##### Researcher

OK, there we go. So just to begin with, obviously, I've had a look at your profile and stuff. So I do know a little bit about you from that, but in your own words, could you just tell me about yourself in terms of your kind of background, your career to date and what you're doing at the moment, your current kind of job role, please?

##### Participant 41

Okay. So I'm currently the subject leader for the [subject] group at the school. So that is, I suppose, equivalent to head of department. And prior to that, I was the [senior education-related role] for the school. And I was lucky enough, in between [senior education-related role] and subject leader to get a sabbatical. We're a school that has grown very quickly, not just the education. I mean, a lot of the leadership has fallen on a handful of people to kind of keep the school ticking along. And I'm never quite sure how I ended up in academia. It certainly wasn't a career aspiration. I actually started my background in [alternative disciplines]. So how I ended up in business, it's a whole different story. But I worked for a number of years in industry. And then I got an industry funded lectureship in [foreign institution]. And then there was a natural progression back to [current institution], I guess. And that's where I've been.

##### Researcher

And did you do your PhD at [current institution]?

##### Participant 41

Yeah, I did. I started off, I had a research post, a research assistant post that was actually directly related to work I'd done when I was working in business. And I started to do a PhD part time, and then I went to [foreign institution] to a lectureship there, and I continued the PhD part time. And then I finished it when I came back.

##### Researcher

Okay. So you said you came from a [alternative disciplines] background. So did you never kind of envisage yourself ending up in a business school?

##### Participant 41

It wouldn't have ever occurred to me. I'd always had these aspirations when I did [subject] that I would be like an [education-focused job role]. And then back in those days, it would have been incredibly difficult to secure a place. So a lot of, if that's the route you were really interested in, you had to secure a teaching post first. And I knew teaching either primary or secondary school kids, I knew that wasn't really my thing. So I ended up, after [subject], I went to work in [sector]. And I worked there for four or five years. And then I took a research post in the university looking at [topic], all the rest of it. It wouldn't have ever occurred to me back then, all that time ago, that I would end up in a business school. But opportunities come along and you just kind of go with them and see what happens.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's really interesting. In terms of, I guess, kind of moving into academia as kind of a career, what was it that sort of inspired you? You mentioned that you sort of liked the teaching aspect, but primary or secondary school wasn't really your thing and you enjoyed working with in the [sector]. Was it the teaching that inspired you to come into this kind of role, or was it more kind of the research?

##### Participant 41

I think initially the post I had in [previous institution] was a sponsored post by the [foreign country] equivalent of [company], and it was particularly in [topic], and that's the kind of thing that I had a lot of experience in. And I thought it would be quite interesting. It was kind of like a business facing role, but it was also an education role, so I would have delivered, it certainly would have been modules at the outset. It would have been short courses to the most random groups of students ever. So I remember delivering two day workshops to zoology students. Not that I know anything about zoology. And courses to engineers about [topics] and that kind of thing. And then eventually the post, I suppose, matured into a full lectureship in the [department] at [previous institution]. And I would have taught final year students and master's students, and I suppose it kind of emerged from that. I quite like some of the teaching, not all of it. And I like the difference, you've got days where you're unbelievably busy working with groups of students and teaching and dissertation supervision and programme checks and all the rest of it. And then you get much quieter days where you can just reflect on a piece of research or do PhD supervision, or I would have quite a number of KTP programmes running. And I've got three on the go at the minute. So you get to spend half a day a week in each of your KTP organisations working as an associate. So, I suppose it's the blend of it all. It's the research... you don't spend all your time doing research, you don't spend all your time doing teaching. You're not supposed to spend all your time doing administration, but unfortunately, you spend probably a heftier chunk doing that than you might really want. So I suppose as the role changes and continues to change, you get an opportunity to play to your strengths. You also get an opportunity to influence things. And you get an opportunity - [current institution] and [another local institution] are probably a little bit different from [other UK] institutions. We would have brilliant access to the most senior people in business, to the most senior people in government, to the most senior policymakers, just by virtue of being a very [distinct area], to get into the politics of it. And all of those people are more than willing to give their time, whether it's to me as an individual doing research, whether it's to me as an academic, bringing students with me, or them offering a project or coming in to talk. So that's a very attractive proposition. So you're not stuck in your office churning out publications. You're not stuck teaching all day every day. We give, at [current institution], colleagues have quite a bit of flexibility. We still have to, you know, we were talking about workload allocations a while ago... 40% of our time is supposed to be spent on teaching, 40% in research and 20% administration. And once you've been given, in inverted commas, your "set tasks", you've got tremendous flexibility in what else you do, how you scope out your role, and flexibility in terms of when you do that. We're not all necessarily hit with inspiration between nine to five every day. All of those things are incredibly attractive propositions for the post that you find yourself in. I'm not sure if that answered your question or not, did I go off on a tangent there?

