##### Researcher

Okay, great. Thank you. So obviously I've read your profile so I know a little bit about you, but kind of in your own words, can you just tell me about your sort of current job role and your kind of background?

##### Participant 16

My background... I've been in academia for a good, nearly 20 years. I did my PhD back in [previous university] in [year]. I was one of the first students at that time to have a scholarship kind of thing. So it was myself and two other guys and we shared an office and it was great fun. And then I finished, at the time in [home country], the PhD area was in [sub-discipline] and I'd done a master's in it as well, and a [professional degree] and all this kind of stuff. And so I, basically went to work on the outside, on the consulting side and I sort of kept a hand in both. And then I got my first academic job in [year], teaching as a full time lecturer then in [sub-discipline]. But I was also doing stuff as well on the outside, so it's this combination, hybrid. I was in [previous institution] then. And I was a lecturer at [previous institution] until [year] and the little unit we were in, in [previous institution], were made redundant. They actually closed the unit. Basically, they set up a competing course, and the competing course cannibalised ours, so it was an opportunity for the organisation to restructure at that time in terms of pressures. Then, we were talking, it was, it was RAE time, I think, late 2000s. I think in terms of changing expectations, workloads started to increase then quite a lot. I was quite happy to leave academia at that stage. I thought "hmm, I don't really like this, it's not really for me". Anyway, cut a long story short, I had some little businesses et cetera, and for personal reasons or whatever, I realised I had to go back into academia. And then I moved over to [area] and I had been working in different places just with the consulting job. And I just took the first post that came along and that was in a teaching university. And I didn't realise it at the time just what I'd done, haha. But it was definitely a shock to the system. So expectations there, it was a teaching-oriented university. There was talk about doing research as well, so my contract was both research and teaching, but in truth it was pretty intensive teaching. There was a lot of stuff. And then also my other roles were getting local industry and reaching out and stuff, and trying to get third sector organisations involved. Yeah, that's basically about it. And so, I suppose it's quite difficult now in terms of reflection. Am I a true academic in that sense? No, probably not. I'm an academic in the sense that the contract I'm on now is an education contract, which is fine, I do course design and teaching, and any of the research that I do is just in my own time.

##### Researcher

Okay. Okay.

##### Participant 16

That's about it.

##### Researcher

OK, wonderful. And so in your current role, you are sort of contracted to teach, there's no sort of formal research allocation for you at the moment?

##### Participant 16

Not really, no. I think it's something like 10% or whatever on scholarly research. But I do research projects with other colleagues in different universities and such. I've got to keep hand in just in terms of publications. I've got some reasonably good publications in the pipeline and some quite good successes recently. But I just do what suits me in the sense of, I made a decision a long time ago, I'm not going to get on this other crazy bandwagon. The only thing that counts is ABS four stars and three stars and all that kind of nonsense, it's just not me. I thought no, I don't believe in that. It's a political game, really. So, yeah, I'm teaching only, basically, or education focused, whatever you want to call it.

##### Researcher

And looking at your kind of profile it's very kind of interdisciplinary, I think. There's lots of different areas. So would you say you have kind of like a defined sub-discipline within the general sphere of business?

##### Participant 16

I've taught nearly everything over the period of my career, and I've been involved in everything in different places previously. Now I don't do any [sub-discipline] at all. A little bit of research but I don't do the teaching. Most of the area that I'm in now is the [area] which is very straightforward, it's very, it's interesting and what have you. So yes, I've migrated from niche things. But yes, I've done, I don't know, most subjects other than [subject], I would say. I've taught almost everything at some point in time.

##### Researcher

A bit of a jack of all trades then?

##### Participant 16

Absolutely, and a master of absolutely none.

##### Researcher

Haha. Okay. Wonderful. So I guess what was it that kind of made you want to have an academic career? What was it about the job that was attractive to you?

##### Participant 16

At the time in the late nineties I actually didn't, and at a point I thought "what am I doing here? This is madness". And I got into industry actually and ended up working for one of the biggest, I was a senior [role] at one of the biggest [sector] companies in [country]. And it was great. But I also heard then on the grapevine, I was there a couple of years, I knew they'd messed up in terms of what they'd taken on. Like most companies at the time, [sector] companies, are just, their expectations were crazy and the markets weren't there. And my old supervisor at [previous institution] said "look, there's a job coming up here, what do you think? Would you interested?" And I wasn't really. But then I thought about it and I thought, "well, if this goes belly up, I'm stuffed really". So it was more opportunism than anything else. So I didn't look back and at the start it was like, it wasn't one of those things where, I think now it's much more career defined than at that period of time. Certainly for me it wasn't. Does that affect one's career progression? Yeah, probably. I didn't live it and breathe it. I didn't love [sub-discipline], which is what I did my PhD in, so it wasn't really my area. And I found it quite boring actually in terms of research and stuff.

