offer some different perceptions of what should constitute academic leadership. Ramsden (1998a) warns against trying to reduce academic leadership to any one, precise method. Elsewhere, Ramsden (1998b) suggests that good academic leaders possess qualities that are analogous to those of good university teachers.

> *There is still some way to go.*

> *I think that management style is the key to recognising good teaching. If you have a manager who is interested in pushing teaching then it will be recognised. If you haven't then you really are up against it aren't you?*

Conversely, it was also thought that inappropriate strategies at senior level could be both to damaging research and teaching:

> *There's this push now to gain a five star [RAE rating] in this faculty and as such we are driving teachers into doing research and, let's be honest, some of them just aren't capable or aren't that way inclined. The higher levels of the university are driving this through.*

Some respondents were frustrated with how little their managers seemed to be doing to promote good teaching. One stated:

> *In 2001 I'd been a teaching fellow [at this institution] for four years. The VC visited the campus that I was working on and I asked him in a public forum what the university would do to support people like me. He was rather embarrassed by my question and said that I could leave it with him and that he would give me an answer within two weeks. I never heard anything else from him.*

One interviewee suggested that there was a certain dissonance between management policy and what happened at department level, with central management policy having little impact on academic culture:[28]

> *We're a very teaching-centred institution but I've noticed that there's an increasing disjunction with central management*

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28    A similar point is made by Rush and Hart (2007).

> *between teaching and research. I think that they do value*
> *teaching more than research but amongst colleagues there's a*
> *sense that you don't get anywhere without doing research.*

Respondents thought that good leadership (at all levels) was important for promoting the reward and recognition of teaching. The interview data suggest that the range of interest from senior managers in, and their commitment to, the promotion of reward and recognition policies and procedures varies greatly between institutions (including institutions belonging to the same mission group).

iii.                    Training and support

Nine of the 31 interviewees thought that formal training courses and other resources for supporting teaching were important factors in making teaching staff feel valued and recognised by institutions and departments. One was positive about their institution's training policy and support services for teachers and thought that, because these things were taken seriously, they contributed to recognition:

> *The university as a whole supports our teacher training*
> *programme and also the teacher training programme for*
> *part-time staff…The school see teaching as a central function*
> *of the university and they support people who wish to do*
> *various things in terms of development etc. If you look at*
> *those courses and you attend them, one of the things that*
> *you always come away with is the feeling that people do care*
> *about teaching – when we talk about teaching in the wider*
> *context there is some recognition.*

However, the majority of respondents were either unimpressed by or ambivalent towards their institution's policies and programmes for training staff. Generally, teacher training and development courses were thought to be inconsistent ('patchy') or in need of a re-think. Typical comments about teacher training policies and programmes included:

> *I once wrote a report on the effectiveness of our teacher*
> *training courses…Staff felt that there was nowhere to go for*

*advice and help with teaching and learning issues so we need
to develop a more fully articulated plan that will address this.
Some staff felt bereft of help and encouragement for their
teaching and left very much on their own.*

*Some staff development does go on to help with things
like resources which I suppose are some sort of feeder into
teaching…Has it made me a better teacher? Not really.*

One part-time member of staff reported that it was particularly difficult to get any
formal teacher training if you did not have a full-time, permanent contract:[29]

*When I came to work for [my current institution] I pressed to
be sent on the PGCAP course. My boss found it quite difficult
to get me on that course because it was only for permanent
lecturing staff.*

Although it was often felt that resources and formal training courses for providing
support for teachers were lacking, it was also felt that support was available for teaching
staff through departmental activity and via interacting with the teaching community:

*I think that more impact comes from the internal staff
development things you go to. You get good ideas, meet other
people at conferences, and pick up different ways of doing things.*

The general picture regarding the training and support of teaching staff is that
academics feel that access to training courses and support services is important.
Effective training courses and support for teachers were regarded to be a measure
of an institution's commitment to the profession of teaching and an aid to assessing
teaching quality. However, some staff also feel that access to good quality teaching
courses and support services is absent.

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29    Anderson (2007) highlights the 'marginalisation' of part-time academic staff and their
      limited access to academic development opportunities.