##### Researcher

No, that's given me loads of really interesting information, lots of stuff I would love to ask about. So you mentioned being where you are, you have that kind of close contact, I guess, with policymakers, government, that kind of thing. That's obviously an advantage of being where you are. And as someone who engages in KTPs... is that engagement with stakeholders something that is a particular passion of yours or something that is really important to you? And is that something that there's also kind of an institutional push for you to kind of engage in? Working with industry and policy?

##### Participant 41

The university would like us to engage a bit more, but it doesn't push an individual to engage more. It would put the ask back on the school. And you know yourself, you can think of people who you come across from academia, some people you couldn't let loose with the business community, and they're far better writing interesting theoretical papers. And there are others who flourish in that kind of environment. And there are others who want opportunities to be there. So the engagement, despite the fact I said I didn't ever want to teach at secondary school, I actually do a lot of work with secondary school kids now. So my background, and currently, I'm particularly interested in [discipline], and I suspect that has come from my [alternative discipline] background and a whole host of other things. So there's lots of opportunities to go and work with local schools, and part of it is related to the policy piece. So, our curriculum exams body for GCSE and AS and A levels, many of us in the school have been involved with them and helping to write the curriculum. So there was a new A Level proposed a few years ago in [subject], and I was on that panel to write that along with business people and educators and so on. So you have quite a degree of influence. It's also really good fun as well, because you get to meet people. You get to see why school teachers think the way they do. They then understand why we constantly complain about kids who join us, who are a really good rote learners, but not very good thinkers. And then the business community would come at it from the skills angle, saying yeah, you might be able to write, but you actually can't manage a project or you can't communicate or whatever. So on the back of some of that, then, the engagement piece, I do quite a lot of workshops. You probably would call them, like half day workshops in [discipline]. Some of them are under the umbrella of the ESRC Festival of Social Sciences. That happens every October, November. I've done quite a few of those this year, they did it online, which wasn't the easiest thing in terms of engagement. So there's that kind of side of it. There's also then the side in terms of business engagement. And I do some work with [organisation] which looks at things like [topic]. I'm a trained assessor in business excellence. I don't get an awful lot of time to do it because it's very intensive, but that kind of interaction, you get conversations with a whole host of people. On Thursday of this week, I'm doing a session with [government department]. We're running a webinar on Thursday about management KTPs. So, you know, one of the senior people from the department and one of the businesses, I'm doing the talk from the academic perspective. So there's lots of things. The engagement side of it really appeals to me. I don't think I could ever have a regular nine to five desk job where it was very samey. And that's not meant as a slight on anybody who chooses that kind of thing. I like the variety of the engagements. And [geographical area], I'm sure you know plenty about [geographical area], we're so... some of the business people that we do a lot of work with now are former students of ours. That kind of circularity, you know... that kind of, it's almost informal engagement. Obviously, the formal side of things where the university ask you to represent them at various forums or policymaking groups or roundtable discussions. But there's also the informal side of engagement as well. Certainly here, and the business school, you can be as busy with engagement or as freed up as you like. And that's very much down to everyone's, their personality, their interests, et cetera. I like it. I like getting about... much less so now, obviously. Meeting different stakeholder groups, if you like. I like all of that kind of thing. Even when I was a [alternative discipline] student, I would have always struggled and said how do you make the research relevant? We can all write superb papers. The business application of my research and the impact of it, I think, are really important. And whether it's how I've been brought up or trained or whatever, and you know, giving something back is really important, whatever that giving something back might be. I think I went off on a tangent there again, didn't I?

##### Researcher

No, no, again, that's all really, really interesting stuff, I think. Yeah. It's good to sort of know how important the kind of impact and engagement stuff is to kind of whoever I'm talking to because it helps build the kind of context, I guess. So that's really interesting. And I'm interested to hear about the KTPs because I've spoken to a lot of academics, and I think you're the first person I've spoken to who at least kind of mentioned they have engaged in KTPs. And this might be my own kind of maybe bias... when I think of KTPs, I instantly think of, like, engineering, for example, those kind of departments that are much more kind of prescriptive in nature in terms of the kind of research and more kind of like design science subjects. That's the first thing that comes to mind. So my perception is that's quite a unique thing, I think, of you to be doing.