##### Researcher

So obviously at the moment you are very teaching focused. Do you enjoy teaching more than doing research?

##### Participant 16

No, actually, I don't. I enjoy them both. Well, I feel, now, I do research for me and do it with a goal in my head. I'm not doing it, I don't have anything to prove to anyone. It just doesn't interest me. If something is interesting and it's just a little short article, I'll write it. It doesn't have to, I don't care about the star thing of the journal. And then there are other projects I'm working on with other people that are three star, four star, whatever, things that I'm working on. That's fine. Happy to contribute to that. But I enjoy both equally.

##### Researcher

Okay, that's great. So how would you kind of describe the environment of the business school? Obviously you've mentioned the ABS three star, four star, that kind of pressure. Is that something that kind of weighs heavily in that environment on your kind of colleagues and stuff?

##### Participant 16

I think it does. Yes. It also depends on the community that you are with. I think for the quality of your colleagues, at a place like [current institution], it's not that big of a deal in the sense that they know what they're doing and they're very, very good at it. I think for other universities that are not in the Russell group, I think it can be a little bit more, it's a little bit more outwardly performance oriented. A lot of universities now are signing the, I forget the name of them now... these DORA principles, you know, the San Francisco principles. But I think in other universities, certainly in [previous institution], and I know colleagues within other universities, they are told, a co-author from [another university] was told they need to be ABS listed at three star in order to get, he's got his probation or whatever. So we need X amount of these. Yeah, at [current institution], I don't know, it's interesting in the sense, you know, obviously quality is associated with the journal, but they will, it's also the internal, the internal auditing I think. Where papers et cetera are evaluated, you know, something may be published in a four star journal, it doesn't necessarily mean to say it's going to be four star quality. It could be three star plus, but may not be a four. Do I think colleagues... of course, they have to have X percent at four star, is that a tough thing? Oh yeah. Is it something personally I would want? No, I couldn't do it. So, and I wouldn't want to. Yes, it's a great privilege to have to work with colleagues who are so good, actually. Really, really good.

##### Researcher

And so obviously there is that kind of pressure then in some respects for academics to kind of do those kind of applications. What about impact? What kind of attitude does the business school have towards impact beyond academia in terms of kind of like external stakeholders?

##### Participant 16

Oh, it's huge. Of course, it's absolutely huge. And I think going forward now as well, it's going to become even more important just in terms of the way things are organised. So it is impact not just for research centres, for example, but also in terms of education as well. So, to what extent will it benefit stakeholders and change their, change lives basically, I think it's pretty huge. So [current institution] is a big university, I think it's one of the biggest of it's type in the country, and so they're working really hard on pushing the impact agenda. And certainly it's something, it's pretty huge in the business school, absolutely. And there is a critical mass of people that are able to do that, I think that helps as well, in particular areas. Because if you're too small it becomes difficult. But, we seem to be doing really well. And we're expecting a good REF score.

##### Researcher

And do you think, because obviously the REF has the sort of impact case study element, which is obviously very important. But do you think, do you think as much importance is given to that type of thing as is just churning out those publications in those kind of really high ranked journals? Do you think they're kind of on equal footing?

##### Participant 16

Yeah. They are. Maybe they didn't used to be, but they certainly are now. Definitely. Yes is the short answers to that. The two go hand-in-hand. I think that transition from the individual researcher and the many outputs he or she has to the impact philosophy and what that means, it's definitely happening.

##### Researcher

And, the business school, does it have any kind of like professional accreditation?

##### Participant 16

Yes, I think it is accredited for most of its courses.

##### Researcher

Great, and do you think that has any kind of impact on the way that you're kind of expected to work or the kind of activities that the business school kind of focuses on and carries out?

##### Participant 16

Yeah, of course compliance is a big thing. So, you know, in terms of course design, in terms of course implementation, they can't afford to let things slip. And overall, I think the response from students is quite good, they're quite happy with what is being developed. Certainly we get great postgrad PTES scores and things like that. So, yeah. So, I think the accreditation is very, very useful, it is something that you need really in leading a business school. Yeah, I know that other universities and business schools have trouble with accreditations, but I don't think [current institution] has had trouble. I'm just looking it up now, as we speak... yes, we have [accreditations].