## iv.        Obstacles to reward and recognition

Respondents made it clear that they thought the issues surrounding the reward and recognition of teaching within HEIs (and the lack thereof) were complex. An academic culture that did not hold teaching in high regard and values that centred on other aspects of academic work were cited again and again as main obstacles to the reward and recognition of teaching[30]. Comments about the general reward and recognition for teaching as a profession in higher education included:

> *Teaching simply isn't supported by the school or the university.*

And:

> *If you concentrate on teaching then you are not appreciated.*

And:

> *Most lecturers do it [teaching] because they have to do it. They don't want to – they want to do their research. It's probably seen as a secondary profession.*

And:

> *It [teaching] is almost a necessary evil. This is what I find hard to comprehend. We make money from teaching – that's why we keep taking on more students. But what they [the academic*

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30       There is some consistency here with Court (1999) who argues that an emphasis on research in determining academic careers has 'gone too far'. However, the findings of our study show that academics do not think that an over-emphasis on research is the central issue. Indeed, interviewees were typically of the view that research activity was rewarded to an appropriate degree. Rather, the problem was with the *under*-valuing of teaching activity. Interviewees were not of the opinion that one activity needed be recognised at the expense of the other. These findings cohere with those from the survey (chapter 3).

*department] really want you to do is get research bids.*

About trying to build an academic career through concentration on teaching, one interviewee reported:

> *There are relatively few promotions on the basis of teaching. Few people believe that they can build a career on teaching and learning and think that it's quite dangerous to attempt to do so. They perceive that they need to be research active and as long as the promotion system perpetuates this then there isn't going to be any change is there? The values that underpin this institution favour research rather than teaching. This is an historical legacy but as long as there is this perpetuation of teaching being seen as inferior to research then the outlook is bleak.*

And an academic from a different institution said:

> *I think that there is a perception that research and scholarly activities are safer and that you won't make your way to the top pursuing teaching and learning.*

However, it should be noted that while the interviewees recognised that there was an imbalance between the reward and recognition for research and that for teaching, they did not think that teaching was undervalued because research was overvalued. Indeed, it was generally appreciated that research was an important activity and that academic staff engaged in research were rewarded at about the right level.

Respondents made it clear that they thought that teaching was as important as research and that academics were not adequately rewarded or recognised for their teaching endeavours. The dominant view was that research should continue to be rewarded at the same level and that rewards for teaching activities should be made comparable. One interviewee summed up this line of thought:

> *You need different types of people to successfully run an academic department. You need good administrators, researchers ("pure academics", if you like), and good teachers. You also need people who can bridge that gap, people who are research active and who*

> *can teach. I think all these things are equally important and one*
> *strand shouldn't be rewarded any more or any less than the others.*

Interviewees felt that a major obstacle to the reward and recognition of teaching in higher education was the lack of any clear and universal method for assessing teaching excellence. Research output, it was generally agreed, could be measured in a relatively straightforward manner. Interviewees thought that assessing teaching quality was more problematic. In some cases, promotion procedures related to teaching excellence were thought to be in need of improvement. In describing their own institution's promotion through teaching policy, one academic said:

> *How do you judge the quality of someone's teaching just on the*
> *basis of an application form? You can't is the answer. I don't*
> *think that higher education or the Higher Education Academy*
> *are going to crack this problem [of assuring adequate reward*
> *and recognition for teaching] unless there are systematic peer*
> *observations for teachers. I don't know if I just filled in the form*
> *better than everyone else [to secure promotion for good teaching].*

Respondents were acutely aware of the dangers of putting teaching into "a destructive competition with research" (Ramsden *et al*, 1995). One way to avoid such a destructive competition was thought to be the development of ways of measuring teaching excellence via better access to teacher training courses, support services for teaching staff, and structured peer review processes.

v.        Gender differences

Two female interviewees stated that there were gender inequalities within their institution that affected both promotion prospects and the potential to be nominated for teaching awards. One said:

> *I think that there may be an element of sexism with this*
> *department. There are no female senior lecturers [in this*
> *department]. Women can't progress. I sit on the quality panel*
> *and they don't judge women within the department.*

Another interviewee suggested that the sexism existed at institutional level:

> *I do think, as a university, we need to focus on equality. Why aren't more women put forward for these [institutional teaching] awards? This is a huge issue at the moment and it needs further prodding to encourage the university hierarchy to focus on this.*

vi.        Career expectations

Interviewees were mostly positive about their current jobs and their expectations for the future. Typical comments included:

> *I've certainly got no plans to change profession at the moment because I'm happy. I like my job. I think the rewards are good. They give me a lot of flexibility here…Too much to do but haven't we all.*

And:

> *I can't think of a better job. It's what I want to do – it's enjoyable. I can do things that I think have an affect on the students. It's good to work with new students coming in all the time. I like research and teaching.*

And:

> *I thoroughly enjoy my role here and being in this institution.*

There was also recognition that receiving awards for teaching excellence (particularly an NTF) was a significant way of improving career prospects. However, it was still thought that career progression through teaching activity was a more difficult route:

