##### Researcher

Okay. Thank you very much for your time. I know you must be very busy, but I really appreciate your time. So I just kind of want to start off, obviously I've had a look at your profile and stuff and I've read a bit about you. So I know roughly kind of where you are at the moment, but just in your own kind of words, could you tell me about your background, your kind of career so far and your current role, please?

##### Participant 21

Yeah, so, my title is [role] in [discipline]. We call that at [institution] the [education-focused] pathway. So, I have maybe more focus on the education side of things than on maybe the more traditional research side of things. But you still have to, you're still required to produce scholarship in it's various forms on the education side as well. So I guess my story so far is, I started, actually, as a teaching fellow while I was still doing my PhD, which with hindsight was, I don’t know if it was the best route to have done, with hindsight. But, yeah, essentially I started, I think in around about my second or maybe my third year of my PhD. So I was still sort of completing the PhD and the data collection and so on, as I started as a teaching fellow. So, that was sort of to begin with. So I've been at [current institution] for 5 years but really only a few years post PhD, I guess, is what I was saying there. In that time I've been teaching one of our largest courses. So I teach our biggest first year [discipline] course, which pretty much all business students take. There's normally around 450 on there, but this year there's closer to 800 because of the unusual A level situation, which led to a sort of flood of first years coming in. And then I teach [topic] to third years, which is our most popular or second most popular third year course. So it's got 200 or so students on it. And I've done a few other modules here and there as well, but that's the two modules I'm currently responsible for. I guess that's it. I'm also deputy programme director for the [degree programme] which I help set up in the first place. I've sort of seen that really from it's early conception to where it is now.

##### Researcher

Okay. Thank you. So you did your PhD at [previous institution]. Is that correct?

##### Participant 21

That's right, yes.

##### Researcher

So how did you end up going from [previous institution] to [current institution]?

##### Participant 21

To be honest, it was my wife. She works in [city]. So that's why I was looking for a job in [city] eventually, just so we could line up our careers if you like. That was probably the biggest incentive I guess. The issue to be quite frank with you is academic salaries. They're not that much different if you're in [region] or [region], particularly if you live near [city], the living cost is much higher. So you sort of almost take a financial hit to work in and around [city]. So I was probably, it wouldn't be my first choice had it not been for that, I think, would be fair to say.

##### Researcher

Okay, cool. And so obviously you said you're on the [education-focused] pathway, so that's more kind of education focused. So, kind of like, I guess contractually, are you expected to do research as well, even if it may be a smaller amount, or is it mostly, is it almost pretty much exclusively education and maybe the admin side?

##### Participant 21

To be honest with you it's a relatively new route. So there's still a lot of, they only created it, I think last academic year and obviously coronavirus has come in recently, so that's been a bit disruptive. So yes, there's pressures to publish and certainly to get promoted you have to be publishing in either the education literature or at least showing scholarship in different ways now. So I think there's some suggestion for kind of textbooks and other stuff. So on the traditional academic pathway, you would be expected to publish more in journals, but it's accepted that maybe the publications on the education pathway can be a little bit more broad. So it could be, for example, maybe something more like contributing to things like newspapers and other stuff and thought leadership type stuff. I think there's a view that there has to be something scholarly about what you're doing. So you almost want to distinguish yourself from, say, a school teacher or something which doesn't have the academic side, maybe it's more educational than academic. And I think that, to honest with you, there's a lot of questions over exactly what, because when it comes to the traditional routes there's quite almost objective requirements to get to each level, you know, there's sort of general suggestions to get a lectureship about publications and so on. Professor might be 20 plus publications, if you like, and obviously there's the journal rankings and so on. I think there's quite a clear, and you can sort of do it competitively as well because you can see what other people have got at that level and think if I've got the same, then how come I'm not at that level? Whereas I think when it comes to this, because it's still so new, there's no precedent yet on exactly what's required. So while there is certainly some level of scholarship required, I think exactly what scholarship looks like and how you quantify it and make it objective and so on, I think that's still quite questionable. But to be honest with you, I sort of fell onto it as well, this pathway. So the issue I sort of had was coming in as a teaching fellow, you're between your PhD and teaching and marking and all that other stuff, getting research done was, just getting the thesis in was a sufficiently big job. And then post-PhD it's been reasonably challenging. Again, I think I mentioned the financial aspects of it, if you live in [area], particularly if you want to have a family and get married and buy a house and stuff, you end up doing extra teaching and marking stuff. So it's a bit of a vicious circle where it's relatively easy to put research to the back of the queue. At least at [current institution] and I think quite a few other business schools, they pay you extra if you do more marking or a bit more teaching and so on. So you end up taking on extra stuff at the cost of, let's say, career progression.

