##### Researcher

Okay. So to get started then obviously I have read a bit about you on your profile, so I know a little bit about you from that, but kind of in your own words, could you just tell me about your sort of background, your career and your current role, what you're doing at the moment, please?

##### Participant 43

Certainly. So I started at [current institution], I started as a [education-focused role] in [discipline] in [year], and prior to that I taught part time for [current institution]. I taught an MBA module of [subject]. In terms of going all the way back to the start of my professional career after I left university, I started off in the private sector, worked for a number of years in the private sector, and then returned to university to do the PhD. After I completed the PhD, I went out and I worked predominantly in the public sector. So I worked in [government] and worked for another organisation that distributed EU funding. And then I also worked for, I think, a charity as well during that period. So that was useful in terms of getting some additional professional experience in the public sector and the third sector. I didn't think that I was going to go into academia full time. I sort of ruled that out because as you know yourself, the academic job market can be very challenging, and there were limited posts available. But by chance, a job centred around [discipline] came up and I applied for that. And that was the start of me then working full time in [current institution]. So in terms of my role, the business school at that period was recruiting a number of lectures of education in different areas - management, accounting, economics and finance. And that was really to in part address the fact that our student numbers were growing and it was a struggle to cover all of the modules that we offered. So I think there's around ten to twelve of us here as [education-focused role] within the business school. In terms of our distribution of our role, it is, I believe, 60% teaching, 20% research and scholarship, and 20% citizenship and administration. And I have quite a large administration role within the business school, I'm the [ethics and sustainability role] within the school. But as part of that role, I would be involved in engaging with the principles for responsible management education, or PRME, and you have sustainable development goals and the UN Global Compact and so forth. So that is an internally focused role in terms of probing those within the school, but then also engaging with external stakeholders as well.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. And in terms of, I guess, kind of going back to before your PhD... am I right thinking you did an [alternative discipline] bachelor's and master's?

##### Participant 43

Yeah, I did [degrees]. So I was definitely focused on the [alternative discipline] side of things. Then my master's dissertation was on [topic], but more from an [alternative discipline] perspective, so that's how I ended up in the business school. I applied to the [alternative discipline] school and I applied to the business school, and the business school offered me funding. So that was what directed me down that route. So I wasn't initially really interested, to be honest, in business and management. I was more interested in the [alternative discipline] side of things. But the more that I got into business and management, you realise that it's an incredibly broad subject and you are covering a huge range of different topics and their scope too. And you can integrate and cover almost anything within the context of business and management. And then I did a second master's after my PhD in [subject]. So, I think, whenever I started teaching business, I'd never actually studied a business module. I was teaching it before I'd ever actually having studied it because of having that background in [alternative disciplines], and they're quite different in their approach to business and management. But I think that is as much an asset as it is a drawback.

##### Researcher

Okay, that's really interesting. And you said initially you kind of ruled out academia in a way. So just kind of your initial kind of career aspirations, say when you were doing your [degrees] and sort of before that, were you looking at career in the [sector], perhaps as a [role]?

##### Participant 43

Yes, very much so. That had been sort of a... I did the [bachelor's degree] and then when I did the [master's degree], and that had been my intention. The plan was I would go and practice as a [role]. I actually started further down that process, the plan was to go to the [educational institution], it was very competitive to get in. I got offered a place. I started. And this was after I got my PhD. And very quickly I realised that it wasn't for me. I think a big factor in that was that, as much as there can be immense pressure in academia and there can be targets that we have to achieve both in terms of teaching and research and scholarship, but it comes with it an enormous amount of freedom and autonomy. And I arrived to go and study to join the [profession] and realised that a lot of that was missing. That, particularly if you go down the [route], that you in many respects have limited freedom and autonomy. And that was when I realised that actually I think I'd become too socialised into academic life, that I was going to really struggle to leave. And I think that to an extent continues to be an issue that... I don't know whether I'm going to stay in academia for the rest of my career. The workload is really intense, but sometimes it is weighing up whether you're prepared to give up that freedom or to forego that freedom in exchange for perhaps a lighter workload. A colleague of mine said "we've got the freedom to work any 70 or 80 hours in the week that we would like - you can do it on a Saturday, you can do it on a Sunday, so it's freedom, but it's freedom within the context of a very heavy workload at times. But the advantage is that we do have a higher degree of flexibility outside of, say, teaching and meetings than other people would have within their jobs. I can do my job from almost anywhere, with the exception of traditional face to face teaching or meetings. You know, I've lifted my laptop and gone and marked in coffee shops, and if I've had to take a few hours off in the afternoon that's not a problem at all. So the drawback is the workload, but the advantage is the freedom, the autonomy. And in terms of research as well, or scholarship, especially for me, because I'm on an education contract, I don't have to be returned in the REF. I do have colleagues who are on the same contract and do sometimes get returned because of the quality of their outputs. But it's not something that we have to do. So it gives us a degree of freedom in terms of what we want to research, because I'm not worried, it's not my top priority to think okay, what journal am I going to get this into? And is it going to be sufficient quality to meet the targets I have for this particular period? So if I want to go and work on a textbook or a case study or an educational journal, even if it isn't top tier, then I can go and do that, which is lovely.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. Thank you. So you mentioned being on an education contract, could you just remind me what the kind of split is on your kind of work allocation for different areas of the job? And you've mentioned scholarship there, and you said that doesn't strictly mean doing kind of research and getting those kind of publications. So what is kind of expected from you in that area? Obviously, you said it's quite flexible. You can go and do textbooks, you can do case studies and that kind of thing. Is there any kind of like, I guess, parameters around that, sort of any kind of more firm expectations of what perhaps you would be expected to achieve within that?

