##### Researcher

Okay. So obviously I've read your profile. So I know a bit about you, but I guess kind of in your own words, could you just tell me a bit about yourself in terms of your background, your career and your current job role, please?

##### Participant 26

Well I've just stepped down as [role]. So I've had administrative leadership roles in the past, but not now. So my research field is [area]. I started off as a research fellow for 20 years, so got used to having large research grants and then moved over to HEFCE funding. So I've always been interested in research, I think.

##### Researcher

Great. How long have you been [current institution]?

##### Participant 26

Over ten years.

##### Researcher

And where were you before that?

##### Participant 26

Before that, okay, so I've been at five universities. I started off at [first institution] and then worked at [next three institutions and current institution]. So since 1995 I've always been in [city].

##### Researcher

Okay. And what was it that brought you to [current institution]?

##### Participant 26

Well, it was back into central [city] and it has a very good and big [another discipline] school. So if you are interested in [applied management discipline], that's quite interesting.

##### Researcher

Ok. Excellent. Thank you. So you said you've just stepped down as [role], but at the moment I guess what are your kind of current responsibilities in terms of research and and kind of education and anything else that you might be involved in? What kind of current things are you working on?

##### Participant 26

I've got 3 funded research projects, one from the EU and two from [research council] where I'm a co investigator, one with [another university] and one with [another university]. So that's taking up quite a lot of my time. Teaching, I'm on sabbatical at the moment, but last term I taught on an MSc course on [topic].

##### Researcher

And have you liked traditionally done teaching alongside research or you generally been way more kind of research focused?

##### Participant 26

I've done teaching alongside research. I mean, I have had a teaching buyout from the research grants, so it's less than other colleagues. And I've always taught on the MSc, really, rather than the undergraduate programme.

##### Researcher

Okay, great. Thank you. Obviously not doing the [role] anymore, but do you have any other kind of admin responsibilities?

##### Participant 26

No, I've been trying to get rid of them.

##### Researcher

And why is that?

##### Participant 26

Well, I'm in my 60s, so I don't really want to do it anymore. I've done it for a long time and I really want to, in the next five years, concentrate on writing I think. So, I think there's a thing about what stage of the career you're on. I probably thought differently 20 years ago. I mean, I thought it was an interesting thing to to do and to have done, being [role]. If you're an academic in management, it's quite interesting to have something to manage. But I didn't want to do it for the rest of my life.

##### Researcher

Okay. So in that case, what was it that brought you into academia then? Was it more the research side or teaching? Or, what was your main kind of interest?

##### Participant 26

I guess the research side. Yes. My first job was, I was a research associate in somewhere called the [research unit] at the [first institution], which was a big research unit and actually very good. And that was entirely funded through big research grants from the [governmental department]. And that's where I did my PhD.

##### Researcher

Okay. Thank you. I guess more kind of generally about kind of academia, what was it that actually brought you into an academic career? Why did you decide to become an academic as opposed to working in industry or practice?

##### Participant 26

Well, I think I wanted to do a PhD and the [first institution] job enabled me to do it for free under staff regulations. So, because I'd done a research oriented MSc at [another university] and enjoyed it. The other job I was offered when I left university was as a national administrative trainee in [public sector organisation]. And thankfully I didn't take that. Because of the pressures that management in [public sector organisation] have. At that point, it wasn't a high pressure job. But it became a very high pressure and a very risky job. So I'm glad I made the decision that I did. So I was interested in the research side of the PhD.

##### Researcher

Okay. Excellent. Thank you. So in terms of, so you've obviously got these main three projects at the moment. Is that is that something that you were kind of expected to sort of go into yourself, like you weren't kind of, perhaps explicitly expected to go into these big projects, but were these something that you kind of sought yourself and made your own kind of workload?