> *The two people I know who have been awarded an NTF have been given professorships. They've gone through the harder route to professorship and they've done so by attracting a huge amount of money.*

Nevertheless, there is evidence that at least some academics now take seriously careers as teachers. Comments about this included:

> *I think that going for PVC in learning and teaching would be a step*
> *[on the career ladder] for me. That's the direction I'd like to go in.*

And:

> *I'd like to focus on teaching and try to gain further promotion*
> *based on teaching within this department.*

On the other hand, some interviewees were of the opinion that the primary way to further an academic career is through research activity:

> *How do I plan to achieve my career aspirations? I need to*
> *increase my research profile. That's definite!*

Most respondents felt that teaching excellence alone was not enough to secure a desired promotion and that it needed to be supported by a credible research and publication record. Conversely, an impressive research profile was thought to be sufficient in and of itself to guarantee a fulfilling academic career.


## vii.  Conclusions

The interview findings suggest the following conclusions:

— Formal recognition schemes for teaching are important. National schemes are perceived to be intrinsically valuable and to serve as an aid to the recipient's promotion

— Promotion is regarded as being the single most important way of being rewarded and recognised for teaching activities.

— 'Teaching-only' career paths and promotional procedures that recognise teaching as one of several criteria that can be the focus

of an application for promotion are popular. Such career paths and promotional processes are perceived to have improved both the rewards available to university teaching staff and to have raised their perceived academic status. These measures for rewarding and recognising teaching staff are taking a long time to become established. In some cases, pursuing an academic career by focusing on teaching is seen as a second-class academic activity; career paths designed to be 'teaching-only' are not enough to guarantee parity of status between university teaching and other academic activities

— The perception of the value of institutional and departmental reward and recognition schemes varies greatly across institutions and between departments

— Training courses and support for teaching staff in universities are regarded as important for two reasons: they offer an indication that an institution takes teaching seriously as a profession; and the level of engagement with training and support offers an indication of an academic's commitment to teaching

— Academic leadership at all levels is important for the proper reward and recognition of both teachers teaching

— A change in academic culture towards one that values teaching at the same level as research and managerial duties is perceived to be the single most important factor for increasing the reward and recognition available for teaching activities

— There is a perception among some academic staff of a 'glass ceiling' for female academics

— Academic culture appears to be changing towards an environment in which teaching is more effectively recognised and rewarded. But the change is perceived to be taking place slowly; pursuing teaching excellence is still seen as being a risky strategy for furthering an academic career.

# 5.        Interim conclusions

This report refers only to the first part of the investigation. The results of the study of higher education institutions' policies for recognising teaching, and how these policies are being implemented, are still to come. The evidence presented in the previous chapters consists solely of academic staff opinions; moreover, we have indicated the need for some caution in generalising from these because of the way the sample was chosen.

However, there are several conclusions and implications that may be drawn at this stage, particularly in the light of the similarity of the some of the results to those from earlier studies.

There is clear evidence that academics believe strongly in the importance of teaching in higher education and that they think it should be appropriately recognised and rewarded. They say that formal institutional processes (especially promotion) and a leadership culture that values teaching are both important for doing this. There is consensus among academics located in different types of institution about the importance of these factors. This complementary combination of 'environmental' and personnel factors exactly replicates previous findings (e.g. Ramsden and Martin, 1996). It indicates a basis for institutional policies that will enhance the recognition and reward of teaching in higher education.

Training and support are also valued as ways of raising the status of teaching. There is less consensus about the value of institutional and departmental recognition schemes such as teaching awards; again, this is consistent with previous research, which suggests that these schemes cannot substitute for more fundamental changes to promotions processes and the environment.

Most academics feel that the status of teaching is low in comparison with research. They say that research is important, and that it is by and large given appropriate status and suitable emphasis in appointments and promotions; but there is a large discrepancy between the value they perceive to be given to teaching and the value they believe it should be given. The largest discrepancies between the perceived and the desired emphasis given to teaching occur in more research intensive institutions. Consistent with previous results, staff who are in senior posts are less likely to think that there is a sizeable difference between ideal and actual in the importance of teaching for promotion. This would appear to cohere with Parker's finding that promotion to senior academic posts is still weighted in favour of academics who focus on research, and it may suggest an obstacle to implementing policies for recognising teaching more effectively.

As far as national schemes for recognising teaching in higher education are

concerned, levels of awareness of such schemes tend to be greater than the belief that they have had an impact on raising the status of teaching. Less than half the survey respondents said that the most influential initiatives (CETLS in England and NI, Quality Enhancement Themes in Scotland, and the Higher Education Academy), had had 'some' or 'considerable' effect on the esteem in which teaching is held. The interview respondents were generally rather more positive about the usefulness of national schemes such as the NTFS in England and NI. It is evident, though, that institutional initiatives have a major role to play in recognising the importance of teaching.