##### Participant 43

Certainly. So my colleagues who are on the teaching and research contract, I think their split is 40% research, 40% teaching, 20% citizenship and administration. Ours, on the teaching and scholarship contracts are, I believe, 60% teaching, 20% research, 20% citizenship and administration. So, whenever I started, actually, or not long, within about a year of starting, the person who was my manager at that time, they actually seemed to be under the assumption that many, if not most of us, might want to move onto the other contract. So he said, you need to think about what you need to do to attain that particular, whatever the threshold was. It was going to be two 3 or 4 star publications to move on to that contract. And I said, no, actually, I don't want to do that. And I'd have some discussion with colleagues who are also on the education contract, and they had decided even though they were publishing very well, they didn't want to move because the advantage was that you retained a degree of freedom and you weren't under the constant pressure of the REF. So having spoken with them, I decided I was quite happy to stay on this contract. And so once I told him that he just said, oh, well, that's fine, you have much greater scope to go and do other types of work. So actually, he was really supportive, once we clarified what particular pathway I want to go down in the longer term. So within our job descriptions, and they actually looked at these again within the last year or so, in terms of what the expectations are... I actually have them, I think, beside me. So I can tell you a little bit more.

##### Researcher

That would be good.

##### Participant 43

Haha, I've just got piles and piles of paperwork, apologies. So, they looked at our academic profiles within the last year, so to really try and get a better understanding of what work people were doing and what work that we should be doing to best meet the needs of the organisation and our students. So they broke it down by discipline. So we have specific requirements in management or business and management as compared to colleagues who are maybe on an education contract in another area of faculty. And that's because, it reflects the fact that we can, for example, write case studies, which are obviously a big thing within the context of business and management, whereas they might not be in other disciplines. So, for example, I have been involved in writing short case studies and longer case studies, and those are considered absolutely relevant to the context of my role. Other things, from the perspective of scholarship, include chapters in textbooks, whole textbooks, but to a lesser extent there's more broadly scoped work around even things for websites and blogs and so forth. So they would carry less esteem and less weight particularly from a promotion and progression standpoint. But they are still viewed as being worthwhile activities, but certainly in terms of career advancement it would be a greater focus on the likes of academic journal articles, textbooks and case studies would carry more weight in terms of promotion. But I think there has been a greater attempt to look at the broader range of work that staff are involved in and to recognise the fact that for some staff, they are having a high degree of impact and that they're fostering engagement, but not through a traditional academic journal route.

##### Researcher

OK, that's really interesting. Thank you. The other element of that kind of allocation is the sort of admin side which you said is 20%. So you're a [ethics and sustainability role] and you're doing the work with PRME. I also read that you work in widening participation as well. Is that all kind of earmarked underneath the admin stuff or is some of that, does that kind of feed into other kind of areas, or is that just time that you spend on activities that is perhaps kind of unaccounted for?

##### Participant 43

Probably some of that is time that is unaccounted for. So I think there can be an issue around that. We've got 20% that is allocated, but that is often quite vague. And you get the impression that some people are going far beyond that in terms of their administrative duties and other people are probably falling far short of that 20%. We're all really supposed to have some sort of administrative role, obviously the big ones within the business school or actually any area of university would be the like programme directors, advisors of studies, exams officers. So many colleagues would have those type of roles which have specific allocation to them. Those of us who perhaps have more nebulous administrative roles, it can be harder to identify the specific time that is devoted to those. And then I suppose, as well, the level of esteem and respect that is afforded to certain roles can vary. I think I'm very fortunate that there's been a lot of support from the head of school in terms of the work that I do. But I know that from colleagues at other institutions that that's not always the case. And so you do need higher level support to ensure that that time gets ringfenced. And the harsh reality is, with the teaching load being quite high, that sometimes it's evenings and weekends where a lot of administrative work happens, because it's the only time that you have available for it. I think it's one of those things that there's maybe a gap between what is espoused in terms of time for administration and citizenship and what is actually available in reality. So the likes of widening participation, and I've also been involved in gender equality and so forth, and a lot of that probably happens in the evenings and the weekends and in the scraps of time that you try to carve out in terms of your working day. Other things that I would point out would be that, for those in education roles, sometimes I think there can be an expectation that we will take on more of the burden in terms of administration, and also we will be more involved in the pastoral side of things. You know, we're the more teaching focused, the more student focused ones, and so therefore I think there can be a natural tendency to push those roles onto lecturers on the education pathway. And in particular, I would say, female lectures. I've seen this happen with colleagues, in particular, female lectures on the education pathway, the roles that are to do with pastoral care that are student focused, they're often the first people who get their door knocked to take on those roles. And in fact, I've seen that happen repeatedly in my current institution, but also in a previous institution, that if you have the double factor of being education focused and being female, that does seem to make you a natural choice in terms of the pastoral side of things.

##### Researcher

And from your perspective of seeing this happen, why do you think that is the case? Why do you think it is specifically female members of staff who are more expected to deliver that kind of pastoral support and take on those administrative roles? What's your kind of hypothesis on that?