##### Participant 41

Yeah. I've had about, I don't know, eight or nine KTPs. I've got three on the go at the minute. So I have three management KTPs. And Innovate UK and government were very keen to support right across the piece. And then there was a massive swing towards STEM, engineering, hard sciences. And there was a fairly negative perception that management was a little bit too fluffy and you couldn't demonstrate real value. And now the pendulum has kind of swung back a bit and said, well, it's great to have all these designs, but do you have people who can manage it? Do you have a strategy in place? Can you manage your ops and supply chain, et cetera? So Innovate UK and [government department], they have funded, put a quite a big pot of money aside, specifically for management KTPs. And one of the requirements is that it has to be led by a business school. We were actually just developing the shortlist and criteria for one today, with a local company. And it's heavy engineering. And the second person who's working on the project with me is based in construction and project management. So, the management KTPs have been a really nice way to kind of reinvigorate a different type of engagement. [Current institution] is probably a little bit different from some other institutions. There's quite an amount of money from the KTP that comes to the university, any university. And each university handles that differently. At [current institution], the monies that come for the academic support are given to the academic in a pot of money. You're not allowed to take it as salary or anything. But it's your pot of money to use for, whether it's development of research, or conference travel over and above the university's allowances - not that there's an awful lot of travel these days - or purchasing equipment, et cetera. Or just keeping it in the year account for a rainy day. But that's not why I do it. It's really nice taking a very complex business problem where you do need to apply research. So it's very obvious when you write the application, you've got to demonstrate why a consultant couldn't do this piece of work and why it has to be housed in a business school. And the challenge of pulling in all of your knowledge from all over the place and trying to help the organisation with a really complex problem and seeing some really good solutions is really quite empowering, but equally so, it also helps break down the barriers. The one, I have an associate in one at the minute, she's been there about 18 months at this stage. And when we were writing the application, I remember the chief executive of the company said "you know, I've never met an academic before". And I asked how do you find us? And he was like "you guys are pretty normal". And I'm like, yeah, that's kind of how we all are. There's a lot of myths out there that academics do really fancy work for want of a better word that has no relevance anywhere and that we are somehow a little bit different. So that half a day a week - albeit it's different now, it's not quite the same doing it online - is still a challenge nonetheless. You know, KTPs, the expectation of the management KTP is that there is benefit to the academic and the institution, and there can be a benefit to teaching, which there is. So the KTP where the associate is in at the moment, we've had MBA projects there, we've had guest lectures, all of those really important things for teaching. But equally, so there's the research side of that. So I'm in the middle of drafting a paper about stakeholder management based on research that I've collected there and other things come about as a result of that. The [association] ran a half day workshop on management KTPs, and I chaired it for them. That wouldn't have happened had it not been because of what had happened. So there's definitely a lot of impact that comes from management KTPs, and there still isn't a lot of uptake at the minute. Certainly it's growing in terms of uptake. It's not perhaps where government might have envisioned it to be at this stage, which is why there's quite a big push on... so [association] got involved, and some of the government departments, et cetera, have got involved, because there's really good projects, really good business problems out there that we could all be working on. I think I've gone off on one again there, you see, at this time of the day, you ask me one thing and I go way off onto something completely different.

##### Researcher

No, that's really interesting. I'd be interested to know from your perspective why you think there has been that kind of lack of uptake in the management KTPs?