The general conclusion from these interim findings is that teaching in UK higher education is still perceived to be valued and rewarded too little, both in formal personnel processes and in the dominant culture of institutions. As far as the former are concerned, it will be important to devise systems at local levels which are based on rigorous criteria that are not inconsistent with the ways research performance is assessed. An important task is likely to be supporting institutions in sharing good practice in promotions and appointments procedures, enabling not only the development of suitable criteria (both general and discipline-specific) but also their application in practice.

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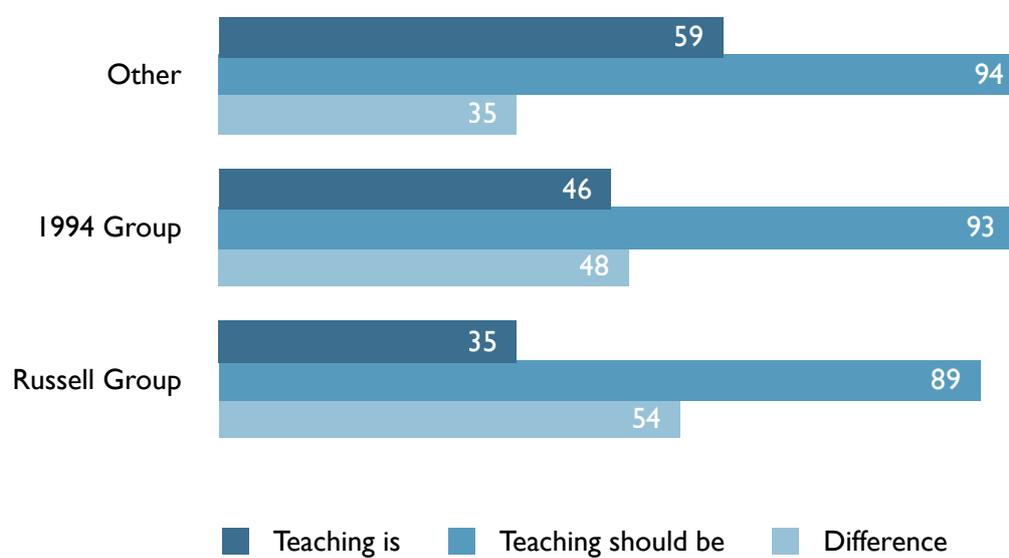
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# Appendix: Importance of appointments

## Importance of research in appointments



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ■ Research is | ■ Research should be | ■ Difference |

## Importance of teaching in appointments



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|---|---|---|
| ■ Teaching is | ■ Teaching should be | ■ Difference |
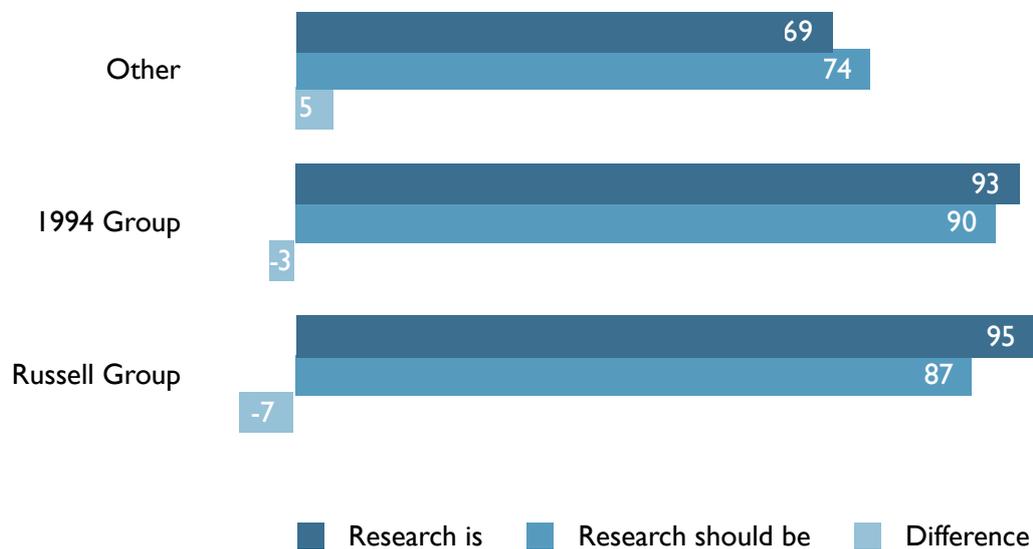
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