##### Participant 43

So I think there are clearly long standing stereotypes or expectations about female staff being more maternal and more pastoral in their approach. And the reality is sometimes that is borne out by particular individuals. So the colleagues that have been approached about these roles are people who are deeply caring, who are concerned about students, who want to improve their experience. And so those roles could be a natural fit for them. But that doesn't actually mean that they want to take them on. Sometimes they, particularly earlier on in their career, need more space to, in terms of preparation for teaching or for research or scholarship, so even though they might be a natural to everybody's mind, a natural fit there, it doesn't necessarily mean that those are roles that they want to take on. Plus, in addition, because they are kind and caring and focused on students, there's probably in some ways a higher capacity or a higher risk of them burning out within those roles because, especially as our student numbers grow, it's never ending. And I've seen colleagues in the context of, both from my institution and other institutions, who are doing those roles in the context of the pandemic. We're seeing maybe a three to five fold increase in their level of work, because as student's mental health suffers, they then have to deal with the consequences of that, which in turn then effects their own wellbeing. So I think it's partially stereotypes, and then partially the characteristics or traits of certain individuals that make them a natural port of call for those roles. Whereas other colleagues who are maybe really good at protecting their time and their space for research are not. The other thing I would say is, which has come up before, is that eventually people will stop asking. So somebody might get asked a couple of times to take on a role, and they keep saying no, and somebody else says yes, and eventually they'll stop asking the person that keeps saying no, and then the individual that keeps saying yes will just get burdened with more and more work.

##### Researcher

Thank you for sharing that, that's really interesting.

##### Participant 43

I should say that there are, I have many male colleagues who are in exactly the same position. And again, I would say the distinguishing feature is that they are caring and they want to ensure that students have the best experience.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. So talking about the kind of things that you do outside of the research and scholarship. So like the PRME, the [ethics and sustainability role], the gender diversity, widening participation, all of that sort of stuff... I think, in your case, working in the areas of kind of [disciplinary] area, they all seem quite well suited to somebody who does work in that kind of area. Basically, what I want to know is, choosing those kind of roles, are they something that you were personally kind of passionate about? Or was it more, like you said, there is an expectation to take on an admin role? Did you kind of do it for your own personal interests, or was it more like, I feel like I should sort of take something on and go to it in that route?

##### Participant 43

100% my own personal interests, because it closely aligns with my values. So I was very fortunate that whenever I was recruited, it was an element of the job. And for as long as I am in this university, for as long as I'm in academia, I would hope that I would continue to have that role, and it's certainly something, actually, that, I'm probably one of the few people who really loves their admin role, and actually I would consider it almost the core aspect of my job. It's technically only 20% of it, but I would consider it, to me, the most important aspect of my role, and I do joke sometimes that I'm mainly here for the admin. There's probably very few academics who would say that, but it in turn influences everything else. I view it as the top of the pyramid for me because it influences everything else that I do. So it influences my teaching both in terms of the content that I cover, but also my attitude to teaching and my belief that my ethics and my attitude to being responsible has to apply to my teaching in terms of my treatment of students and my level of engagement with students, my support of students. And similarly, then in terms of any research or scholarship that I'm involved in, I always try to make sure that there is an ethics or social responsibility or sustainability dimension to that. So I would consider that my life's work rather than the other aspects of the job. So I think I'd be probably more unusual in that regard than certainly somebody who has a programme director role or advisor of studies role. I'm sure that their work, they find it really enriching and there is scope for creativity and for engagement with students and engagement with other stakeholders, but fundamentally, my role is so closely entwined with my own values and interests that it's a key aspect of the job for me. And it would be a very sad day if I had to give that up.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. And with being an advocate for PRME... I read a really interesting paper a while ago, and it was all about bringing in the PRME element by introducing it as a new sort of disruptive institutional logic to kind of change the landscape, a little bit, of business education within business schools. I think this is quite a while ago, but I think the kind of conclusion was it wasn't particularly easy. I'm not entirely sure obviously of the technicalities of what PRME means in terms of changing programmes and focuses and stuff like that, but I want to know, what has your kind of personal experience been of being the advocate for that? Have you found it a challenge at all? Have you generally found that you've been achieving what you set out to achieve?

