##### Researcher

There we go. Okay. Excellent. So just sort of to begin with, obviously, I've had a look at your profile, so I do know roughly a little bit about you, but in your own words could you just tell me about yourself in terms of your background, your career and your current role, please?

##### Participant 39

Okay. Yeah. No problem. In terms of my education, I have quite a mixed background, and that's important because it's led into the fact I'm an interdisciplinary researcher. So I did an [alternative subject] degree in [home country], but then moved almost immediately to the UK, to [previous institution], where I studied [postgraduate degrees]. So my focus has always been around [topic]. And at the heart of that is I'm essentially nosy, and I'm interested in why people do what they do and in particular around policies where we would like people to stop doing stuff. So around [topic] policy related challenges. After completing my master's in [previous institution], I got a junior lectureship there in the late 1990s. And pretty much I've been a career academic. I did my PhD somewhat differently. At that time you could get a lectureship without a PhD, and I did it while I was working full time. So, and I actually did it by published work. So full on. Rather than, I didn't do it by paper, as quite a lot of people now do, but it was a full on published work PhD. So it took about eight years or so, and I completed that in [year]. I had gone on to a permanent contract [9 years prior] at [previous institution] and was promoted to [role] in [year] there. So within that period then I was a sort of full serving academic and I've always had quite a strong strand of leadership or management through my sort of career in terms of programme management and sort of faculty management around that. So I led a large degree programme at [previous institution], as well as the trickling, reasonably significant research career. The type of work that I would have done or the type of work I continue to do is very much grounded in interdisciplinary, large scale, EU funded projects, so they're complex, quite diverse. They've all got a lot of travel and complicated teams. And usually quite long term projects, sort of a three to five year project, so that in itself has been quite interesting. I moved to [current institution], and I think importantly, from your perspective, and I might be one of many that you have interviewed, but I wasn't in a business school at [previous institution]. I was in the [alternative school] which, for historical reasons, [subject area] was located within. And as a result, we actually managed the generic [subject area] degree. I moved to the dark side in [year], I took a sideways move to [current institution], so I moved essentially on the same grade and the same salary point, to take on [role] in [subject area]. And pretty quickly from there I was asked to do the [senior role] for [subject area]. So, about 15 to 18 members of staff in the group. I was promoted to [role] in [subject area] in [year] and also since then I've been director of [programmes] for the business school, which is essentially, I have both strategic and operational responsibility for all of our [programmes]. So there's about 2,000 students. So it's a sort of equivalent to, in other business schools, sort of vice dean of education, director of teaching and learning, that sort of role. I do have an equivalent for [another group of programmes], so there's two of us, but we are exec board members and drive the sort of strategic direction as well as dealing with the chaos that is going on at the moment, and has been going on for a reasonably long period of time. Alongside that, I continue to, we were successful with a pretty large EU bid that actually was led out of [previous institution]. And so I've been working on a large [funded] project since 2016. It's nearly done. It's nearly going to be off the agenda. And that's been transformational in terms of the research, it's very much around [topics], but it has brought me into public procurement and public sector and schools, which has been absolutely fascinating. And again, I continue to be involved in and contribute to sort of large interdisciplinary projects around [topic] and that side of things. The other relevant thing that is probably really developed at [current institution], although I did a little bit at [previous institution], is wider community work and sort of wider impact work. And the core of that, I'm a chair of [alliance] which is a group of NGOs, third sector organisations, who are campaigning for change, transformation of the [system]. And that has been a phenomenal sort of experience in terms of networking, campaigning, political lobbying, engaging with policy and politics, and really has, I think, had quite an impact on myself and on the way we have developed and evolved the sort of ideas. That's probably the relatively short version.

##### Researcher

That's really fascinating. A sort of varied background. You mentioned about your previous institution, but it was a different kind of focus or subject group kind of department?

##### Participant 39

I was in an interdisciplinary school. We had scientists right through to social scientists. We lived and breathed interdisciplinarity.

##### Researcher

And that's department was in charge of the [subject area] programmes?