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. In terms of kind of like your job role and the kind of expectations on you as an educator, are there are any kind of formal requirements in that they're kind of like written down that you have to meet, such as, for example, maybe like student scores in module evaluations or that kind of thing?

##### Participant 16

In terms of what you need to get in order to continue in your job?

##### Researcher

Yeah.

##### Participant 16

No, well certainly I haven't come across anything. There probably is. But I think it's more a case of management by exception. So if something really terrible happens, you'll get pulled up on it, definitely. Pulled up is the wrong word, it would more be a case of "what went wrong here?" People's attitudes are very, very professional to be honest. The work pace is intense, so sometimes my own, the issue, the only issue I would have is emails don't stop. So, it's one of these things people work on all the time. People turn around the emails quite quickly. So if you get an email, for example, 9 o'clock at night, people will turn that around at half 10. So that's a bit nuts. It works for some people. Obviously the business school isn't expecting people to turn around emails or anything like that but in terms of the informal working culture, yeah, it does seem to be, it seems to be very full on. And yeah, so it's a lot of intensity from that point of view. I suppose in the other university I was at, that wouldn't have happened, they were more rigid in terms of, you know. It's interesting.

##### Researcher

So would you say that those kind of expectations are more sort of normatively enforced rather than kind of set in stone kind of thing? They're kind of more like expected of you, but not, no one sort of, it's kind of like an unwritten rule kind of thing?

##### Participant 16

Yeah, it's one of these things where, but, you know, I think it came up in a discussion as well quite recently, the dean was having a discussion about it, there are reasonable hours that you're expected to work and to get back to people and students and all the rest. And that's fine. But I think some of the other stuff as well is just getting the general pace of things. Everybody wants to do a good job, really. So they tend to work, I mean, I've changed my work pattern and I won't answer emails immediately when they come because it's actually a huge distraction. So, stop the day at the end of the day, fair enough, if you can get everything done. But sometimes things do pop up in the middle of the day, and I try not to do them late at night because I'm too tired and knackered. Unless it's something simple. Yeah, it is full on and I think with the Covid-19 thing and everything else, the move to online, it's been pretty intense for everyone. It's completely new for everyone. How to deal with student expectations and just working that through and what it looks like, how do you live it and breathe it. It's been, definitely, an experience. I don't know about you guys, but it's definitely, I've had a shock.

##### Researcher

So, in terms of delivering education, on that kind of topic, how have you kind of found the transition to the new style of teaching?

##### Participant 16

Stressful. That was stressful. Stressful. Better now obviously, you can make sense for it as you go through, but it's still very much, you know, it's one of these things, you try something new, you're hoping break out rooms will work in Zoom, or you're hoping you can use the technology. So I think in terms of the class dynamic as well, that's something different. How students interact, for example, we do a lot of seminars on Zoom, and figuring out the best way to do that and all the rest. And I think it's definitely been challenging. It's been stressful. We've had guidance, a lot of guidance, a lot of support. But at the same time it's difficult, it definitely is. Do I like it? I didn't at the start. I'm getting used to it now.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's really interesting. Obviously things have changed in terms of the fact that teaching is online and it might take maybe more kind of preparation and obviously it's learning a completely new skill. Do you think that's had quite a significant effect on your workload and kind of the time you're spending to prepare for these kind of teaching activities?

##### Participant 16

Yeah. Yeah. So I'm now responsible for doing programme, facilitating programme redesign as well. So, but a lot, all of it together it has been absolutely hectic. It has definitely been very busy. Yeah. So it's basically, it has been quite challenging, there's no point in saying otherwise. And I'll be glad once Christmas comes, at least then that first semester is over.

##### Researcher

And do you feel like this is going to change the future of business education permanently? Or are you hopeful that it is going to go back to normal? Or do you think things are going to be permanently a bit different now?

##### Participant 16

I think things are going to be different, absolutely. Partly because of the flexibility that it has introduced and, you know, there are good things about it. And so I think the blended model will be with us for a while. I think words that have been used before, such as resilient, et cetera, I think that's going to be, it's going to be there in the future as well. Do I think I we will be returning to face-to-face, because that is what Russell groups do? Yes, of course. But at the same time, I think there'll be an increased role for blended activity. People are cautious, they've turned everything around and have got this model, so I think things like asynchronous materials that are ready for students for prep for physical face-to-face is something that is an easy win. And I think that is useful and benefits the pedagogical experience for the student.