##### Participant 43

As an institution, we historically have had quite significant focus on not for profit and public sector management and alternatives to the sort of dominant capitalist or purely capitalist view of the economy and business and the interaction with society. So we were probably coming from a fairly easier standpoint of perspective than other institutions might be. And probably a large part of that is because of where our institution is located in the UK, that there's a very strong public sector and third sector within the part of the UK that we are located in. So, we we're starting from a strong position in that regard, and there was already, within teaching and research and citizenship, there was already a significant focus on responsible management, even if we didn't necessarily put that particular name on it. So I've found that process probably more straightforward than colleagues in other universities have. In terms of what PRME is, it's a set of six principles that cover a range of different areas, and involves the integration of responsible management right across teaching and research, and then also our engagement with wider society. I don't think there's anything hugely controversial in it, but it does require a shift from the dominant profit focused attitude towards business, but I think that has been naturally happening anyway, particularly for the last number of years. So I think people are quite welcome or quite open to alternative ways of thinking about business and management. Certainly the students that we're getting in, who are coming in from school, are quite aware often of the sustainability agenda. They maybe have participated in strikes and some other kind of awareness raising activities over the last couple of years, so they have an appetite for it. We have a very small percentage of our students that wouldn't have any interest in aspects of social responsibility or sustainability. So there's absolutely an appetite there. And for the most part, although by no means always, the members of the business community that we would engage with would also be increasingly thinking about how they can be more sustainable, how they can make a positive contribution to society - but that's, of course, not to say that, you know, profit is not, or at least the financial sustainability of their organisation, is not first front and centre. So we've had a positive experience in that regard I'd say. In terms of engaging with colleagues, most, if not all, are aware of the importance of these issues and a large part or a large proportion are, if they're not directly engaging in terms of their research, although many of them do, they're also looking at ways to integrate these concepts into their teaching. So whether it's accounting or economics or finance or management, they're looking at ways that they could, for example, look at sustainable finance or green supply chains. And it's also helping students look at things more critically, which is fundamentally what we are supposed to do - create more critical, more analytical students. And so this is another way that we can encourage that, is beginning to think about, for example, the sustainability dimension of business. So we've been pretty successful, but we are, at the end of the day, still at an early point in that journey. We've been members of PRME for several years now, but I think it's something that is a long term commitment in relation to sustainable development goals. We've got another nine years left of this cycle in terms of the current sustainable development goals. So we view that as a journey or a path that we are on, and one that we're hopefully going to continue to reflect on and improve over the next decade and beyond.

##### Researcher

It sounds like it's a really good context for really engaging with the kind of responsible management side of the business curriculum.

##### Participant 43

The criticism of PRME sometimes would be that it can be window dressing. And in the past, I think, more so where organisations would have signed up to PRME, they would have used the PRME logo, they would have talked about being PRME members, but they wouldn't necessarily have been making a significant change internally. But I think that is changing now, and certainly for anybody who wants to develop their relationship with PRME, you've got to communicate at least every two years on your progress towards integrating PRME and the sustainable development goals. And so that is usually quite a substantial piece of work and requires a rather holistic look at the different aspects of the work that the particular institution is doing.

##### Researcher

Absolutely. That's really interesting. Obviously, something you mentioned that I think is really interesting is helping students become more kind of critical thinkers, which is obviously hugely important and definitely kind of a role that the university should be playing. Based off of that, I want to sort of move on and talk about kind of impact. Impact obviously has some different meanings. Basically I want to know what kind of attitude does the school have towards impact? And it'd be good to kind of know when impact is spoken about, what is the kind of idea of impact when you speak about impact? Is it related to impacting students and creating critical thinkers and impacting organisations through educating students, or is it more sort of in the context of the REF or citations or that kind of thing? What is the general kind of impact attitude in the school?

##### Participant 43

I think there's been a shift in terms of attitudes toward impact over the last number of years. So I think whenever I started and certainly in the previous institution that I was affiliated with, it would have been very much that view of research impact and the association with the REF. But I think there has been, the definition of impact has broadened in recent years. I say so predominantly, there is obviously a very large focus on the REF, particularly at the minute, because of the point that we're in of the current REF cycle. But I think there has been a greater awareness of the multidimensional nature of impact. And as you highlighted, there's impact in the context of students and student experience, both in terms of their capacity, or in a multitude of different ways, their capacity as critical thinkers, but also their capacity, say, for example, in terms of driving responsible and sustainable business in the future, in terms of becoming entrepreneurs and starting their own businesses. So that's a big one for us, is how can we help and support students to develop a more entrepreneurial mindset? And they may employ that entrepreneurial mindset in the context of working for somebody else in an organisation. But equally, we hope that they will consider the possibility of starting their own business in the future, including a social enterprise. We've had a number of students go on to develop their own social enterprises, so thereby combining the sustainability dimension, social responsibility and also entrepreneurship. Then, in terms of engagement with wider society, I think there's similarly been greater, there has started to be greater recognition of impact in that respect. So in terms of, say, coverage within the media or putting out articles in newspapers or even blog posts and podcasts, I think there's a gradual awareness of the fact that impact can take many forms. So I, for example, wrote an article for [outlet], which is something that has been promoted within our university. And I got an email a couple of days ago to say that almost half a million people had read it. So that's something that, it took me, it took me a couple of hours to write it, but it clearly resonated with people. And so I think it's a realisation that we can have impact in other ways. And in the past I've spent months and months working on something that probably actually had very little impact. And then you can spend a few hours on something and it clearly attracts attention, it's something that people are interested in, and the medium allows it to reach a wider audience. So I think we're reflecting on what impact is and what kind of impact we look at and whether we want to ensure that we have quite a wide and varied impact. The other factor is, it can be easier to measure some forms of impact than others. To go back to that example of students as critical thinkers, that may be harder to measure, obviously, than journal citations or the level of engagement with an article in a newspaper or an online platform. So it's still a challenge measuring some forms of impact.

##### Researcher

Definitely. That's really interesting. And you mentioned it's a shift in kind of attitude, I guess, in a bit of a transition phase, do you think there is still more that can be done in terms of acknowledging that impact through education and impact through things like PRME, for example, are perhaps just as valuable, just as important as reaching other academics and getting citations? Do you feel like there's more of a way to go in kind of reaching that level of respect, I guess, for both areas of the job?