##### Researcher

Okay.

##### Participant 21

I think your question also alluded to the pressures. So there is pressure to, so it comes up in the performance review you have with your line manager, the kind of head of group, and that has been - it's not to the point that I'm being told that if I don't publish I'm out, which I think is more or less what you get told on the traditional routes - but there is that aspect to it that there is it, you know, it is part of your... you've got kind of three areas if you like. What we call our admin, things like deputy director roles and all that kind of stuff; the education side, which is basically your teaching scores; and then the kind of scholarship part. I feel like I'm strong in two and pretty much have very little to show for the research side of things right now.

##### Researcher

Okay. Excellent. So in terms of, so obviously you say quite strong in the two and then the research is kind of on the backburner. So like, for example, over the past kind of academic year, things have been a lot different with Covid-19 and online teaching, has your time been 100% put onto education and programme directorship and that kind of thing?

##### Participant 21

Yeah, very much so. So even over the summer, for example, I was heavily involved in sort of rejigging our VLE. And so I actually kind of led on a project to effectively kind of give that a face lift, because we had a pretty archaic version of it before and it was just something people would drop. You'd have a few subheadings maybe and a bit of lecture notes and stuff on there. But now we have rejigged it and made it very much a nice student interface. So it was overseen obviously by our dean of education, but we have like subgroups, and I led one of the subgroups that was doing the design if you like of the VLE and so on, the interface. So that took up most of the summer. I think the issue being that we have obviously got professional service people - and the business school at [current institution] is quite well funded - because they don't teach, I think you need somebody who's teaching to lead on these kind of things. I think while we have quite a lot of support from professional service people, they're trying to work on things which they don't actually do. So then it's sort of, they don't necessarily know what the students want and I think you have to have that side of things. So that took up most of the summer and then, yes, since term started it's been putting up material, but it's also, I think, it's just, I mean, we've got more students because of this debacle with the A levels, but that means that there's now a lot more communication from students by email and other things. And email has to be amongst the most least efficient way communicate with people. Sometimes I can, it can take 20 minutes to reply to one email. Yeah, there has to be better ways of doing things. I think answering questions in a lecture was always quite an efficient way to, you know, often they have the same questions. But yes, definitely. And I think most of my colleagues are saying that they feel it's tripled, if you sort of actually put it down to what it'd be like in previous years. Because you've got the first thing of trying to rejig material which may or may not work in an asynchronous way, what we are doing is pre recording lectures and then having tutorials live. So some of the material was designed to maybe have discussion in class and stuff, so then you have to sort of rethink that. I teach [topic] so I'd like to do experiments in class, I used to use lots of polling software to show the experiments. But now I have to rejig that, and that takes up time. So, you're redoing your slides if you like. You've then got the time taken to record it, pre record it. We're putting most things in 15 minutes chunks if you like. So it's like watch something, give them a little activity to do, watch something. A lot of colleagues are saying the actual activity aspect of it is much more time consuming than the lecture is, if you like. You're trying to think of something fun to do for five or ten minutes. And then, yeah, and I think all colleagues are having to deal with their emails and other stuff, and all of the other jobs that we have around the campus or the university. Director of things, and stuff. Marking, all this paperwork type stuff that comes with grading. They always want things six months in advance, kind of, whatever it is. It seems they always, now, they're worrying about what the module information looks like for next year and you're just thinking, I'm going to be in the middle of marking and teaching and I've now got to prepare a handbook for next year as well. Yeah.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's really interesting. And so you have the, so you're director of the [programme].

##### Participant 21

I'm technically deputy director but I'm heavily involved, probably as much, if not more so, than the director is for various reasons. Partly because I have been here longer, I kind of help set it up and so on. So I would say it's closer to a co-director position than a deputy director position.

##### Researcher

Okay, that's interesting. So I guess kind of like a two-parter question then. First, do you kind of have any other sort of administrative responsibilities on top of that? And second, in terms of, I guess, your day to day working, how much time do you kind of have to dedicate to the actual kind of core teaching, which I guess would be like the actual teaching, preparing materials, marking. And then how much time is spent on the sort of nitty gritty admin stuff? Like you said, kind of redesigning courses and that kind of thing.