##### Participant 39

Yeah, it was historically. It has, [subject area] did move to the business school. [Previous institution], as with many of the Russell groups, didn't really have business schools until the 2000s or into the 2000s. And they did create a business school. And we continued for quite a long time to be managing the [subject] programme, but it did transition. But they continue to deliver specialist [applied subject area], they are very well known for that type of work.

##### Researcher

Yeah, that's very interesting. On the topic of your sort of background, doing an [alternative discipline] degree initially and obviously continuing on that trajectory, did you ever kind of envisage in the earlier stages of your sort of career and education that you would ever end up in a business school? Is that something you ever kind of saw for yourself?

##### Participant 39

No, I suppose, actually, not being in a business school was quite important actually. And it's interesting having moved into one. And I think it was very important to go, if and when I did make the move, and it was quite a difficult move to make in a lot of ways, I was very emotionally connected to [previous institution]. And I think partly that was because I had studied there. I had been there for so long. It has been so much part of my personal development as well as professional development. It was very important that I went to the right business school for me, and there were definitely business schools that I wouldn't have gone near with a bargepole. And also business schools that probably wouldn't have gone near me. The reason why [current institution] was quite attractive was, far from it being in [city] - which is still pretty big attraction, even in lockdown, I've literally not left the city for five months, and I'm just about hanging in there - there was and is still a sort of [subject area] enclave in it. So two previous colleagues of mine are based here. And so there was a recognition and [current institution] I knew had a fairly strong sense of public policy and was less, was not a corporate business school and could cope with publications that weren't strictly ABS, and wouldn't sort of bat an eyelid at an article in [example non-ABS specialist journals]. They could cope and live with that. They themselves were pretty open to enhancing their interdisciplinarity and their expertise in that, because, while they were open to it, they were still relatively disciplinarily focused. And to an extent still are. So, there has been quite a lot of development. There's a lot of academic freedom that I don't think is there in other business schools. So we are actively and continually encouraged to just do the best research we can. Doesn't matter what it's on, doesn't matter in one sense where we're publishing - do the best that you can. And yes, there are sort of broad areas of expertise and broad areas of interest. But we have a lot of flexibility. I think that was really important to me. We're a pretty small business school in comparison to other Russell group and civic universities, relatively new in that it was only properly conceived in [year], so it's still relatively embryonic. It doesn't actually feel that embryonic anymore. We're about to have [accreditation body] re-accreditation tomorrow. So I was reading all the documentation for it, and I was like, wow, we are a fully functioning, world class business school, absolutely, haha. And there's been a lot of investment and a lot of development within the school. So the other really interesting thing, and I think I possibly underestimated this or didn't probably didn't value it as much because it was so normal in the school in [previous institution], but there is no department that does [applied subject area], there's no school that does [applied subject area]. There's just [applied subject area] done everywhere. So there are pockets. And one of the things that really helped right at the beginning was a sort of group of social scientists from across the [faculties] created what is called the [researcher network]. And that's been really valuable in terms of PhD supervision, collaboration, seminars, dissemination, sort of idea generation and connecting us with people. So I'm involved in quite a large [research council] bid at the moment on [topic], and that has come out of that network. There was a very large [research council] bid, unfortunately, which we didn't get. You can't win them all and you can't do them all either. But that was led out of the [interdisciplinary research hub]. And interestingly, [current institution], unlike [previous institution], essentially divested itself of [applied subject area] in the 2000s and has to reinvest in it. So it got back on the wagon and now has an [applied subject area] degree again and all various sort of variants. And it's driven through the [interdisciplinary research hub]. So there's actually been a lot of really interesting investments and people coming in. So I've been pretty blown away by actually what value there is in not having a department that says [applied subject area] on it and allowing it to sort of happen much more organically. And I think that also, being in [region] and being in [city], being very close to government, to be able to engage with, you know... one of the things that is just fascinating is, it's not that difficult for me to get to meet a Cabinet Secretary, right? They're relatively busy at the moment, but it's not unusual for us to put in a request or to be consulted by a Cabinet Secretary or by a minister. That does not happen, you know, even previous to the current administration, does not happen in [other regions]. So you have a much closer connection to national policy as well as local and regional policy, because the system is more agile and more accessible.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. Thank you. In terms of what you're doing at the moment, obviously, you've mentioned you have quite an important sort of admin leadership role in terms of directing the [programmes]. Obviously you've spoken about your research as well, very research active. Is that sort of the bulk of your sort of time and your sort of activities or do you engage in any kind of teaching?