##### Participant 26

Well, I've always always had research projects up to now. So, this is the latest iteration, it's probably the final iteration. I don't want to take on new long projects, but the EU one is a big one. It's got two research fellows, [amount of money] to [current institution]. You know, it's a [research initiative] project. So that's the big one. And the other two are quite small, but they're with good partners. And they both wanted somebody to work on the [specific area]. They wanted a [specialist].

##### Researcher

Ok. Excellent. And what is the kind of, I guess, expected output of that? In terms of, I guess, the kind of expectations on you to produce output. So what kind of publications and that kind of thing are you expected to get from that?

##### Participant 26

Well, the final report and then publications. And some publications have come out one of the studies already. That's on [topic]. And we've got a couple of publications out of that. If you go on to Research Gate, you'll see, that's with [co-author]. The other small one hasn't produced any publications yet. The EU one is just producing a special issue in [journal] with about six or seven papers.

##### Researcher

Okay. And it's interesting to sort of look through your publications because a lot of these publications are in more, I guess, [alternative discipline] oriented journals.

##### Participant 26

It's a mix. And that's deliberate. So the big grants are in, a lot of the big grants are in the [alternative discipline] domain. So it's quite a good strategy to link up with people in the [alternative discipline] school as part of a multidisciplinary team. And I mean the three bits of the [alternative discipline] school that I've had most progress with are [areas], all of which are quite social science-y or have social science-y bits.

##### Researcher

Okay. Thank you. So obviously, I guess kind of traditionally business schools do publish mainly in those management focused journals. Do you feel like you are almost, obviously because your work is very multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary in its nature. So you can publish in those other kind of journals, you know, not necessarily the management focused ones. So do you feel like there's almost, I guess, kind of an exception to the rule with that kind of interdisciplinary work?

##### Participant 26

I think you have to meet the ABS criteria. So I also publish in [high-ranked management journals]. So that covers the ABS. I also write books, monographs, which I mean, my first degree is in [humanities subject]. So [scholars from that discipline] write books, they don't regard articles as particularly important. The business school field does. But, so, I think in every REF return I've submitted a monograph. And actually, some of my, I think my two most cited outputs are both monographs and not articles at all. Which is interesting.

##### Researcher

So I guess, what is it in a certain project that sort of influences the kind of publication strategy that you take? In terms of, you know, doing a book, a monograph, an article for a certain journal, what is the kind of influence there to choose a particular kind of publication?

##### Participant 26

Well articles usually come first. So a lot of the projects are team based with four or five people. So what we might do is everyone might lead on one article but put other people's names on it. And then a book at the end. I mean, that's been the pattern for the last, well, almost 30 years actually. I did my first book which was [book] in the early 90s. That came out of a big research project for [public sector organisation]. We had a few articles and then we had a monograph. And that's been well cited. I mean, to me, ABS rankings are a proxy. I think citations are more important. The trouble with citations is it takes a long time to be able to make a judgement. You can't really judge until five years after an output has come out. But to me, there is a big difference between an output with 50 cites and one with 500 cites. And I would regard that as more important than ABS ranking.

##### Researcher

Is that more of a personal view as opposed to the view you think is taken generally by the business school, the business school culture?

##### Participant 26

It's very much a personal view and is very much against a business school culture, which rarefies the ABS list. Although the panel said, don't use it. Nevertheless, it's so rarefied. Yeah. Which I think is narrow, because, I mean, I have been allowed to submit monographs and of course, technically, a monograph can be double weighted in REF terms. So it's quite, can be quite a good output for a school to have. So one of my books at the moment going into the next round, we're making the case that it should be double weighted.

##### Researcher

Okay. And so you mentioned that ABS is, your kind of view is very personal, and the business school one is rather different. Why do you think that is the case? Why do you think the ABS is seen in that way? As opposed to maybe citations or other kind of, I guess, metrics that you could use? Why do you think that is the case?