##### Participant 21

I don't know is the honest answer, because things seem to come in waves. You've always got waves of things that you need to doing, so you work on something for a while and then it's something else. For example, marking can pretty much nonstop, for the whole of this month, more or less. So any kind of spare time you've got at evenings, weekends, whenever, you sort of end up doing marking. Then you don't do it again for another, you know, it's only two kind of peak periods of marketing, usually. Unless you've got a coursework of some sort. The main ones at [current institution] are just after January and then just after May, that's when our two exam windows are. So that's usually when most of the marking is being done. So that comes in peaks and troughs. So it's like you're not doing anything for months and then you've got a big chunk of it. Admin stuff, it's hard to say. It's ongoing. So there's always, you've got a mixture of setting stuff up for the future, which is particularly time consuming for a new programme. For example, at the moment, we're getting the third year set up. So, you've always got, you're trying to get, you've got this strategical side of things where you're wanting to try and focus on what it's going to look like, how to make it a bit unique, and so on, and all this kind of stuff. But you also got the operational firefighting type stuff and, you know, somebody drops out last minute who is meant to be teaching and you have to find a replacement, and this type of thing. There's a lot of, [current institution] particularly likes bureaucracy, I think universities are kind of infamous for it in a way. But [current institution], I think, takes it to another level. We just, there is a committee for everything. There's a kind of subcommittee and whatever, so getting anything approved normally has to go through five different committees. We also have, I think it's common with most universities, but I think [current institution] again is quite bad at it, we have these central university committees and they come up with these kind of madcap ideas that then effect the programmes. I'll give you a classic example. We were allowed to have what we call ten credit modules. So we have to have everything add up to 120. So we have twelve modules in the first year, the idea being that they can take a little bit of everything and then specialise in the second and third year. The university has now decided that they must be fifteen credits, which means we can only have eight modules in the first year. So this now screws up everything you designed for the second and third year. So stuff like that. So you end up having these situations where you feel like you've got the first year running smoothly, module evaluations are super high, students are happy, everyone's happy. And then the university decides that since regulations are changing, for who knows what reason, and you know, this creates a lot of work. Again, it's peaks and troughs. So, sort of, now I've have lots of meetings recently about the first year, what the new first year will look like with only eight modules. Which modules can be kept, which ones must go, can we merge modules together so we keep the teaching but we just call it 15 credits or whatever. So I don't know if that answers your question or not, but it's quite hard to say. I would say education or teaching is ongoing pretty much all the time. If you teach larger modules, I think it takes longer. So for example, last term I was teaching the best part of 830 students and that's literally every evening, weekend. Pretty much every minute you're just replying to emails, you're just doing everything you can to keep things running smoothly. This term I'm only teaching 200 and it's definitely giving me more spare time to do other stuff. I feel like more on top of things. Last term I was just chasing my tail, whereas this term you can sit down and do stuff. So I'd say this term is probably, 200 students on a module I've been teaching for a number of years, it's probably two to three days a week you're spending on the education side of stuff and then the other couple on the admin director role type stuff. Again, it's not easy to say that because things come in peaks and troughs. For example, markings just been, again, that's most evenings, most weekends, you're marking and then that ends again, we just submitted the marks yesterday, so they released marks yesterday. So that's gone quiet again. Although I've got another programme which I'm overseeing the marks on. I don't know, it's hard to describe it in a... because we also get a request from, every so often, whoever it is, like the central university wants this data on what you spend time on, but it doesn't work like that. It's not like you can say it's three days a week on this and two on that. But that's kind of what they want.

##### Researcher

Kind of changes throughout the year then?

##### Participant 21

Yes.

##### Researcher

Obviously you mentioned there that you, it sounds like a very kind of busy schedule, I guess. How do you kind of feel about the kind of workload? Do you find it manageable? Do you find it maybe too stressful? How do you kind of feel about it?