##### Participant 39

Yes. I am not teaching at the moment because there just literally isn't enough hours in the day. So I haven't been teaching for a couple of years, primarily because the EU project has bought me out of it in order to be able to balance that and the leadership management role. I was also due to be on sabbatical this year as a reward for the six years of being [senior role] and director of [programmes]. But with everything that went on, I stayed on an extra year, so I am due to be on sabbatical for twelve months from [month], and as a result... for example, dissertation allocation. I would normally do dissertation supervision, but the dissertation supervision allocation had happened when we still thought I was going on sabbatical, so actually it's proved quite lucky. I haven't been supervising dissertations. I do supervise PhD students. So I have two PhD students ongoing, but yeah. And then the other, you know, I would have, there's a few other sort of external things that I would do in terms of external examining and also advisory committee membership. So I'm about to have my first one for [board]. So I've become one of their twelve, one of their members of their advisory council. So there's sort of a mix of things, but there's no doubt that the leadership and management role, I mean... it's work-loaded at three days a week. And we have a protective research allowance of 42% of our workload at the business school. So generally speaking, 42% of a research active academic's workload is protected for research. So between the leadership and management, the research allowance, and what is still a relatively small research buyout, that has me done.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting.

##### Participant 39

I have of course taught for decades, haha. Prior to this current period.

##### Researcher

Yeah. And you mentioned, obviously you haven't been teaching for the past few years. Is teaching something that you sort of see yourself getting back into as things perhaps calm down a little bit?

##### Participant 39

Yeah, I actually adore teaching. It's not that it's been something necessarily that I chose to step away from, though I think there has been some value in me having a break from it, actually. So there is some value, but I think I'm at an interesting sort of, and I'm sure you will speak to people who are in similar interesting sort of crossroads, as to where I've got to in terms of the school, what I might decide to do going forward, whether I come back and stay on as looking after [programmes] going forward, it's certainly not a job that's complete. So there's a number of choices to make which I think will influence whether I go back into the classroom and manage courses, certainly on my own. I do contribute to some courses. But yeah, as it stands going forward, I think I'll probably be more probably, more involved in strategic leadership rather than on the ground delivery. Though it could change, who knows? And whether that's within the school or whether that goes into the faculty or wider university, it's something that I will spend some of the sabbatical reflecting on.

##### Researcher

Yeah. That's really interesting. And in terms of that sort of directorship sort of role that you've taken on, could you tell me what the kind of, I guess, motivation was behind taking up that role?

