##### Researcher

Okay, so obviously I've had a look at your profile and I've heard a little bit about you, so I know, I know a little bit about you from that, but could you just sort of, in your own words, tell me about yourself in terms of your background, your career to date and your current job role, please.

##### Participant 53

Okay, so I'm currently a [role] at [current institution]. Main area is in [management sub-discipline]. I've been in academia for 20 years, 20 years or so, something like that. I started off as [profession]. I'm [profession] by training. I worked in the industry for a couple of years as [profession], but then decided to do my postgrad studies. So I came to the UK to do my postgrad studies, did my PhD in [area] and really liked that aspect. And then sort of started off working at the university as a researcher. So I worked on a couple of projects there doing research and then I got a full time job as a lecturer. So I started off really in an [alternative school]. That was sort of my home, feeling very comfortable within that field. I eventually ended up moving into the business school, that meant I needed to expand or broaden my horizons. So that was fine. So I broadened my perspective. Got a lectureship in [management sub-discipline theme] within the business school because there was an MBA programme specifically for [theme], so that was my way in. That programme has since closed. And so therefore I developed within the business school, within [management sub-discipline] since 2007. So that's been about 14 years then. And that has been my main area really of teaching, of research, it has been [management sub-discipline] or management generally, if you like. That's how I ended up where I am now.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. Thank you. Spending a fair few years in industry, working in [profession], what was it that kind of inspired the move to go on and do the postgrad studies and then eventually obviously a career in academia?

##### Participant 53

I always wanted to carry on studying, so I always wanted to do a master's degree. So that was, I wanted to specialise in sort of [topic], which I did. So I did a master's in [topic]. I didn't much enjoy that, to be honest. It seemed like the course itself, when I look at it, how am I going to take that into practice? There was a lot back then that wasn't known and there were lots of assumptions being made. I wasn't happy with that. But there was one module that I really enjoyed in that master's programme, which was management, and I also wanted to do a PhD. So I continued studying. So that was my three years of doing a PhD. And I looked more into the management sphere then. So I love doing the research part. I love doing the interviews and doing all that, doing that, learning more about something, doing all that reading. I love that. I really enjoyed it during that time. While I was finishing writing up my supervisor asked, what do you want to do? What are your aspirations? Where do you want to go? So I think they were fishing. I said, I really like the research. Oh, would you be interested in working on a research project? So that's how I got in. So I just carried on doing little research projects and then a big research project and so on, and I really enjoyed it. And then an opportunity arose to apply for the lectureship and then I got into teaching. So that was another big learning journey because where I did my PhD, there was no opportunity to do any teaching. It was just, as a PhD student, you're just doing your research. So there was no... I see PhD students now, you can be TAs, help with seminars. We didn't have that, at least in the university I studied at. I did a little bit of support for one of the lecturers, but that was it. So, yeah, teaching was a bit... I had to learn everything about teaching, higher education. So again, that was, I think I spent the first three years learning more about pedagogy and all that stuff and less on the research side. I think that's fair to say. I think that had an impact on my research and my writing, because I went this other way. After that then I had to find the balance between doing the research, applying for research funding, carrying on with your publications, and also doing well in your teaching. So I think that was a big transition for me during the early days.

##### Researcher

Okay, that's really interesting. Thank you. So in terms of where you are at the moment as a [role] in [management sub-discipline], what is your kind of working life looking like at the moment in terms of different responsibilities?