##### Participant 41

I think it's for a whole host of reasons. I think there's still a bit of a job for government today to get the message out there. There were maybe seven or eight years where it was almost impossible to get what I would refer to as a mainstream management project. If it didn't have analytics attached to it or quite a big design thing, you weren't expecting it to get funding. So KTP offices kind of retrenched from that type of thinking. There's also, in lots of institutions, there's still a little bit of intellectual snobbery around KTPs, that you'd only do that if you couldn't get a big research grant. So there's still a little bit of residual snobbery about it. There's also a challenge in terms of our most precious gift as academics - our time. We're all busy doing lots of things. And when you set out it out in terms of half a day a week - it doesn't have to be half a day a week, it could be one full day every two weeks - there's a reasonable time commitment there. And some colleagues right across the UK would see that time perhaps being better spent elsewhere, whether it's in terms of writing a paper or making an application to a large funding body or whatever. And even just in terms of the application process, it's a lengthy enough process, and you might not get out of it what you've intended. And so there is, in some institutions, some colleagues would suggest there's a lack of incentives, and I know from having spoken to several, they think that we're in a fairly enviable position in [current institution], where the academic gets to keep the academic support monies and whatever. So from [current institution] perspective, I would say that everybody wins. There's something in it for everybody. It's not just the institution gets the money, and there's almost kind of like a compulsion for you to do it. So we have a number of colleagues, another colleague has just had a management KTP funded in school, and another colleague, if it had existed at the time, would have had it funded. But they did get it funded under the old scheme. There's two at the minute, two companies approached the school last week having heard a webinar or something, and there's certainly enough interest from colleagues to kind of get going on those ones. So I don't know if that really answers your question in terms of why there is not more uptake. I think it's a difficult question to answer. If you were asking the institution, I think they'd probably give you a different answer, but that's kind of my take on it.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. Thank you. So you mentioned for academics time is so precious, you have to kind of protect your time in a way to make sure you get done what you need to get done. And you mentioned working on three different KTPs at once...

##### Participant 41

Well, at this stage, so, one is in post, one we are recruiting, and the other one we're confirming the shortlist. So by the time, like, the time frames in all of this, you've got to be careful not to over commit. So the one that I have will probably be drawing to a close and there'll probably be an overlap of maybe two or three months. And then the other two, so, when the two then come on board, you would never do it in your own. You always have, they call it the lead academic and the academic support. There's always a second person there with you. And at various stages, one person will carry a bit more of the load depending on what the need is. So you've got to prioritise somewhere. But you've also got to play to your strengths. And the role I'm in now, I could spend all day every day doing admin. And one of my former colleagues who's very, very senior elsewhere now, used to always say to me "you need to work out what is urgent and what is important, and focus on the important rather than the urgent" which is difficult to do if you've got a student query or whatever, but you make it work. The funding body for mKTPs also wouldn't fund the same academic for more than, I mean, I'd say I'd be at capacity now if I made an application. Not that I have any intention of it, but if I made another application now, the advice, I know the advice from the KTP advisor would be get somebody else to lead it. They'd be concerned that you couldn't manage it. So there are enough stops and cheques along the way to keep everybody happy, I guess.

##### Researcher

It sounds like the business school there are very supportive in terms of the kind of KTP side of things. And you talked about kind of the academic snobbery of some other schools where it's quite a common thing where research and grants are really kind of prioritised. So do you feel like, say, if, for example, you were to move to another institution, that might not be something you would ever consider, but just hypothetically, if you did, do you think that you would be at a disadvantage having spent time on KTPs and not, for example, churning out loads of four star papers every year kind of thing?

##### Participant 41

It depends on the institution that you apply for. I think there's intellectual snobbery in my school as well, you know. And the be all and end all of everything is research publications, and we know that, and that makes perfect sense, but equally so, there are things, if you look at it more broadly, I think many institutions in the UK, we focus disproportionately on the publications. If we look at REF much more carefully, they are asking us about impact, impact case studies, and asking us about the research culture and the research environment and how we nurture young scholars and what we do with the money that we get. And it does come as a bit of a surprise to some of them, those who say have a little bit of snobbery when it comes to KTPs, it does come as a bit of surprise whenever KTP monies go in as research monies for REF. And that's perfectly appropriate to do that. I think it's a little bit of horses for courses. Some colleagues have no interest in that type of work in the business community, and that's fine. We are quite a broad brush school, so we've got room for us all. In terms of considering moving to another institution, each institution has its own ask in terms of what they want a candidate to come with. And some institutions are more accepting of things like KTPs or other indicators of esteem or where you put your focus. And other institutions are less forgiving in relation to that. And a lot of it down to where would you like to work? I have no desire to work in an institution where it's, you know, churn out the publications, it doesn't matter what the impact is, it doesn't matter if anybody actually reads them, just keep going with it. Everybody has got their own different idea about what will work for them. And also then in terms of like, I'm under no illusions that my career path hasn't exactly helped me. To have taken on a role like [senior education-related role] and then staying in the role for an obscene amount of time. And I'm under absolutely no illusions that that has hurt me in terms of promotion, et cetera. But sometimes a promotion... that's not why I came into higher education, and there's definitely a change in perspective. We see a lot of early career researchers who are "how quickly can I get to chair? And what will I do to get there quickly?" That doesn't really drive me. It can be a bit frustrating when you see others kind of moving on past you and you think, what exactly do you do? But, you know, would I move to another institution? I've had job offers elsewhere, and it just wasn't personally the right time to move. And some of them were fairly significant moves. They weren't just hop, skip and jump over to the next city. They were massive, massive moves. But at this stage, I'm happy enough where I'm at. I might have a different answer tomorrow, mind you, but for today, it's okay.