##### Participant 21

It's hard to say on that one again. At different points of the year it can change. So I think I have quite a reasonably laid back personality. So in a sense I'm not somebody who worried about it too much. I'm just going to get on with it rather than maybe get overwhelmed by it. The other thing is you sort of, things like education type stuff, because if the module ran well last year and you've got good module evaluation, you're not as stressed or anything. You kind of know, OK, it worked last year, I'm just doing the same thing again this year. Then it's more about functional stuff about replying to emails and marking. There's less pressure that way when somethings worked quite well. I think the pressure tends the come when you haven't taught the module before, or something like that, because then you've got a bit more of an unknown. If it worked last year it should work this year is a sort of general mentality I have when it comes to the education type stuff. Yeah, but everybody I know at [current institution], and I think it's probably the same at most universities, the working hours are ridiculous. You sort of, you work like an investment banker, a lawyer, and then get paid like a, you know, whatever - not like an investment banker or a lawyer. A lot of people seem to form the same category, and I'm guessing outside [current institution] it's probably the same. But I don't feel overly pressured, as silly as that sounds. I just think you've just got to get on with it a little bit. So I don't feel pressure per se. You get the odd occasion, the marking is always a tight, tight one, particularly if you're marking in term two because you're still, if you are making for term one in term two, that's a pain, because you've got your modules just starting, you've got everything getting going, and that's usually when there's a lot of emails as well. And you're marking. That's normally the peak time of year generally. And I think there's definitely pressure there. It's probably a more stressful part of the year. The rest of it, I think you sort of almost, because it's sort of like a cycle, you just sort of get used to the cycle. I sometimes joke to my wife, it's the same crap, different students, if you like.

##### Researcher

You did mention about sort of student evaluation scores. I'm wondering what the kind of expectations surrounding that are. Is that, is there like a specific number that you're supposed to aim for? Is it kind of just reviewed with you and your line manager? What is the deal with that?

##### Participant 21

It's sort of reviewed with you and your line manager. I would say anything above 3.5 is regarded as not being a problem. Anything below 4 probably will be looked into. Everything tends to cluster, most people get, I got I think 4.3 out of 5 for my two modules last term. And I think, I think it was the best out of the first year programmes. So that was good. But I think, nobody is overly critical on our module evaluations in a sense. I don't think it's considered like, if you get below a score you're sacked type thing. I think it's more as a flagging system. So, it's pretty unusual to get anything below 3.5 or so. So, there might be a few sort of 3.9s or that kind of thing, and that's okay. Maybe you've got to look into what you can do to improve, but I think it's more used as a flagging system. You know, something's clearly gone wrong if the majority of the students have rated it as unsatisfactory. We tend to also aggregate it. It's a number of questions and then you might do better in some questions and weaker in others. So, it is part of your PDR, personal development review, basically our appraisal. It is part of that. But you don't hear about people worrying too much about it. The university is also, the business school particularly, is also quite aware that there are a lot of biases within it. You know, females tend to perform less well, younger people tend to perform less well, and it's, certain modules and disciplines and so on tend to perform less well. [Different management sub-discipline] modules traditionally do very well in the business school. I think it's just people find [different management sub-discipline] fun. And I think there's some evidence as well, the more challenging you make a subject, sometimes the scores start to drop as well. So you've got to be careful that you don't have a system where it's completely based upon student satisfaction. Obviously it is an important aspect of what we do. But they are here to learn as well. So you want to have a trade off between, hopefully you want to deliver something that's high quality and they find rewarding. I think you can get both right, don't get me wrong, but I think you just have to be careful for using satisfaction as the only variable when judging somebody's performance. I think that's the mentality a lot of people have, particularly the more senior people at the business school, is that they're an important metric but you shouldn't use it as the only metric - you should have a bit of a more balanced scorecard approach to it. Also, contextualise things, you know, sometimes people just have a blip, something, an issue with an exam or something like that. That could pull down the score as well - otherwise they may have had many years of good scores and so on.

##### Researcher

And you mentioned your personal development review and the scores may be discussed in that, but it's not really an anchor for anything, but in terms of that PDR, what else do you kind of, what else are you kind of, I guess, expected to achieve? What else is kind of discussed in that kind of review process?

##### Participant 21

I would say it's more mentoring, at least at the business school. It tends to be less of an appraisal per se. So you do state your objectives for the year and you do discuss whether you've achieved them or not, but they tend to spread it out. We have our head of departments but there's quite a few colleagues under one head of department now, in the business school, I think there's probably about 20 to 30 people under one head of group. So it tends to be that they share the PDRs out amongst different professors. So that means I think it adopts less of a line manager role, more of a mentoring role, because they're sharing across different professor, the professors job is less to hold you to account, and more about how can you progress through your career. So I think a lot of junior faculty use it more like a mentoring system, and it's less of an enforcement system on things like publications and other stuff. I think there is other routes for that. I think I would say it's more like mentoring. So the conversation tends be about what's gone well, people tend to then have a conversation about what they'd like to do. So, for example, I spoke a lot about being strategic with time, because I think the issue with research is it's easy to deprioritise, because everything else must be done. You must do the marking by the deadlines, and stuff like that. It's quite easy to actually deprioritise research. So we were just talking a lot about a strategy for ensuring that I can devote some time to it. So I guess it's more like mentoring. I think the head of group role is, obviously, if somebody's under contractual obligation to do something, they will flag that, but I don't think it's so much done - it won't be noted in the PDR, I don't think the PDR is the main vehicle for that. I think there's, you know, if somebody is continuously not getting good teaching scores, and is not publishing and stuff like that, I think there's generally a meeting pulled together with maybe the executive dean about it, or something on that level. I think it's done, I don't know, I've never been involved in any of that, but I get the impression it's not done through the PDR process.