##### Participant 26

Well, I think it's easier. I mean, internal peer review is even more difficult I think. We tried that and that was contestable as well. So it's just easier to, I mean, and it has a certain methodology behind it. I remember they did quite a lot of methodological work looking at rankings and citations and things. So it's not entirely made up. But I don't think it captures, I don't think it captures real impact, which to me is citations. I mean, it's difficult for younger scholars because they won't have had the time to build up citations. So, it's a proxy, really.

##### Researcher

So you mentioned impact there. So impact, I guess, impact has a lot of different kind of meanings. There's kind of the academic impact, which is I guess citations. But the other side of impact, I guess, is kind of external stakeholder engagement and that sort of area. I mean, what does kind of impact mean to you? How do you define impact in your kind of work? What does impact mean in terms of your projects?

##### Participant 26

I think it would mean, it would mean some of the core ideas being taken up and used. Yes. I think that happens rather rarely.

##### Researcher

Okay.

##### Participant 26

[Public sector organisation] is quite a difficult organisation to work with because it's constantly reorganising. Its just about to go into another reorganisation. So there is very poor stability or organisational memory.

##### Researcher

Okay. And in general, I guess obviously at kind of a business school level, what is the kind of general approach to impact and kind of attitude towards impact? Is there more of a focus on the kind of academic impact side, or is there also focus on the kind of impact on external stakeholders?

##### Participant 26

Well, increasingly a focus on the second, I think, as well as the first - as well as the first, not instead of. So [current institution] has got eight impact studies, case studies, going forward, and a lot of effort has gone into that. And I'm glad to say the three of them are from [my sub-disciplinary group]. So the group does have good relations with stakeholders. So, for example, I have a senior colleague, she's now part-time advising [organisation] on higher and further education policy. Her research is on those areas. That's the advantage being where we are, we're quite close to [our stakeholders].

##### Researcher

Is that something that is kind of personally a motivation for you in terms of your work, in terms of the kind of impact side of it?

##### Participant 26

Yes. I guess so. But I don't think I've been particularly successful because I think it's, I found [public sector organisation] such a difficult organisation to deal with. But I am in the middle of [city] and there are all these incredibly interesting institutions around. So we have a thing called [partnership], maybe you have one in [researcher's institution], I don't know, which is a combination of the university and [organisations]. So we've got, we've got [participating organisations]. So they're very big and important organisations, but not easy to establish relations with.

##### Researcher

And those three impact case studies that you mentioned coming from your sort of area of the business school, were you involved in any of those? Or have you historically been involved in any impact case studies?

##### Participant 26

No. No. I mean, had the work been more impactful with the [public sector organisation], yes, I might have done. But no. In fact, I undertook two small evaluations with local partners because I thought that they might lead to an impact case, but they didn't, because people stopped being interested in the innovation. And I didn't get any publications out of them either, so it was a bit of a waste of time.

##### Researcher

Okay. And is there any kind of, I guess, a push from the school to kind of generate impact case studies and that kind of thing?

##### Participant 26

Very much from the dean from the Director of Research and from the faculty. Because a lot of resource from REF goes onto impact cases now.

##### Researcher

Okay. And obviously, so, the last kind of thing I want to talk about with impact is related to the REF. So obviously the RAE before the REF didn't necessarily have that kind of impact element to it. And the REF kind of introduced the impact case study section. So do you feel like the kind of attitude towards impact changed because of that?

##### Participant 26

Yes. It's become more important.

##### Researcher

Has that been reflected in the kind of, you know, activities of the business school?

##### Participant 26

I'm not sure. I mean, the three cases that I know, people were doing them all for years anyway. I don't know. And they're all professors. So I don't know what's happening lower down at lecturer level, what with whether behaviour is changing there. I think it's more difficult there because they are less likely to have contacts, though they may be in particularly interesting areas where there's media interest.

##### Researcher

Okay. Thank you. So well, kind of onto the last kind of section now of what I wanted to talk about. We've zoomed through this. So in terms of the last thing I want to talk about, I guess, is I guess kind of your career and how you've got to where you are. You've been in business schools, different business schools for a long time. And you know, obviously at [role] level... what was your kind of strategy, I guess, for kind of getting to a high level? Or maybe you didn't have a strategy as such, but how did you kind of navigate this kind of environment to get to that kind of stage?