##### Researcher

And obviously so you said that your workload has kind of been impacted and it's been quite stressful, quite challenging. Do you have, like, a specific kind of strategy or coping mechanism for dealing with that? Do you kind of just get on and not really think about it in that way?

##### Participant 16

I think it's week to week really. So myself and my other half is a [role] in another business school, so we both are at home, we share a workspace together. So it's just getting to the weekend really, in the hope of, it'll be better sometime soon, in that sense, the intensity will go away. Yeah, so I think it's just a week to week kind of thing. I do know a lot of colleagues that are incredibly stressed with all of it. I think there's a fear too of the physical presence in the classroom. I would be lying if said I wasn't worried about getting Covid-19 when delivering seminars, for example. It's a real worry.

##### Researcher

Are you doing any face-to-face teaching at the moment?

##### Participant 16

So it will probably be November time before I do some. Another colleague wanted to do the physical side and so I agreed and she was happy to do that. So that's fine. But yeah, it's something that I will be doing. Am I nervous about it? Yes, slightly. Absolutely.

##### Researcher

Okay. So the last thing I wanted to ask is obviously you've been in the kind of business school environment since, you said since the mid nineties when you were at [previous institution] doing your PhD. What do you think are the main kind of changes that you've seen occur in the kind of business school environment from then to now? I mean, if any, if there has been changes.

##### Participant 16

There are a number obviously. I think probably one of the biggest ones of late has been the student fees changes, they've gone up dramatically. So students are customers, and as a result, that has changed the, not just the power dynamic in essence, but it's also changed how and what can be delivered. And so you do sense, there are pros and cons for some things and changes that have been good. But there are also some other things that have sort of, I don't know, I think a lot of students now, their motivation is get their degree, getting as good a mark as possible, get out and forget about it. That's it, that's my learning done, thank you very much, it helps me to get on to the next part of my life, as opposed to the reflection on the level of the learning itself. So I think that is there. I think the other thing obviously is the metric system around REF, and KEF, and TEF. I think that has definitely created pressures and hierarchy. So it just depends where you are on that hierarchy. Good for the sector? No, I don't think so. Because at the end of the day, this is my personal view, you know, everyone knows who the good universities are, everyone knows where the research comes from, does it need this exercise? I don't know. I don't think it helps. So, but yeah, so basically REF, KEF, TEF, and student fees I think are the main drivers of change. And things have changed.

##### Researcher

And speaking of the REF, obviously you've seen the movement of the RAE to the REF which happened for the first time in 2014. Do you think, because obviously the REF has that kind of impact element in it, whereas I think the RAE previously was kind of missing that, do you think that kind of changed the way that business schools are looking at impact if it's something they are being assessed?

##### Participant 16

I think now, and again with the rules changing for the next cycle, whereby portability of individual publications, that's changing. So up until now people have still been able to take their publications with them, so there is still that sense of the research being owned by the researcher, an individual researcher. Whereas now that is definitely owned by the university. And in terms of impact, thinking back, it is definitely there, it's visible, and it's changed the resourcing models for lots of research centres and it's also changed the expectations in terms of what staff do as well.

##### Researcher

Okay, wonderful. Thank you. I think that is pretty much everything I wanted to ask directly so unless there's anything else significant that you might have thought that you might want to say in relation to this kind of topic.

##### Participant 16

No, not really. I probably, to be honest, I probably wouldn't be the best person in the sense of, because I'm on an education track now, it'll probably be better with someone that is on the research, on the three legged contract as opposed to an education one, but I don't know.

##### Researcher

I mean, I really really, I'm kind of looking to get all perspectives, I'm sort of trying to talk to teaching focused, research focused and those who are kind of more blended. I can't remember the word, like dual kind of contract lecturers who do a bit of both because it's interesting to get the kind of perspectives. And then also looking obviously at different levels of seniority and that kind of thing, just to sort of see the kind of differences. But no, education is hugely important, and one of my kind of, one of the things I'm kind of looking into is education and how it has changed since Covid-19 and seeing where the emphasis lies. And also it's such a dynamic career in that you can be essentially the same, in the same kind of job field, but doing completely different things. So it's definitely good for me to get all those different perspectives. So it was really interesting to hear from a teaching perspective. Definitely. Yes, it's really, really interesting.

##### Participant 16

Well, I really hope it helps.