##### Researcher

Yeah. And so you mentioned that sort of towards the beginning of the interview that you sort of started on the teaching fellow kind of route while you were towards the end of your PhD. But in retrospect, that perhaps wasn't the best option. Why is that the case? And I guess following on from that, I guess kind of why, why did you kind of want a career in academia in the first place? Why did you come into academia?

##### Participant 21

Yeah, I think it's fair to say in any university, but particularly in the Russell group ones, the publications are the commodity. That's taken as a the way you get promoted. As a general rule, it almost doesn't really matter when you got them as much as that you have got them. So, the PhD, if you've got nice quiet period to get publications during your PhD or post-PhD, if you get the publications done and out you have got them and you sort of effectively bank them. If you're working alongside that, the hope of trying to publish, I think it is near enough impossible unless you're like a robot, you don't sleep. So, I would say that using the PhD time efficiently and effectively, there's very few times where you'll have just pure research time and nothing else. It's like, effectively like a four year sabbatical you've got. You've got this really nice clean period to do stuff, get it out, publications, and then you've got those forevermore. I think the pressure is to publish every five years because of the REF, but for promotional purposes, I think it's really about the number you've got and where they are. I think that's useful. And then I think watching some colleagues who've gone through the ranks quite quickly, people who have then gone on to do a research fellowship are the same because again, you've got that clear window of two years or so, where you can just publish. Often you're working on projects that are well funded and well structured anyway, so they tend to produce publications by the nature of the fellowship. And again, you know, you can quite easily sometimes come out straight away at senior lecturer level or even sometimes reader in a relatively short window if you're super efficient with that time. Now, there's basically in business schools, and I'm sure it's the same anywhere, any department in the university, there's no, very little recognition for teaching other than it needs to be done. It's not, nobody's in a sense - I don't think ever at [current institution], and I'm sure at most places, particularly Russell groups - has ever been promoted based on teaching evaluations or based on how well you programme directed a programme, or something like that. That's all housekeeping type stuff relative to research. So with hindsight, had I known that, I think I would've probably done that differently - with a time machine. Yeah. And then, what was the second part of your question?

##### Researcher

Kind of like your initial kind of motivation for an academic career.

##### Participant 21

To be honest, I sort of fell into it. So, I graduated with my bachelor's degree in [year], so I was in [subject area]. And there were just so few jobs because of [situation]. So my dad said to me at the time about doing a master's, and I had not even considered it. The reason I went to [master's institution] was they had one of the cheaper master's. And I was looking at places like [another university] and it was like 30 thousand pounds, like there's no chance that's happening. So [master's institution] was like 4,000. So I did a master's almost to postpone getting a job for a year. I then started applying again - this was only [year] - not much was happening. And then I got a job at [organisation] for a while, just kind of looking for work and worked there and realised I quite enjoyed academia, just, I think the office thing of pitching presentations to people and that kind of stuff just wasn't quite for me. And I sort of fell back into just doing a PhD - there was some funding going and so on. But I don't think I ever, it wasn't like a strategical plan, it was more of a, I fell into it. But no, I'm glad I chose this career. I don't have any strong desire to change. I want to say it was a part of some sort of grand plan, but it sort of just, serendipity, whatever the word is.

##### Researcher

And would you say you went into it with more of a view to have kind of like a research career, be kind of more of a researcher than I guess teacher?