##### Researcher

Yeah, that's really interesting. So you briefly mentioned the impact case studies. Just out of interest, have you been expected to engage in those? Because you're such a kind of engagement oriented academic?

##### Participant 41

Yes and no. None of my KTPs are advanced enough to have an impact case. But I can see for the next time around one definitely will. Another piece of work that a colleague and I are working on, there will be, there's a potential for a very good impact case there, based on some work we're doing with a local organisation. One of my colleagues and myself, we just set up a research centre recently. It's a centre for [subject areas], and there will be something coming out of that. So we've just recently, as of yesterday, been given quite a bit of money from two different big research pots in the university, an engaged researcher scheme and sustainable development something or other, I don't remember what it's called. We've been given quite a bit of money to do a baseline study, and there is an expectation there that by the time we get to the next REF, if we haven't all retired or there's another pandemic or whatever, there'll be something coming out of that. There's a potential for another case study with a piece of work that we're doing with some American institutions, kind of on sustainability tracks, but focused in [current institution's region]. We've got a Scottish partner and the American partner. So there is potential for some of this... the expectation in school at this stage is, certainly for this current REF, which is obviously closed, was that the professors needed to lead on the impact cases, because that's almost by virtue of their skill and their craft of getting to that stage, they needed to demonstrate that there was some impact from what they were doing. Certainly, we've already started, it's like most things, you've hardly finished one till you're working on the next idea. So we've already had planning meetings about the next REF and where we see potential impact cases coming from. We already have an impact champion, and the university are working with us to make sure that we have multiple cases if we need them. But who knows what the next REF will look like? It's not just an impact case for the sake of it, it's genuine impact, and the case will emerge from that.

##### Researcher

Yeah, absolutely. Another thing you briefly mentioned was the workload allocation.

##### Participant 41

What a headache.

##### Researcher

Haha, my recording can't pick that up the eye roll. Haha. So in terms of that, I'm just kind of interested to know, the work on the KTPs and engaging with stakeholders, is that sort of allocated to the research element of that? Or do you get, like, a separate pot of time for that?

##### Participant 41

So the eye roll was as head of department, I have to do the workload allocation for all of the colleagues in my group. Hence the eye roll. Because some colleagues like to get down to, like, bean counting almost. As an institution, there are a number of working groups looking at the WAM, because it's, like most institutions, it's a bit of a thorn. And how you come up with a university wide workload allocation model that accepts all of that kind of diversity and kind of can fix it in some way, is difficult. So as a school, we've tended to veer to the easy part of it. So we have 40% for teaching, 40% of your time for research, 20% of your time for admin. But things like KTPs are captured in a very blunt way - that's your research time, do with it what you will. And there hasn't been that level of quantification. And if you took, you know, half a day a week is 10% of your time for the entire year... there's no way the institution or the school would give you - we work on hours, so an entire year's workload allocation is 1650 hours. There's no way we would get 165 hours for KTP, even if that's what it took you to do it. For three of those, there's not, that just wouldn't happen. And that's also part of the motivation that some colleagues, there isn't that incentive. There's the financial incentive, there's the business incentive, but there's not necessarily the time incentive. We keep our WAM as I suppose, simplistic as we can, which means that sometimes quite important things are not given the attention that perhaps they really deserve. But in the absence of anything better, at least it's some kind of fairly blunt barometer in terms of what we're all doing.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. We've talked about lots of different areas of your job. You do the teaching, you have those fairly hefty admin responsibilities, obviously, you have your normal research and then you have your sort of KTP, which is also research, obviously, but much more applied, much more engaged. So that's a lot of different kinds of hats to be wearing and different sort of roles within one job. Do you generally find that your workload is fairly manageable, or do you often feel differently?