##### Participant 39

I suppose I was ambitious. I saw that it was a good role to take on in terms of developing my portfolio. I did want to stretch myself. I did want to challenge myself. I'm not sure if managing academic faculty is the best use of my skills. So, for example, one of the things that I probably don't have the ambition for is to be a dean, actually, to be a business school dean. So I was pretty young, relatively speaking, in the [senior role]. And I think one of the things I've learnt an awful lot over the last seven years about is, if I was doing something like that again, how I would do it again. And one of the problems with these roles is that they generally circulate around a relatively small number of staff who have to sort of suck it up and do it. I really enjoyed it, it did support me in getting my [current role], there's no doubt. But my passion has always been undergraduate, undergraduate, anything undergraduate. So I absolutely love undergraduates. I really love the time you have with them. The sort of unconditioned - well, they are slightly conditioned - but the fairly raw sort of product that you get and what you can do with them. There's been a lot of opportunity to evolve and develop both beyond curricula as well as the cocurricular, we are still doing shockingly badly in the NSS. It's no reflection on the actual quality of what we do, but there's a lot to do. So I was really intrigued and sort of excited by the challenge. And while the last twelve months have been truly relentless, they've probably been one of the most professionally exciting years as well, in terms of what we have done, how we put together unexpected collaborations, the level of engagement with students, the sort of opportunities I've been able to drive and influence. So that's been really exciting. There's no doubt I enjoy the role and responsibility of leading and shaping undergraduate provision. I possibly would see myself going more down the sort of developmental route of that, into the faculty and university, rather than necessarily being a dean of school. Because nobody is paid enough to do that, haha, in whatever business school they're in. They really aren't. No matter what they're paid, haha. So, yeah. So I think it's been really interesting and it has allowed me, interestingly, so one of the areas, when I haven't been teaching, one of my priority areas has been supporting the development of staff in teaching and pedagogy. And it has been slightly slow going, but we have made a lot of investment and we are making quite major sort of developments going forward, both in terms of how we support our PhD students in terms of their academic and pedagogy development - especially where they teach - as well as faculty at all levels. And what we've been working with and we'll be rolling out is a much sort of stronger sense of a pedagogic staff development culture, because there's no doubt the university is research focused, and somewhat less orientated towards teaching and pedagogy. And it's been fascinating to be able to be part of that shift and to drive that forward and influence how that is effecting recruitment, how it has changed the types of roles that we offer. So we've made a big investment in education focused staff or those that are predominantly teaching orientated. And I've been quite involved in that. We have changed the way we manage interviews and recruitment so that, I can hand on heart say, that people are not getting jobs at [current institution] just on their research portfolio. It's just not happening at the business school. I'm very involved in promotion in terms of supporting and mentoring and ensuring that again, holistic all round sort of performance, is being valued within the promotion process. So the role, while very undergraduate oriented, still has - because of our role on a the exec board and the ability to influence school strategy - we've been able to really drive a stronger orientation and culture around teaching and student experience. We had a new dean appointment during that period, though our dean is a very long standing member of the school and has done, as I've said, every dirty job along the way. So she knows everything and has experienced everything. So even though we have a new dean, it hasn't been a radical change. It's actually enhanced the sort of culture. Yeah, so that's been a really interesting sort of part of the journey. And also being someone who genuinely manages a sort of full portfolio, who has always juggled the research, leadership, management and teaching, I think, and having that sort of mix of people involved, I think, is really important because again, I'm someone who has never tried to specialise in one or the other. I've always tried to sort of be pretty good across the board. And I think that sort of perspective has been quite relevant and important.

##### Researcher

Yeah, that sounds really interesting. Thank you. You've made a few sort of references to the challenges of the past twelve months. Obviously, things have been a lot different. I would be really interested to know from the perspective of a director of [programmes], what have those really big challenges been in terms of obviously the pandemic and kind of the shift to blended delivery?