##### Participant 43

Yeah. I obviously am relatively new in terms of, I'm quite early in my career, and I think that I was lucky to come in at a point where a lot of those issues had been addressed, and certainly from what I've been told by people who have been in academia on a full time basis for longer than me, that certainly there was definitely a difference in the level of esteem towards colleagues who were research focused versus those that are teaching focused. And I would have no doubt that there are still people who would hold those kind of views, who would view teaching focused colleagues as being slightly lesser than their research focused counterparts. But I've been very fortunate that I've encountered very little of that. And I'd say that I've been almost universally treated with dignity and respect for the work that I'm involved in. But I think the reality is because of the funding model in the UK and because of the importance of the REF, as long as that persists, which may well be forever, we will still see research... and actually, I'm not suggesting that that's the wrong thing. But what I think is important is that, fundamentally, universities, especially research focused universities, in addition to the importance of research, we must always remember that we are performing a really vital function in terms of the education of students. And for many of them, they'll maybe do one undergraduate degree, some may go on and do further postgraduate study, so they may be with us from you anywhere from a year to three or four years plus. And so it is incumbent upon us to make sure that they have a very good experience, and we need to do that holistically, including obviously the academic side of things, but also in terms of the social side and building their confidence, building their capacity, and encouraging them to be independent and autonomous and to take advantage of opportunities. So I think we should always, in terms of the scales, we must always balance the focus of research against our role as educators. And students are paying an enormous amount of money. They are doing us the honour often of coming to our institution to study. And so I think we have a very strong responsibility to make sure that experience is as good as possible for them, but that doesn't necessarily just involve giving them a soft experience. Sometimes that involves challenging them and pushing them and encouraging them to be brave and courageous and to think differently about things and maybe to travel to places and to study subjects that they wouldn't have thought about previously. So sometimes being responsible to students, that involves pushing them and pushing them a little bit harder so that they can explore the edges of their capabilities.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. Thank you. And something that you mentioned earlier on in the interview was kind of about workload. You mentioned that workload is intense in this job. You have a great deal of flexibility, autonomy and freedom, but at the same time, there's a huge level of responsibility on your shoulders in terms of the job that you're doing and the workload. I would be interested to know, has that changed at all since the pandemic started?

##### Participant 43

The workload has been a problem since the start. And the workload is, I believe, a problem across all institutions. It is really challenging. I would say that it's had a negative effect on, probably my physical and my mental health at times, because it's never ending. As somebody said to me, it's like signing up for a job where you'll have homework for the rest of your life, or certainly the rest of your working life, because there's no end to what you could be doing in terms of your research, your teaching, your citizenship. There is always more that you could do. I could keep working on my slides. I could keep working on our online, our virtual learning environment. In terms of research and scholarship, you could always be pushing to make it better. So there's no end point. And obviously I'm comparatively new to academia. I've had maybe in total, if I added up, I've worked for maybe about 15 different organisations in the past, sometimes for very short periods, other times for a couple of years, and I've never experienced workload like this. I still meet with friends who I used to work with previously and they'll say, "oh, is it as bad as whatever, X or Y or Z, happened in that particular organisation?" I'm thinking - it's multiple times worse than that. And sometimes you have a really big class size, up to maybe close to 300 students, and sometimes more than 300 students. The actual burden in managing that is really intense. Never mind getting into delivering teaching and marking. So that can be really problematic. I would say that in some respect it has intensified since the pandemic because you're having to retool, rework resources. So you could have turned up to maybe a class, if you're delivering face to face, having to sort of update your slides, maybe you put in some new examples, some new research, but whenever you have to shift to the online platform, it often requires radically rethinking things and redeveloping things. I'm also really conscious about the students' experience and, as far as possible, it's not being reduced or limited because of what has happened, although that's inevitable. So I feel like I'm doing a lot of stuff and none of it particularly well, even though you're working as hard as you possibly can, because you've got so much to do, no aspect of your job is going to be done to the standard that you would necessarily want.

##### Researcher

And in terms of obviously the kind of workload pressures you mentioned, having to work extra hours and really manage your time effectively and just trying to manage the workload generally, would you say that you kind of have a specific strategy for how you deal with these kind of pressures and expectations of you as an educator, as an academic? Or would you say that you just more kind of take things a day at a time, just see what needs to be done on the day, perhaps fighting fires a bit in a way? What is your kind of take on that side of things?

##### Participant 43

So I think a big advantage that I had was coming from industry effectively was that I had learnt to be very efficient or as efficient as I can possibly be. And so that was good in terms of giving me strategies and approaches. I try generally to be very well organised and to do things as far in advance as I possibly can. Over the last year in particular, that has been a real challenge. And sometimes you are firefighting because there's no alternative to that. Particularly early on last year, so into March 2020, whenever we saw that sudden shift to online, that was firefighting, there was no other way around it. And the trouble is, I teach in three semesters. So as a result, for those of us who are in that position, of which there are a small number, you never really get that space to catch up with things. And so you're constantly, you're in that cycle of prepare for teaching, deliver, teaching, assessment, resits, and then you're into the following semester. So you're constantly a hamster on a wheel, constantly going. But I would say that I really try to work as far in advance as possible to try and ensure that I don't end up in a difficult situation where you're struggling. I don't like to be under prepared. I don't like to have that feeling, the sense of panic that you haven't prepared sufficiently for something. But I would say that there's been an unavoidable element of fire fighting over the last year just because of the circumstances. But the good thing is, what I would say is that the longer you're in it - under normal circumstances - the easier it should get. Because you build up resources, physical resources, but you also build up mental resources as well. So you build up physical resources in terms of multiple decks of slides on different topics and journal articles and case studies. And your toolkit gets larger and larger in terms of what you physically have access to, but also mentally, you get more comfortable with being a little bit less prepared because actually, you have that reserve of knowledge to draw upon. Actually, one thing that a colleague said is that you actually learn from students as well. So you learn from your interactions with students in terms of lectures and tutorials. Actually, you learn through student assignments as well. And whenever you're marking - especially the better quality assignments - you learn. You'll get students who've really gone the extra mile and they'll bring in really interesting examples or research that you yourself haven't had the time to find. So I think you gain a little bit more confidence as you go. But that takes a few years to get that sort of accrued.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. I want to ask about kind of your plans for the future, how you sort of are viewing your kind of career trajectory. So I would be interested to know where do you kind of see yourself going in terms of your current career? Are you quite happy on the path that you're on and are you seeing progression coming in the short to midterm future and also in the longer time? Where do you kind of want to end up? I'd be interested to know what your kind of ambitions are for the future.