##### Participant 41

I think certainly since Covid-19, I've always thought it was really, I mean, as [senior education-related role] it was very, very high. At the minute you're kind of walking on a fairly tight rope and we're in the middle of a massive recruitment exercise, which means we're understaffed. And Covid-19 has added, as I'm sure it has for many colleagues, it's added a whole different dimension in terms of managing things. And we owe it to our students to put in extra time to be with them online, which we wouldn't have had in a face to face setting. All of our workloads have shot way up. We've tried to mitigate that in the school by adding in extra hours in the WAM, which means we need to bring in additional adjuncts which counterintuitively then increases my workload. Because we don't want just any dog and his friend in working with students. We've got to train and develop them, et cetera. So at the minute, I was actually working on the WAM earlier on today, this morning, because I needed to update it. I'm currently doing more than double the expectation of the WAM. I probably do have the most in the group. Some of that's my own fault. But if you have nobody to go in and teach a class, what's your alternative? We also would have maybe 20% of my colleagues in the group doing quite a bit more, 20%, 30%, 40% more than would be written into the WAM. And moving forward, that's utterly unsustainable. We're trying to work out what else do we do to mitigate that? And is it just an unfortunate consequence of Covid-19 that will ultimately rectify itself? I'm not so sure. There's lots of challenging questions for us to answer, to make sure that we're mindful that we don't inadvertently push our colleague too far and to burnout and stress. And Covid-19 has been stressful enough for us and all the mixed messages that were out there. So workload is a challenge. A real challenge. So things, unfortunately, emails are just an absolute curse. If I don't get my emails answered in one day, they won't be answered, because there's so many coming in the next day. It keeps dropping down the list. So we've had lots of conversations about how do we work smarter? What can we, you know, I've taught in my time "lean management" and "six sigma" and all the rest of it. And you think, what else can we do to get rid of nonvalue adding activities that will free up our time? And we're kind of at a loss to know what some of those are now. We have just provided an advertisement for six lectureships and we were shortlisting this morning, I think, at the crack of dawn - I'm an early bird anyway, I'm not making that sound as though "poor me, I've had to get up really early". That's actually when a lot of us do our best work, because it's easier. Those six posts, if we're able to successfully recruit six people, will certainly make things a good bit better. But we need to think, I mean, we actually had a planning meeting last week, we need to think much more carefully about succession planning and about continuing to cut out anything that is nonvalue adding and to ensure that whatever additional professional services support we need, it's put in at the right time and in the right place to maximise everyone's effort. So I think I went off on one again there, didn't I?

##### Researcher

No, again, it's all really useful stuff. I am conscious we've gone past our timeslot and I don't want to keep you too late because obviously, well, I don't know if you take your evenings off...

##### Participant 41

Well tonight I've got other interesting work treats like dissertation allocation, but it's fine. You ask whatever questions you need. I'm happy to help you.

##### Researcher

OK, so, I did want to ask, obviously you're at [level] at the moment, I would be interested to know what your aspirations are for the future. Not so much in sort of long term, but I guess maybe in the next, I don't know, three to five years. What in your mind you think you would like to kind of work towards and in terms of that kind of goal, if you have kind of like a strategy you think you might need to kind of employ to get to that stage? Or if you're sort of more of a person who maybe takes things day by day just as they kind of pop up? I'd be interested to know.