##### Participant 39

Okay, well, I think there's been, the biggest challenge, apart from the obvious... so for me, working from home hasn't been that much of a challenge. I would always have worked from home at some point. That I haven't found too bad. I think the biggest challenge I found is this, I'm sure it's not only [current institution], but I think it has been mirrored in other places, is I think there has been a disconnect between what senior university leadership have wanted to happen, hoped would happen, and the reality of what could happen. So, on the ground... when I say on the ground, as I said, I'm not trooping in and out of the classrooms delivering tutorials, but on the ground, the directors of teaching, certainly in my faculty - and there's eleven schools - we had a very different sense right from the very beginning of what could be done, what should be done and what was possible to do. It's not rocket science, what we've actually done. And in fact, surprisingly, I think, yes, there's been innovation but there hasn't been much deviation by the university, I think none of them were that willing to break ranks, or there hasn't actually even been that much collaboration across the university. There's been discussion across Russell group business schools, and CABS has been very good in that. So, we experience a real disconnect. That disconnect, to be frank, is continuing. So we have a senior vice principal who was pretty new to the job. Some might say pretty inexperienced in terms of his background. And anyone would have found the last twelve months difficult, but I think he - and we had a relatively new principal - and so the senior leadership team was pretty new. I think one of the challenges they have is they haven't had as good a knowledge and finger on the pulse of their own institution. Their desires or their sort of vision of what they wanted to happen very rarely bared any resemblance to what could really be done on the ground. So we got into a situation where there were essentially promises being made that couldn't be fulfilled, and we knew they couldn't be fulfilled. And there was also this sort of blind optimism going on. I think this was happening in other institutions. And there was this blind optimism that it would all be okay by September. So there was a lot of this going on. I think the other big challenge has been an obsession on in person teaching and an obsession on bringing students back to [city]. Which to a director of [programmes], all of us were saying, roll back, pull back. Really think about what you're saying, what you're doing. Why would we bring them here? And I felt genuine moral and ethical concerns about why we were driving this agenda to bring them back. And I think the complicity, it wasn't necessarily, you know, it was no way contrived, but the government wanted it to happen. Parents wanted it to happen. 18 year olds wanted it to happen. And the universities wanted it to happen. And they felt that if they kept saying it will be okay. Then we were in, I mean, there's no doubt, the worst part of it, was the beginning of October. We actually started term in September, and there was no change to term date, no delay, no nothing. And while many would say surely admissions was the worst part - I mean, that was just chaos. So you're watching BBC to find out what was happening. Nobody knew. And then in October, where it just became clear that this was just... any sort of planning that we had done to try and deliver in person teaching was just unworkable because of the level of infection, the level of self isolation, the not knowing where students were - it was as simple as that, we didn't know where they were. So if you didn't know where they were, how did you know whether they would turn up for in person or anything? And that then led to, that, that was probably what was the most difficult, was trying to manage a university directive that we had to give in person delivery with the reality that giving in person delivery was nigh on impossible. Now, we managed it, sort of, through an immense effort by our tutors and faculty, who were particularly good for first and second years. But it was pretty hairy, and I don't think anyone benefited from it. The business schools that I know, [example institutions], who didn't go down an in person route, who made a pretty strategic institutional decision not to promise in person have come out better from it in terms of staff morale and in terms of being able to direct staff energy. The amount of energy that the likes of me and many others spent trying to make an in person delivery system work, that had no chance of working, was, I think, the biggest issue. The actual designing of how you supported staff and how you developed a hybrid teaching framework and how you resourced it, that was reasonable bread and butter to a director of teaching. So, it was nerve wracking in that we basically could kind of do what we wanted, so there were no rules, and I'm quite happy with that. There were some that were maybe less happy with the lack of rules and the changing rules and not knowing what was going to happen. And there was a bit of "just in time" timetabling and all of that, which was pretty hairy, but overall, actually, that side of it of a working pedagogy sort of framework to say, okay, this is what hybrid should look like for our students and for our courses, I think generally was pretty straightforward. It's actually more difficult now than it was twelve months ago or nine months ago. So there's a lot of tiredness, there's a lot of fatigue, there's a lot of resistance to changing what we've done this year and evolving things for next year, which naturally has to happen. So I would say I'm getting much more resistance to evolving the hybrid model that we have in place. So that's been quite an interesting process. And to be frank, I'm pretty ready to go and lie in a darkened room. I'm definitely ready for that sabbatical. But I think the business school community has actually pulled together. The Chartered Association have done a really great job in having regular meetings, regular workshops, regular catch ups. We have a sort of informal Russell group network of [group focused on activity], which mirrors the dean's network that they have, and that has proved, like, it's just been therapy and there's always someone worse off than you basically. So I think that's been really interesting and helpful. And I think what has happened in a lot of cases is people have got closer. They've pulled together, they've shared ideas. They've been very open about what challenges they've been facing, and I think it's been really supportive in lots of ways.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. Thank you. I guess from the perspective of the kind of education side, it has been very disruptive. Has that had kind of a sort of knock on effect on your research activities? Do you think over the past twelve months you've had to make any kind of sacrifices in terms of the other elements of your job? Has that been something that you have seen happening?