##### Participant 21

I'm not sure to be honest, probably a little bit of both. I am generally of the view that, maybe for being a lecturer, doing just education can be fine, but there's definitely a view that to be a professor, if you like, you do need to be research focused, thought leadership type stuff, have something that you profess in, an expertise in a particular area. So I am of the view that, because you do get these educational professors these days, and I think that's fine if they're publishing or doing thought leadership in education. But I don't think it should ever be, professors should be, in my mind, someone in a position where you are a leading world expert in a particular subject or discipline or area. So I think the research academic aspect of it, I do very much value and do want to try and built into my career profile. I don't know if that's really answering the question or not. I guess what I'm saying is that the education aspects I think are important. On some level, I think that's the most impact we actually usually have, particularly in a business school. People in, for example, the medical school are creating vaccines and all the other stuff, it's important. Whereas business schools are social science, we're not exactly changing the world by research. I don't think there's been much coming out of a business school with the exception of maybe the odd bit where it's really world changing the same way a medical school can really have an impact. So I think what we can do is influence the next set of business leaders and stuff. And that's where actually business schools can really be influential. If you can make business people actually have purpose and not just there for the money, they actually want to change the world, that's, I think the educational stuff can be super valuable when done well by a business school. And that's where actually the biggest societal impact can often be. But I do think on a more individual level, career progression type thing, I do think professors in particular should be experts in their field to get to that level. So for my own progression, if you like, I do think the research side of things, it does need to be part of the job if that makes sense.

##### Researcher

You just touched on influencing future business leaders. And that goes on quite nicely to the kind of impact agenda that has become quite prominent, I guess, in recent years, especially since the REF kind of came into things. So I guess what I want to ask is, I mean, impact can mean lots of different things. It can mean, I guess, you can have academic impact. So that would be like citations and things. But also the other side of impact is reaching those external stakeholders and actually making a difference and changing stuff, as you've sort of cited, medical schools doing that quite well. In general, what is, I guess, the kind of attitude to impact at [current institution]? And does that kind of come into your job much in terms of a sort of educational impact? Is there a certain expectation there for that?

##### Participant 21

I think so, yeah. I think there's a couple of ways to describe this. The first would be that I think there's a recognition increasingly by, particularly at [current institution], but I think generally speaking, that you need to be not just standing in front of them with some PowerPoints and effectively going through a textbook. There's actually got to be something of greater purpose. And the way I would describe that is actually more lining up with something like [example institution] or something like that, which traditionally had a very executive education focus where they don't want to just give a crash course in whatever, marketing, accounting, whatever, they want that executive education experience, you know. Debating ideas and really kind of make learning kind of practical. And with that aspect then comes, you know, I think business schools or universities have been quite bad at sometimes just having somebody basically regurgitate a text book in front of students. I think that's where there is potential to offer a lot of impact on an educational level. So I think on that level we're trying to create programmes and learning which is much more meaningful and has a sense of that. As a business school we've recently, because the one at [current institution] isn't that old. To give a bit of context, [current institution] has perhaps one of the world's leading [other management sub-discipline] departments. There's a couple of scholars in particular who are the most cited people in the [subject] literature, so they're people like [name], for example. So the department was very good when it came to particularly [other management sub-discipline] but it didn't have much in other areas like [example subject] and other things. So it's grown relatively quickly to include other departments and other specialisms. So it only formed as a business school about [years] ago, and so we've been having this kind of internal discussion and speaking to consultants and other things about what is our our mission and vision? And out of the various colleagues there's a lot of processes involved like focus groups and other stuff. I forget the exact thing, but it was about creating business leaders of the future who change the world, creating both research and education that changes the world. Yeah. And I think there is that going through the business school and there is an appetite, and I think that people buy into that as well. I think there's a lot of stuff in the kind of psychology literature that says people need a sense of purpose, just being paid is not sufficient. And I think bringing that into research, bringing that into education, is, it's definitely an ethos that's being pushed and I think is valiant within the business school. And I would sort of say it lines up with something like [example business school], which I think has been traditionally very good at that side of things. People seem to understand that when you go there, you're not just going to get somebody standing in front of you and basically reading out of a textbook, if you like, they're going to give you business type problems to deal with and really see the world through the eyes of somebody who could be leading a company in the future.

##### Researcher

So I guess sort of impact is really kind of gaining traction in this kind of context. But at the same time, obviously, you mentioned publications are obviously kind of like a commodity in academia. As you kind of mentioned, you really need to publish in academic journals to get ahead. And those academic journals are obviously predominantly for other academic stakeholders. So a very different kind of impact. I want to know, I guess, what the interplay is between those two strands of impact. What is seen as more important do you think? The kind of publication side or the kind of more external impact side?