##### Participant 43

Well, I think I'm most likely going to be going for progression this year to [role]. We'll see how that goes, but I think, I've been told that I meet the criteria. So I think that's the immediate step for me, to apply for that and go through that process with obviously the hope that it will be successful. Longer term, I'm not sure what the future holds. I think the only thing would be the workload issue. I don't know how sustainable the workload will be in the longer term. So, right from the start, because I came into it quite late on, I was in my early to mid 30s when I came into academia. And so, having had a very varied work history before, my attitude always has been that I keep one foot, if not in the door, then certainly towards the doorway, in terms of making sure that I'm still developing and maintaining skills that would allow me to be employable in other sectors. But if the workload issue was resolved or at least it was a bit more manageable, then I think academia is a good career long term. But I developed some health issues, I developed an autoimmune condition, and it may well partly have been induced by stress is the reality of it. And so because I have underlying health issues and I've got colleagues who've got underlying health issues as well, and that is a big factor for them, too, is the thought of is this going to be sustainable? Is it going to potentially damage my health? Similarly, I have colleagues who are parents - particularly, and actually I would say more so, female colleagues who are parents - many of whom are actually really reconsidering whether they can stay in this job long term. So one colleague has gone and shifted to part time work, but actually she's thinking even part time, it's still very demanding. And so she's looking into potentially other job opportunities. So I do always keep that in mind about what skills do I have, what qualifications do I have that would allow me to go and work elsewhere? And maybe in some respects that's like an emotional safety valve, or parachute, for me, to know that I'm not boxed in. I'm not so restricted. And if it became too much at any point that I would have other options available. The two things that tend to be pointed out are that it is still a job. It's hard to know, you know, I've been in it long enough that it's hard to know how outside people view it, but it is still a job that seems to be held in a reasonable degree of esteem. And so people go, why would you think of leaving academia? Why would you think of leaving an institution that is held in high regard? So that is a factor in terms of leaving. And then obviously the autonomy factor that I would probably have to sacrifice, your degree of autonomy. But I think the pandemic has maybe made everything, perhaps, they usually say that three years is, three to four years, is where it becomes easier at times for people because you've built up your knowledge and also your kind of resources. But then the point that I was about to hit three years, then the pandemic started. So perhaps I'll have to wait a couple of extra years, in which case either things will have calmed down, or maybe I'll be thinking about a change longer term. I wouldn't rule out moving into the support side of the university or the administrative side of the university, which some colleagues have done as well, and where you can have more of a nine to five existence by moving across to the admin rather than the academic side.

##### Researcher

Okay, that's really interesting. And in terms of going back to, you said that you're looking at going for [role] in this year, have you had to sort of prioritise anything specifically for that in terms of the progression, have you had to focus on some activities more than others, or have you been able to just kind of get on with what you're doing anyway? Have you had to be kind of strategic about it? I'd be interested to know.

##### Participant 43

I would say that I haven't had to be strategic about it, it's more by accident than design. So in terms of progression, a factor would be teaching both in terms of the load of teaching, but also teaching scores. And my teaching scores have fortunately been very high. And so that side sort of took care of itself, I have a high teaching load... right from when I started I've been involved in open days and student recruitment and things like that. And looking at the list, which is in front of me, we've got things like teaching awards, and I think in every year that I've been full time I've been nominated by students for teaching awards. So that again is outside of my control because it's something that students choose to do or choose not to do, and it's something that I would never ask them to do. So it's always a bit of a surprise whenever it happens. In terms of the research side of things, or scholarship, again, more by accident. I was working on, I got asked to work on a textbook, so that got completed within the last year, which I think will be a big factor for me in terms of progression. But I've also been quite widely engaged in terms of presenting on scholarship and so forth. And then in terms of the PRME side of things, which is my predominant citizenship role, we're considered a thought and action leader on responsible management and the report that I wrote won the [prize] last year, and we've had various other things like that happen, that were not strategic in any way, but they were born out of just a desire to do a good job and to produce high quality work. And so all of that came together. And it wasn't strategic whereas I think probably the more sensible thing for a lot of people is to be strategic, and to look at what they need to get promoted within their particular institution or department. So our colleagues who are on the research side, the reality is that they need to prioritise producing high quality research publications because that's what they'll get promoted on. It's slightly different for those of us who are on the education contracts. It's a little bit more amorphous in terms of what the work is that we do and what we can get promoted on. So we'll see... I'll be putting in for it, obviously there's no guarantees about whether it will be successful or not. But I'm happy in terms of the work that I produce, particularly in the context of the pandemic. As I said before, you can always do more. But I think at a certain point you just have to say you did the best that you could in the circumstances that you find yourself in.