##### Participant 26

Interesting question. My first department was actually the [alternative discipline department] and that, and that morphed into [current discipline]. I've always enjoyed writing. As I said, my first degree was in [humanities subject] and [academics from that discipline] like writing, and they tend to be good at it. As an undergraduate, it was a 2000 word essay every week. So I've always enjoyed the writing. So it isn't just as, it isn't just that I'm doing it to meet performance targets. It's intrinsic in that sense. And, so, for 20 years I was in quite big research units, with some protected space. Not sure you get that now. So, both my most cited outputs were books that came out of that period, particularly the period at [a previous institution] under [academic]. So I had very good mentors as well. And then moving across to HEFCE funding, because the research element became riskier and riskier as you got older. So the compromise was that you had to teach, but not so much, as long as you've got research grants in. And then I learnt how to work with the [alternative discipline] school at [a previous institution]. I think I was the first person to hold a joint research award with somebody in the [alternative discipline] school, in [area]. And I repeated that when I went to [current institution]. The other thing which is important is the [organisation]. So I was elected as a fellow of the [organisation] in [year]. It now has quite a flourishing management and business section. It's quite important within the field. And it's not really hierarchical, so it's quite, it feels different. And I think that's quite an important influence. So I think becoming a fellow was important, and that's done on research reputation.

##### Researcher

Okay. Excellent. And so in that kind of, I guess, journey to where you are now, has there ever been any period where you've experienced, I guess, particularly challenging workloads, or is generally consistently manageable?

##### Participant 26

I think when I was [role], it was, it was very challenging. And again because, because the nature of the research work, which were quite large research projects, I was surrounded by some quite good RAs and PhDs who could keep the publications going. But the workload, I mean, the role was in a small department, but even that, the workload was always immense. And I don't know how, how people who are [role] in large business schools can combine that with research activity, it's just overwhelming.

##### Researcher

Okay. And during that time, would you say you had a particular way of managing that, or was it very much kind of take it day to day?

##### Participant 26

I think it was all about keeping the research group going with good RAs and PhDs, so that they could, I mean, increasingly what's happening now is that my RAs and PhDs are writing articles and they're putting my name on last. Because I read it and make comment. But I'm not doing the empirical fieldwork. So having that group around you is important.

##### Researcher

Okay. Excellent. The last thing I wanted to ask was, you mentioned that you did your PhD. It was the [alternative discipline department] that's then turned into the [current discipline] sort of area. So coming from that, I guess, kind of a social science and obviously a [humanities subject] background, did you ever kind of envision that you would end up in the business school area? Or were you always kind of more focused on the kind of more social science-y, less applied to business type thing?

##### Participant 26

I mean, I've always been interested in social science. I mean, the key transition was my job at [a previous institution]. I was a research fellow in [research centre], had a big project on the introduction of [concept] in [public sector organisation]. My thesis was on [related topic], so it was an extension of that really. And [mentor from the research centre] is a very good social scientist. And the first major qualitative management researcher in Britain, I think. So that was a key transition. So it felt quite social science-y, and I think, I mean, as well as attaching myself to [management sub-discipline], I would also attach myself to [another management sub-discipline] as a field. Which I think is quite social science-y and quite qualitative. Case study based. So I've enjoyed that. The methods tend to be comparative case studies.

##### Researcher

Wonderful thank you. That was kind of every question that I wanted to cover in terms of asking questions. So unless there's anything you can think of that you want to add based on this kind of topic.

##### Participant 26

No, I hope we've covered everything that you wanted to cover?

##### Researcher

Absolutely. Yeah, it's been a very efficient interview, we've covered everything and I have a whole page of notes. So that's always a good sign. I'll stop recording.