##### Participant 21

I would say there is almost a generational difference on this. What I'm noticing is the professors closer to 40, the ones who are the recent professors, they seem to have a much broader notion of impact. They are, they'll be doing TV interviews and writing blogs and other kind of stuff, which seems to be having a much more impact focus, and they love doing consultancy. I think partly because it can pay pretty well if you're a professor as well. You're effectively, you have to bill people sometimes and other stuff for your work. So I see quite a few of the younger professors, full professors, being more impact focused. I do think that some of the older professors who have just never had that have always been about research and they've got more of an Ivory tower perspective of a business school. And they see the other stuff as inconvenience and noise and so on. So, I would say it's almost generational, there's, yeah, I think the younger generation of academics, they've been brought up in this maybe, kind of, something closer to kind of like Harvard Business School or Warton style of academia, they have quite a lot of business facing stuff, or executive education type focus stuff which is, I would say, more impact focused. I think the older professors particularly I think they have been brought up in maybe the English system, the Oxford, Cambridge system of sitting in a library and publishing and not really ever interacting with business and so on. I think that's, I'm probably being a little bit facetious here, but I think it's not inaccurate the way I'm describing it.

##### Researcher

Okay. You said earlier about how since the pandemic, research has almost been deprioritised in a way for those who are, you know, who have that kind of research focus in their day to day role. So do you think, do you think kind of Covid-19 has changed the landscape in a way of kind of the priorities of different academics and obviously yourself as well? Maybe things have changed for you slightly in terms of your focus, obviously online learning and that sort of thing?

##### Participant 21

Yes and no, I think, yes, it's been disrupted since it happened. So there's no question about that. I wouldn't say that the research has been deprioritised from an institutional perspective. It's still the way to get promoted and I think people still accept that. But I think there's accepted limitations. So for example, people are, I think there's, we are very... as I said before, [current institution] loves a good committee, there's committees for everything and we're quite unionised in that respect. People happily fight the authority, if you like. We're not overly hierarchical, people have been making the case for the impact negatively on career progression, particularly for that let's say people in their thirties and so on. You know, they're likely to have a family. Then, particularly, obviously female colleagues. Anybody could be disrupted if they're home schooling right now, for example. So I don't think that they're ever going to deprioritise the research side of things. I think any Russell group, that is what makes a Russell group a Russell group, the research side. So I don't think they're ever going to say "okay, this year it's fine". But I think it's, I don't even know what I'm saying here to be honest, but the research, it still needs to be done is what I'm trying to say. They still would need you to do it. But I do think, there's at least a kind of acceptance that this is not good for particularly junior people. Because I think if you're senior, it's actually, and particularly if your family are grown up, you can still do research just as actively from home. Most colleagues work from home anyway. A lot of the more senior colleagues as well, they tend to live outside of [city] because they've got a family, got a house and nobody can afford to live in [city]. So it pushes people out. If children are grown up or whatever, then Covid-19 is actually quite a productive time because you can't do anything else, you might as well write a paper. Of course it depends on the type of research you do, if you can still do it online. So yeah, I think it's just that the main thing that's been impacted has been the, I mean, the younger generation, who may be trying to balance home schooling or other factors. The education stuff, I think the advantage is that it seems to be reasonably clear that we're not going to be doing lectures, at least not in a big format, next year either. So the advantage of recording stuff this year is you can actually resurface stuff just by just keeping it saved. So there's some suggestion going around, we had a school meeting yesterday, that sunk cost is not like going to say, okay, you have to do more teaching this year, because you pre-recorded everything last year, so that's fine, so kind of re-use material again next year. And the suggestion is right now we'll just be doing small class stuff. So I think the direction of travel is there's not going to be 400 people sat in a room by September, I think that's pretty ambitious. So we may be doing the fifteen to twenty-five class set up, but that's quite an efficient way to teach, because your preparation is the same for one class as it is for six classes, so it could pay dividends next year if you like. Timewise, there's been a big disruption for setting up your courses for an online format, but it could be, yeah. And for example, I think a lot the senior colleagues, particularly the executive dean, has been saying "look, we accept this has been a big demand on you this year, we'll look at how we can better support you next year". And basically getting TAs to help with emails and stuff. I think it can be smartly managed. I think the advantage a lot of business schools have is they have money. Most other departments don't, most departments lose money for the university whereas business schools are kind of cash cows for the university, so they can justify getting the extra support for particularly large modules and stuff. Like, a geography department will make no money for the university whereas a business school, you know, we've got master's programmes with 200 students on its charging thousands each and so on. So business schools are, you know, we can get that extra bit of support from PhD students and other stuff which you may not get in other departments, but then they don't have the student numbers, so they don't have the problems we have.