##### Researcher

Okay. And, so, I guess in terms of my kind of questioning I've covered everything I would like to cover in terms of asking specific questions. So I'm happy to kind of leave things there unless there's anything off the top of your head you can think of that you think might be relevant or interesting related to kind of business schools, the environment and your experiences, that you haven't had a chance to sort of say or anything you can think of that might be particularly interesting or that you think could be useful.

##### Participant 43

So I think, in terms of what I would be involved in, general discussions across business schools, for many of us, accreditation is a big one, in terms of EQUIS and AMBA and AACSB, and the drive for many institutions towards accreditation, and that is probably reshaping some business schools as much as anything, in that we are pursuing those accreditations and that's requiring us to have a look at our practices and reform some of our practices. That's a big driver. I would say the international market is a big driver in terms of student recruitment. And within the UK, there's been a heavy reliance on the predominantly Chinese market and perhaps to a lesser extent, the Indian market. So that is a big topic of discussion, I think, is diversifying our student body and recruiting from outside of the markets that have been dominant over the last decade or so. Recruitment in business schools, I think actually recruiting staff can be challenging enough, which has surprised me because, you know, other disciplines, and as I'm sure, you know, whenever I was doing my PhD, you would interact with people from outside of the business school environment and you know how tough the job market is. And if you're doing a PhD in English or politics or other aspects of the arts, the job market can be absolutely horrendous. It's still tough in business schools, but we've equally had difficulty in recruiting, in the past, suitably qualified, suitably experienced staff. So that has been a factor for us, is the recruitment side of things. I suppose as well, PhD students, so I don't know about you, do you fancy going into academia? Has your views been changed as a result of this process? Or at least do you feel that you have a better idea of what kind of the expectations would be and the challenges and the opportunities?

##### Researcher

Yeah, it's interesting because I think I'm in a really kind of unique position where I'm sort of doing research on my future sort of working environment. So it's been really eye opening to hear a lot of the stuff that I get from participants. Every interview so far I've learnt something new, things that I haven't heard of before. I know that HE in general is a tough industry to work in. Sorry, not industry, sector, should I say, to work in. I probably do still want a career in academia, but yeah, it's certainly been interesting.

##### Participant 43

Yeah. It's a job where you're required to be really good at so many different things. Research and teaching are so disparate in terms of the qualities and the skills and the attributes that are required of them. And so to expect somebody who is an absolutely sterling researcher to then at the same time be a fantastic teacher and vice versa, is a pretty significant burden. You have to be a great oral communicator, written communicator, and you have to be innovative and creative. So you feel like you're juggling all these different balls. And then something that you said that really jumped out was that, when you said industry, which was a slip up, but then in some ways isn't a slip up, because is it turning into an industry? Because that's another big factor for us, is are students customers? And if we start to treat them as customers or they start to see themselves as customers or their parents view them as customers, how does that change our approach to them? I think that is, I do get the impression that we're trying to kind of hold the tide on that one, to an extent, because it could potentially be a little bit dangerous treating students as a customer. Because then if you're a customer then, yes, it's about wanting that really high quality service, but it doesn't mean that everybody gets a first or high 2:1. And sometimes people get low 2:1s or 2:2s or thirds. And that has been a bit of a factor. And what worries me, what always worries me, is when you hear students say I need to get a first. I have to get a first. Because it's not good for them. And it's not good for us either, because they end up sort of working themselves to a point of illness almost, to try and achieve this. And whereas most of us are aware that, yes, the first is nice to have, but actually there's many other qualities and attributes that will facilitate people's success within the workplace. It was really interesting you said industry because that's the big shift in the sector, you know, are we an industry? Or are we a third sector organisation? Or are we a private sector business?

##### Researcher

Yeah. That's really interesting that you say that because that has definitely been something that has come up. The phrase "students as customers" has been mentioned. But yeah, that's really interesting that you said that, and that's definitely come up a lot.

##### Participant 43

I know somebody who was sued by a student, and they were taken to court and it was actually a PhD student. I don't think it was their supervisor. I think they were an external examiner, and the student attempted to take them to court for failing them, and they were not successful. The work was atrocious. There was no way, there's no way it would've passed. And the person was actually my PhD supervisor, and he's highly respected and he is generous, and if he could find a way to pass it he would've, but it was unbelievably, I mean, how it ever even reached the stage of the viva is beyond me. But it was enormously stressful for him. And there was, I think, some pressure from the institution just to say, just pass it. He was like, no, my integrity does not allow me to pass it. So maybe we're going to see more and more of those cases.

##### Researcher

Yeah. And this sort of marries up with the discussion that the way universities kind of approach international students as well is changing, like you said, the focus on the Chinese market, the Indian market. I think I read something, I think it was some sort of report on business education, from maybe three or four years ago. I think there were some stats. I think one of them was "one in three international students are studying a business school". I might have that wrong, it might be slightly different, but I think it was generally, it was a very high percentage rate.