##### Participant 39

Yeah. I would put myself in the fairly lucky camp of not having small children, or not having children at all. So I have not been dealing with home schooling. I've not been dealing with caring responsibilities. Yes, it has had an effect. There's no doubt. I have probably had more flexibility than some to be able to juggle things or change my working day, play around. It has certainly slowed down things, and it certainly made some collaborative work more difficult. I don't think it's effected PhD supervision, actually, I think PhD supervision has proven quite efficient digitally actually. So that's quite okay. And actually the impact work has probably ramped up. So there's been a need to do more of that and be more involved, primarily because [topic] has been so central to everything. So that has been tricky. So I would have said, I mean, it's unsustainable really. To an extent my response has been to just do a little bit more and try and do what you can. And I've used some techniques to try and ensure that on a daily basis, I am touching in with that. So I've been doing a sort of morning writing session, or morning research I should call it. So whatever happens, usually I will get somewhere between 45 minutes and 90 minutes of research done or impact work done in the day, just for my sanity and just to help tick things along. And I think actually, in one sense, it's probably challenged me to really try and compartmentalise a little bit like that. I don't think it's a sustainable. And there's a sort of sense in, we were very much into that big interdisciplinary bid, there's no way you would have got involved in it if... it was one of those ones where we were in the first round, we had got through, and you just kind of have to suck it up and get on with it. And I think therefore it's easier for someone like me without the sort of same level of family responsibilities to sort of absorb that. But there's no doubt there's a physical and mental cost to it. And I suspect we'll be paying for it for a number of years in lots of ways, because what they have tried to keep doing, the REF has continued on, so the REF is just being submitted. I think things like that, and as I said, we're about to go for [reaccreditation] tomorrow, have nearly pushed people over the edge. They're the sort of things that I think require head space and require a sort of level of focus and quality that I don't know whether people had it in them. We somehow managed to write them, but I do think there is likely to be a big cost in terms of those things that we don't know what will be going forward. But yeah, there's been an impact. It involves more hours. It's involved me probably sacrificing the work life balance, and I certainly wouldn't or wouldn't be prepared to do it for much longer than is going on. And I suppose I probably haven't had the best work life balance over the years. So you don't do the sort of stuff that I've done having a perfect nine to five existence. Or nine to four, you know, we're only contracted for 7 hours a day. But yeah. So I think that is something. And that is at the heart of a lot of the challenges that we're facing, what universities are expecting out of people for the hours that we're actually paid to work. And I do think that there will be a reckoning in that going forward, because I think what people forget is that we were technically on strike last year. We were actually on strike last year when it began to hit, and that hasn't been forgotten. That is still a very much part of what's going on. I think the community, the wider academic community, we haven't been on the front line, like the medical community. But my goodness have we kept these bloody universities functioning. And I do think this sort of thing really does need to have senior leadership and wider, you know, those who are funding and all of that, need to have a really serious think about how you keep the value of these systems and how to keep these systems functioning... because I think the cost will be that there will be a lot of people who walk away and say "I've had it. I've had enough. This is not what I can continue doing". So that will be quite interesting to see going forward.

##### Researcher

Yeah, definitely. That's really interesting. I'm conscious about the time, so I really don't want to keep you, I know you've got a meeting in five.

##### Participant 39

Have you covered everything you wanted to cover?

##### Researcher

Yeah. We've covered all of the main topics that I would want to. I guess there's probably one more question I would like to ask, is that okay?

##### Participant 39

Yeah.

##### Researcher

So, you've made quite a lot of references to impact throughout this interview. So you've talked about the kind of, the [alliance], you talked about how the past twelve months, that need for impact has actually been ramped up. And you've showed that that's obviously something that's quite important for you in your role, in your kind of interdisciplinary area. Is that something that you personally feel quite passionate about doing as part of your job? And is there kind of like an institutional push to engage in those kind of activities?