##### Researcher

So, I'm conscious of time. So I guess as a kind of final question, I kind of am interested about you, you kind of personally in this kind of environment. There's a lot of different things going on, it sounds like a very kind of hectic environment. And obviously you are looking forward to the future as in you're looking at how you can kind of progress to a higher level in your career. So I guess what kind of are your ambitions I guess for the future in terms of where you want to get to? And do you have like a strategy in mind or any kind of plans or anything you might be doing at the moment of how you would kind of reach that stage?

##### Participant 21

Yes, it's a good question. I'm probably not being, I don't have as much of a plan as I'd like. I'm sort of doing stuff without having too much of a plan. So for example, we set up like a mini conference and [practitioner] feedback. So I've got this mini conference thing set up, which is not quite scholarship, it kind of overlaps with it. So the idea is just create a bit of networking on an individual level. But also it brings the educational side of things, educational research and get that bit. I've got a couple of projects that I'm working on. One, we've got the module evaluation data going back a few number of years. So looking to put a paper together, assessment and feedback on an educational level. Also just getting agreement right now, we've been recording data on how long people spend on our VLE and so looking to sort of create research out of that. So there is a sort of desire, I think, people on the education side of things, to do educational research. I think, I want to just tick the box of doing that by sort of publishing some low hanging fruit, if you like, or using some data that is low hanging fruit to put those papers out. So the plan is to use the summer to put that together. Currently, I don't know if I ever want to be long term completely on the education research side of stuff. So I think I might almost try and have two aspects of my career. One that's educational and sort of doing stuff about how can we improve education in business schools, and have that angle. Because I do seem to be on that route. But I think I'd like to do research of a more traditional route as well. So I've got stuff I'm interested in around [topic] and so on. So there is a couple of projects, I've got some data that suggests [idea for paper]. So I'd like to do more traditional research if you like as well. So I'm not always education focused. But the advice I get from senior colleagues is it's best to have one thing you're known for and progress on that. But I'm not quite ready to give up and going completely down the educational side of things. I have the highest esteem for the education side of things, and I think that's important and an important part of my role, but I think I'd like if possible to keep two hats on if you like. Something that's, you know, my specialism in [subject] and then also being known within the business school and progressing the agenda, if you like, the business school agenda on a number of issues. Online seems an obvious one right now alongside assessment and feedback. To give context, the business school at [current institution] is notoriously bad for assessment and feedback. When we look at the NSS data we rank one of the worst in the country for assessment and feedback. But we, our undergraduate programme, we've got one of the best ranked undergraduate programmes in business. So how are we doing so bad at assessment and feedback? It's a bit of a puzzle. I think on just some level as well if I do help push that agenda for the business school it bodes well for me in terms of, I think the executive dean and others would appreciate, it's a known area we need to improve in. So it makes sense tying myself a little bit to that and being seen to be part of the movement to improve that. But also it's just something I'm quite passionate about as well. It's clearly something we have a problem with and I'd like to, for the student benefit, improve it. We've got some fascinating issues, things like it's not clear to us even what assessment and feedback means. Like I've been making a number of initiatives in my modules to improve assessment and feedback and the scores don't move even though I keep doing stuff to improve it. We paid about 30, 40 thousand pounds last year to have this portal added into the VLE which effectively gives them practice questions and feedback, and the scores were the same as the year previously. Loads of practice questions with feedback and students don't seem to see it as assessment and feedback. So there are interesting questions around what is assessment and feedback and maybe even what is assessment and feedback in a business school specifically? Maybe, maybe it's different to other contexts, I don't know. So, I guess, I don't know if that has answered your question. I haven't got a complete plan, I think I'm just, because the issue as well you've got is the summers are short and before you know it, it is September again. And if you think about it, you teach until pretty much either end of March, April. You're marking through most of May and June and at some point you're going to want to take a little bit of time off. And you've got July, August and by September you're starting to get going again on teaching stuff, because they all start in the October. You've only got that two to three month window where you can be super productive. If you're on the traditional route in the business school, you tend to only teach in one term so most people will be teaching one term. If you're on an education pathway you tend to do three modules rather than two and you tend to have that over two terms, which is quite unproductive.

##### Researcher

Okay. Okay. That's really interesting. So I think we're bang on time, really, to finish before the hour. So I'll leave it there in terms of the questions. So I'll just stop recording now.