##### Participant 43

Yeah, it sounds like that could be right. Because there is a general attitude that business schools are the cash cow of universities, and we would cross subsidise pretty much the rest of the faculty. And that's the reality. As a result, there is a huge pressure from the central university to grow our student numbers and to not place a cap on student numbers. So that starts to put obviously enormous pressure on staff. And then it also diminishes the student experience because what kind of level of interaction are you going to have with your lectures if you're sitting in a class of 160 or 180 plus students? But yeah, we are, the business schools - I say that in a collective way - we are the income generators for many universities, and our overheads are low. It doesn't usually take very much to put on a class in marketing or HR or whichever subject compared to, say, engineering or medicine or so forth. So yeah, that's another big factor. So it's interesting. I think you're doing a really interesting study that actually is going to have huge potential value for all of your hopefully future colleagues across higher education.

##### Researcher

Hopefully, that is definitely the goal.

##### Participant 43

And just on the cash cow thing, I think a lot of the money comes from a predominantly Chinese market. And that can be an issue, more actually, from the perspective of the students. But we had a case where he only had one non-Chinese student on a programme and it was like 100 students, and they were the only one. And actually they ended up moving to another programme. And it was actually something that, it just was, the balance was so far out that they didn't feel... and I do not believe that there was a racial element to it, it was more the fact that the Chinese students were predominantly speaking Mandarin or Cantonese. And so the student found it just incredibly hard to forge relationships. And so they moved into a more varied programme where there was maybe about eight to ten plus different nationalities represented. And it worked much better. But for the Chinese students, they're coming all the way to the UK to get a UK experience. And I don't think it's right for them to, to effectively be in a class entirely consisting of other Chinese students because they're paying a lot of money to come and get a diverse experience. And often we find that then their English language skills don't develop to the extent that they do if they're on a very mixed programme, where they get to interact in English more, because other than when they're interacting with the teachers, what will tend to happen is they'll default to Mandarin or Cantonese whenever they're speaking with each other. So I really feel for those students because you're just effectively transferring your, in some respects, your experience of studying China to the UK and not getting, you're not getting the benefit of building a really rich, diverse and international network. But I think that luckily in the subsequent years it has been more diverse. But I just worry about them and that they're not getting a good enough experience. And some have had dreadful experiences during the pandemic, stuck in student accommodation, it's been horrible. The sooner the restrictions get lifted and we can socialise the better.

##### Researcher

Yeah. It's also interesting that you mentioned accreditation a little while ago. Is the business school, does it have different accreditations?

##### Participant 43

[Institution-specific information related to accreditations]. But, predominantly in the last ten years we've started to get a greater influx of students from outside of [the local area], but a lot of the criticism is often put against students in [the local area] is that quite a lot don't want to go and study outside of [the local area], so that has allowed us to regularly fulfil or exceed our recruitment requirements. Therefore we didn't need to focus on accreditation. And so it was really only the more that we started to look internationally, I think there was a realisation that accreditation was important. We're quite far down that process, so we are attempting to engage more with accreditations. But a big factor in getting those accreditations is kind of, being autonomous as a school. And I know a lot of business schools in the UK strive for that. It's a major factor for us because we sit as part of a faculty. So we're not, you know, some business schools, particularly in the United States, and I think other parts of Europe, they don't sit under a faculty. They're separate. Whereas we sit under faculty. So we're part of the [faculty]. And they don't like that. They want it to be completely autonomous. But the reality is, that's the model for many UK business schools. So maybe we'll end up falling down on that hurdle. To persuade a central university to move a business school out of a faculty, I think, is a pretty tough ask. Accreditation is an enormous amount of work. And how can you fix that problem? Other than completely redesigning the structure of the university?

##### Researcher

That's really interesting.

##### Participant 43

Something else I should mention is having networks. The PRME community, it is good if you end up in an, in terms of whenever you complete your PhD and hopefully go into an academic job, if you end up in an institution that is involved in prime, it's a really good community. I find it definitely one of the most positive, supportive and interesting communities that I've been involved in, and everybody's always willing to help and to share resources. And so I'd say it's a good way of building your network, through PRME, and there's obviously a big responsibility dimension to your work in terms of responsibility towards staff and then staff to students. It's a good network. Also, the British Academy of Management, BAM, I find actually some of the education side of BAM to be the most supportive side of BAM. So they have, like, a management knowledge and education, I think, group, and they're lovely. They're so supportive. They just want people to do well and they'll try and support you in your research and even your teaching. So there's some really good communities and networks out there. Hopefully you'll be able to get some of that whenever you go out to work full time.

##### Researcher

Definitely. Yeah.

##### Participant 43

Well, if there's anything ever I can help with, just drop me an email and I'd be more than glad to try and help and just good luck with everything. You're doing a really fantastic interesting project. I would really hope that you'll have hopefully some really great opportunities open for you whenever you get this finished.

##### Researcher

Thank you. I really appreciate that.

##### Participant 43

And if there's anything ever you think I can help with or anything just give me a shout.

##### Researcher

Thank you. I really appreciate that and I'll remember that. And I've really enjoyed chatting to you today and interviewing you, and it's been really useful. So thank you and thank you for your time. I really appreciate it.

##### Participant 43

No problem at all. It's been a pleasure. So have a lovely afternoon and I'll probably see you again at some point. Thanks very much.

##### Researcher

Thank you. Bye, bye.

##### Participant 43

Bye.