##### Participant 41

Well, in terms of the next three to five years, I could be facetious since I'd really like to be retired, but I'm not sure what I would do for the rest of my life then. I'm not quite that old either. It's a difficult one to call. I'm very aware that the choices I've made, for better or worse, do impact on career progression. You do kind of feel a little, well, I do feel a bit conflicted in terms of doing the right thing versus doing what is right for you. And doing the right thing in terms of the group, we have a number of colleagues who stepped up and taken on big school roles, which meant that the group didn't have a natural leader. So I can do one of two things. I can sit back along with everyone else and say, gosh, I hope somebody emerges to do that job and I hope that then keeps us alright. Or you can say, right, OK, well I'm going to do it because we need some direction and we need to know where we're going. You know, instinctively, it was the same when I became [senior education-related role], you think this is going to hurt me in the long run, but it is the right thing to do. And unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on how you want to look at it, no matter what the institution says about the value placed on leadership and citizenship and teaching and programme design and all of those things that are really important, at the end of the day, the only thing that will get you a promotion is research. And everybody says it. Whilst the institution puts forward the message that it is, what do we call it? "Balanced excellence" or "the well-rounded profile" or "we will, if you exceed in one area, used that to offset another area" - that just doesn't happen. And there are a number of other progression routes. I've never really had the time or the inclination to go and look at them. So I'm on an education and research contract, whatever it is they call it, we also have education only contracts and we have had some colleagues who, in inverted commas, "switched over" to those, and then have gone through that progression pathway. And to be honest, I've never really thought about it that seriously, to think should I think about that or whatever. And I equally don't want to give up the research. And in an education related pathway, that 40, 40, 20 balance shifts quite significantly towards teaching only practically. There's a little bit there for scholarship, but it's tiny in comparison. So in the next three to five years, well, we're just about to get a brand new head of school, which will be interesting. And we'd be surprised if there wasn't a change of strategy or strategic direction. We are in the middle of all of those business school accreditations - give me strength. So we had our [accreditation process] last week. Didn't go very well. Well, I don't know. Certainly our panel was fine. The panel that I was on, we were so well rehearsed, they couldn't have asked us anything that would have caught us out. And our panel, we've known each other for a long time, so we know exactly what the other would say. I get the impression from some other panels that maybe they didn't go quite the way they would have wanted it. But it's like most things, you don't hear until [month], I think, so, we could maybe be over exaggerating or underplaying just how it went. But we're in the middle of all of that. So in terms of where I see myself in three years time, I will probably still be in this role I would imagine. And I'd have to think carefully whether or not that would be out of choice or if I had to do it. I don't know at this stage. You know, the Covid-19 thing, I'm sure you've heard it said as well, we've said frequently what on earth did we do before Covid-19? Because all we do now is talk about Covid-19, and teaching has changed because of Covid-19 and student engagement has changed because of Covid-19, and they need new regulations because of Covid-19. So there hasn't really been that flexibility to think. I do need to have a serious think - that sounds way more powerful than it is - but I'm not really driven by career and "I must get up to the pinnacle and I must be this and I must be that" - that's just not my psyche. Would it be nice to get there? I think in terms of recognition, it probably would. What would you need to do to get there? I'd have to totally reorientate myself. Would I be prepared to do that? I don't know the answer to that. Maybe. I'll get in touch with you in five years time and tell you the answer, haha.

##### Researcher

Haha, yeah, that'll be good. Interesting.

##### Participant 41

With the accreditation... you kind of wonder what else they might expect of us. But we committed to this a number of years ago and we are where we are. So we just kind of keep trundling along. And the university has great aspirations on us getting Triple Crown accreditation. So we're just focused on that. So there's plans, we are reasonably well advanced for [accreditation body], [another accreditation body] is probably a little bit further away, there's a reasonable bit of work needed to be done on that. I'll be interested to see what happens if we do get the triple crown. I think the university has got this great desire that all of a sudden it's going to open up all these new markets and we're going to get hundreds and hundreds and hundreds more students. I'm much less convinced that that's actually what the outcome of it's going to be. But we'll see.

##### Researcher

Well, fingers crossed that you do get it. It would obviously be good.

##### Participant 41

Well thankfully by the time it comes to [month] and the final decision is there, the sting will be taken out of it if we don't get it. And it'll be pretty sweet if we do, because it'll be after the degree classification boards, et cetera, when everybody's tired anyway. So it will be quite a nice uplift. So we'll take it on the chin whatever way it happens and we'll see.

##### Researcher

Absolutely. I have basically just one more question I would like to ask if that's okay, if you don't mind.

##### Participant 41

Is this the killer question at the end? Haha.

##### Researcher

Haha, no, to be honest, we have covered everything that I want to talk about, but it's just something you said, I kind of want to ask about. So you mentioned when talking about kind of your future aspirations, the difference between doing what was right versus doing what was right for you. And you said that although these messages are put forward that you don't need to be this superstar scientist to go up the ranks, that very much kind of is the case, doing research, getting the publications... I would be interested to know from your perspective, and you might not have the answer to this, and I don't know if a lot of people really do, but just from your sort of experience as an academic working in a business school, why do you think that is the case? Because I know in some other disciplines, the emphasis, for example, is put on textbooks or conferences as opposed to journal publications, and then in some others, teaching is given as much, if not more, importance than research. So why do you think in a business school it is the way that it is?