##### Participant 39

It's a really great question, and it's a good one to finish on, because I think it's at the heart of some of what I was saying earlier on. People often ask me what has changed in academia, you know, why is it considered so difficult now? And it's not that the job itself has fundamentally changed. The doing of the research and the teaching, yes, there's new ways of doing it. Yes, there's all of that. But I think actually at the heart of it, where the pressure has come from is on the impact work and the sort of formalisation of that in the REF, without it necessarily being formally articulated within the way in which we do things. And one of the problems that high functioning academics have - because generally we're reasonably high functioning, we wouldn't be here if we weren't - is that we're not very good at giving up stuff. We're not very good at saying, actually, we need to do less in order to achieve more. And there's always this pressure on output. And it's interesting. I think the narrative and the discourse is evolving around that. I think the changes to this cycle's REF, that is putting a greater emphasis on quality rather than the quantity of publication and ensuring that everyone is submitted, is actually a really positive step. What I don't think universities are doing, and certainly with their [grade] staff, and this is not meant to be a "aren't we poorly treated [grade] staff" because I'm sure there's more poorly treated people in universities than us. But there is an enormous amount of pressure on you as a [grade] to bring in large money and to deliver four star publications, to manage large areas of leadership, and to wow the public and change government policy. Some of the impact work that we do will be very policy orientated. And I don't think there's a recognition of just how much bloody time it takes. And also that some of us, I'm also probably less skilled at writing four star publications. What I find quite interesting, and I've actually framed my upcoming sabbatical very much around impact, is that if I'm going to write a four star impact case study, which I think I have the potential to do and the work to do and the context to do and the opportunity to do, then I need to have dedicated time and resources and support to do that. So I've been working very hard to construct that and sort of said, look, the cost to this is that you don't get as much academic publications out of me. That's just the way it is. But in one sense, the REF is allowing that because it's saying we don't need you to write loads of four star papers, actually, if you could just write one, that would be fine. Or maybe one and a bit, that would be fine. But if you deliver a four star impact case study, there's a real value to that. But as an academic and as a person, I have to be happy to step back from that. Now, the benefit I have at [grade] is I can do that because who cares? Whereas the [lower grades] who are still trying to get their way up the promotion ladder, I think it is more difficult to make that choice, and it's more risky to make that choice. And there's a lot of huge amounts of work. It takes years, really. It takes longer, I think, to get a four star impact than it does to write a four star paper. It's tougher, it's more interdependent, it's riskier, it's probably more rewarding. It's probably more exciting, it's probably more creative, but equally, it's less clear how you do it. So I think it's quite a difficult area for younger or lower grade colleagues to experiment with. So there is a responsibility, I think on a [grade] staff to sort of show the way and to really work with that. But equally, I don't think I'm doing a great job of that in terms of I'm not modelling well enough the "how do you do that during the normal working hours?" Because I think the reality is a lot of this work still happens voluntarily and it happens out of your normal hours. And I think women and men with family and caring responsibilities, it's a real struggle for them. It's easier to pragmatically manage your time around research, the sort of normal output, than it is that. So that's a big area. I think the other big area that has really affected the ability to juggle research and teaching has been the size and demands of projects and the internationalisation of those, so that you're physically away. I can't even remember how many times I was in [foreign city] when I was in [previous institution]. I spent a lot of time away, and now I've realised that many of those trips we didn't need to do it all. There's no way, there's no need to fly to [foreign city] for a day trip. Never again. Even first class on Eurostar won't get me doing it. But I think that has been difficult. And I think people have underestimated the huge toll of that level of travel and multiple time zones and multiple partners and complex projects, which, while great from an interdisciplinarity perspective, are just mega to manage. And when put on top of leadership, management and put on top of other related things, it becomes unmanageable. We are not incentivised, encouraged, supported or facilitated to drop things, to let things go, in order to fix other things, and that's probably at the crooks of it. Someone at that point in my career, where I am genuinely having to make personal and professional choices about what I prioritise, what I take forward, I think the biggest thing going forward will be to do less in order to achieve more. Because the impact is genuinely why we do it. There really cannot be an awful lot of other reasons why we do it that isn't narcissistically and ego driven.

##### Researcher

That's really excellent. Thank you for that. And that was a really sort of great answer and focus on impact. Yeah, I've noticed we've gone past the end of our slot.

##### Participant 39

That's okay. Don't worry. She'll be waiting for me in the next one.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's good. I don't want to get you in any trouble or anything with anyone. I'm happy to leave things there then, because it's been an absolutely fascinating interview. Really wonderful. Thank you so much for sharing your experiences.

##### Participant 39

If you do need to follow up on things or you want me to add anything, just drop me an email and let me know. Okay, good luck with your research, and I look forward to reading it or hearing about it. It sounds really fascinating.

##### Researcher

Yeah, it is. Definitely. And thank you. And obviously, best of luck with everything too. Carry on juggling all those different tasks and everything.

##### Participant 39

Well, thank you very much. Bye.

##### Researcher

Thank you. Thank you. Bye.