##### Participant 41

I think some of it, from a [current institution] perspective, I think some of it's because we're in the Russell group, and we keep talking about the Russell group as if it is the be all and end all. In order to be in the Russell group, we're a research intensive university and therefore we must do research in a particular way. Some of it's also got to do with the strategic direction of each vice chancellor that's there, and their particular leadership style. The current vice chancellor, never mind his focus on Covid-19 and all the rest of it, but his approach is maybe a little bit more thoughtful because he's saying that it's not about quantity of research, it's about the quality of it. Actually, we should take a little bit more time and reflect and do better pieces of work. That doesn't sit comfortably with the REF, it doesn't sit comfortably with a whole pile of things. So that will need to be much more clearly and carefully articulated. Our previous vice chancellor, he was tough, very tough. And his opening statement to us all was "if you don't like it, there's the door". And "this is what you will do". And there were aspirations to push, to push the university up the ranks, to the top 100, whatever. And all of that is predicated in their minds, whether rightly or wrongly, predicated on research publications, journal articles. There's a little bit of a shift more towards, you know, books are - this is a terrible phrase but I'm going to say it anyway - books are kind of tolerated. And if you have to write a book, you'll write it, but really, could you come back to your publications and your papers?

##### Researcher

Yeah.

##### Participant 41

It's a bit of a mystery in terms of why it is seen as the only alternative, the only route, over and above various predispositions. We know other business schools do it differently. We know other institutions, we know other schools do it differently. We see colleagues getting promoted in other schools, and who are we to judge their profile? But you judge it anyway. And you look at the profile and you think what's so special about that person that would allow them to get this and this? And obviously some of it is back to disciplinary focus and disciplinary norms. I don't see... [current institution] have had this focus on publications since even I was a student there, and I don't see that changing anytime soon. I think it's one of those, from a [current institution] perspective, I think it's one of those residual cultural issues that is totally resistant to change. We're quite good at [current institution] at being resistant to things that don't really fit our norms, or we just ignore them. So I think it would take... and that's why I think our next two or three years in the school will be quite interesting with the new head of school. We already know that they're not from [local area]. We know they will bring with them a different focus. We were talking the other day, this is one of the sad things academics do, we were trying to remember every head of school ever from the time we were students - because I was a student in the school donkeys years ago. And I actually don't think there has ever been a head of school who hasn't been from [local area]. Every institution has its quirks. But [current institution] has a lot more quirks than other institutions by virtue of where we're based and all the rest of it. This will be an interesting time. We've had, unfortunately, a number of senior people, not just in the business school but the university in general, who have been from [outside the local area] who totally misunderstood the [local area] dimension, including vice chancellors. And it was an unmitigated disaster. We had one vice chancellor a number of years ago, his statements probably would have been okay received in [another area], but they went down like a led balloon here. And he had to engage himself in serious apologies. There's lots of reasons why we still continue to perpetuate a research publication profile. It's not just the preferred route, in many cases, it's the only route to progression. And I think it will require either someone very special to change that, whether it's at school level or vice chancellor level, or it will require some kind of mutiny from the troops, you know, "we're not going to do that". I think it's just one of those things that we might not like it, but we just accept it. And I suppose in some respect, if that's what we know the norm is, we feel like we know what the rules of the game are, then that's the game we know we have to play if we want to succeed. Which sounds dreadfully negative. I think many of us, we just accept it now and say let's keep going. And we don't allow that kind of thought process, I guess, to kind of impact on what you enjoy doing. You just get on and do those things. And Covid-19 has been good in one respect - we're all working from home still, a year later - some of those games if you like, they're less visible from home. Of course, we're going into another round of promotion and progression and you can kind of feel the atmosphere tense and thinking who's going to apply this year? And the university have changed the regulations for promotion and progression, so now progression to senior lecturer is dealt with at the school level, and everything else goes higher up - very different to how we did it before. It is what it is. Well, we've ended that on quite a depressing note, haha.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. There's a lot of food for thought there definitely. I've found everything you've talked about really quite fascinating, to be honest. So thank you very much for sharing your experiences. In terms of actual questioning, I'm probably done asking any questions. We've covered everything I wanted to talk about in really good detail. So thank you. Unless there's anything off the top of your head you can think of that you might want to add that you haven't had a chance to talk about then...

##### Participant 41

No, I think I've offloaded enough on you!

##### Researcher

Haha, well thank you. I really appreciate it. I appreciate your honesty and you sharing your experiences with me. It's been very useful. I've got a huge page of notes, which is always a really good sign.

##### Participant 41

Well, thank you, it's been nice to chat to you. Thank you for that. Thank you.

##### Researcher

Thank you very much for your time. It's been great to meet you. Thank you.

##### Participant 41

You're welcome. You, too. Thank you. Bye.

##### Researcher

Bye. Bye.