##### Participant 53

Okay, so I do teaching. So four modules of teaching across undergraduate, MBA, and executive education. I was doing master's, but I had to give something up because it was too much teaching. So I dropped the master's course. So that's it. The other thing that I haven't mentioned to you is about two years ago, or three years ago, maybe, so I was contracted for research and teaching. So the balance back then was, I think, 60, 40. So 60% was research time and 40% was your teaching time. Of course, that in practice really never did happen. So in the very early days, when I was investing all this time and learning how to teach, I was teaching undergraduates, I was teaching MBAs, and I was teaching master's. And then people ask, would you like to do this teaching? And I would say, yes. So I was overloaded on my teaching. I have always been doing more teaching than research, even though in principle it should be the other way around. So, as I said, that impacted on my research and my writing. So I was, I suppose, not as prolific as other colleagues at the time. I was still publishing, but it was, I suppose, slower. And it was always said to me, because of the REF, oh, you need to apply for funding. And I would apply, but wouldn't get any or get really little, really small grants, which the school at the time really didn't appreciate. So they were really looking for you to get the big grants. Even for young or just starting academics. There were other opportunities that one could get funding. So, for example, I remember KTPs, but I was explicitly told don't waste your time applying for those. It's not a lot of funding, it won't count for anything. So this was in the very early days when I started, but I think in the last, in the preparation for the last REF, our school put a lot of pressure on new academics. A lot. I think we weren't told explicitly, but rumours were going around, and if you were talking to your line manager or your mentors, they were sort of hinting that if you don't publish, then you're out. Basically, unions were getting involved. Your union rep was asking questions of, how are you doing? So the atmosphere, the environment in preparation for that REF was not happy. There was a list that our head of school had of what were known as "troubled children", the black sheep in the school who weren't producing, publishing in the journals that the school wanted you to publish in, and weren't getting that research income. And so I remember the head of school called each one of the individuals on that list to have a one to one. I don't know what the conversations were like, but out of that you saw people leaving during that time, a lot of people left and these were the people who were on that list. I had a conversation with my mentor at the time - so I was on maternity leave - and I was called in to have a conversation with my mentor - with the baby in my arms - and he said, you're in a good position now. You could go, either, we can continue on the path you're on with teaching and research, or you can go into a teaching and scholarship route. So that was an option. Actually this was before the REF. So, I went on maternity leave in 2013, and then I had applied for study leave. So that was 2014. So 2013, 2014. The atmosphere, the environment was not good. I remember that because I was already thinking about, this is not going to end well. They're putting a lot of pressure, they were getting rid, they were hiring new people who were really good. And these individuals didn't last very long because of the pressures that the school was putting in. I was on maternity leave. I had just finished my maternity leave, I was starting my study leave and my mentor called me in for a meeting. And that's when he said, you could go here, you could go there and I asked him, what would you recommend? And he said, oh, it's up to you. It's your decision. You still have time to think about it. So I remember this was in the autumn. And then that put me off my study leave completely, because I was panicking. What if I don't get this paper published, what I said I would do? And that affected me quite a lot. I didn't do what I said I would do in my study leave. I submitted the papers, but I think one didn't go through the review, it was desk rejected. And the other one went to two reviews and that was rejected again. So in their eyes, I wasn't being productive. So I think in the January, I went back to my mentor and I said, I want to go to a teaching and scholarship route, or track, if that's possible. And he said, yes, you're in good time. I'm glad you've done this, because I think he was having conversations with the senior managers and he didn't say this, but I think he knew what was coming. And he said, this is good timing, this is perfect. I'll propose it. So during that time, then I changed into the teaching and scholarship route. I was one of the first ones to do so within the school. And I said, okay, I'm no longer in the REF. I don't have this pressure, which was a great relief. And then the REF came. So all that year, all the REF preparations. And that's when the conversations the head of school was having with the people on the list happened, and people are just going, moving. And then we had redundancies, during that year, we had whole redundancies taking place, so even more people left. So it was not happy environment, to be honest, but now I'm on the teaching and scholarship track, and to be honest, it's been the best thing for me. I've been more productive in terms of my writing. I have more teaching to do, so more courses to do and coordinate, I'm still applying for funding, I'm still doing research, and I'm still writing, but I'm writing and publishing where I want to publish, so not where the school expects you to publish, which is nice. And I think I found that balance, that work life balance is much better. So I don't work weekends anymore. I stop working at five also because I have a child now. So that sort of focus has shifted. And I think going through that experience of that pressure and then the pressure of the REF and then the whole redundancy process that happened during that time just put things into perspective. I was working weekends, not going on holidays, really, and I said, for what? So that really changed my whole attitude. And work is a means to an end now. And it was my life. I think I learned to say no, and that has taken me a while, but I think I got there.

##### Researcher

I'm really glad to hear that things are obviously going better for you now. It sounds like it was an extremely kind of stressful time.

##### Participant 53

Yeah. So now the teaching is, the balance is 80, 20, so 80% is your teaching and 20% is your scholarship time. So that's the school's balance. Am I doing that? Yeah, I suppose I am. I think I'm doing more scholarship, but because the teaching I have now, I know what I'm doing. It's something I'm familiar with, I'm comfortable with, and I've done that learning curve with the teaching. So I feel I don't need to invest as much time anymore as I used to in the earlier days. So I have allowed that space for the scholarship.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. And if you don't mind me asking, I would be interested to know what kind of considerations were put in place for you in that position, in terms of being on maternity leave, did that sort of factor into, when they were looking at what they classified as "productivity", was that something that was considered?

##### Participant 53

Yeah, that was considered. Even though I was on maternity leave and then study leave, those years, that year counted as you needed to have two publications or to submit two publications for the REF. So that's definitely counted. But actually the line manager, the head of our group, he was very good. He said, okay, your teaching is sorted, you don't have to worry. So he got somebody, we got somebody to cover my teaching. They hired a professor who took on my teaching load. And of course, he was so overloaded, they hired somebody to help him manage the courses, which was nice, but I thought, unbelievable. I couldn't even get somebody to help me with marking the 100 plus scripts, but they can get somebody to help the professor... anyway. So that was good. And then when I came back from maternity leave, my line manager said, you're going to take it easy, you've just come back. So we're not going to give you any teaching, which was great. So this was term two. And he said, just come back slowly, update your teaching that you're going to do next academic year. And I think I only got sort of supervision and master's supervision, maybe some guest speaking with some other courses, but it was very light. So he was very good in that sense when I got back, which was perfect, actually, because I did need to... one needs to settle back into work and not feel that pressure. So I wasn't feeling stressed or anything. So I think that was a nice provision, but I think it was through him that happened because he was managing all the teaching for the group. But that year of maternity leave, you needed to have those publications. But I didn't do any work. I was on maternity leave.

##### Researcher

Yeah, of course. I would be interested to know, from your perspective, these kind of measurement systems like the REF, the ABS list and the way that we kind of, I guess, quantify productivity. Do you think that is beneficial for you as a woman working in this environment? Or do you think it puts you at a disadvantage at all? In terms of having to go on maternity leave and things like that?

##### Participant 53

I think so. I think if the school or the university, I don't know where this is coming from, I think it's more school than university or faculty, to be honest... bear that in mind, if you are on maternity leave, then that's a pause in your work. So that year they shouldn't expect you to be able to produce anything while you're on maternity leave. I had articles in review, so I submitted articles before I went on maternity leave so that they would count that year, so that there would be something that year. So I had to plan that. But I didn't produce anything for the following year, if you see what I mean. So it would be nice if that was taken into account. I think that will vary from school to school, I would imagine. The REF and measurement... I understand why it's there. It's a game. I think it's a game that one has to play. I personally feel that... I think I needed to be really brought into that system... so a PI I was working with was, his advice was, just do what makes you happy, in the end, work in the field that makes you happy. Because we were coming from the [alternative department] and I said, this is a whole new world, it's a different language. So that was another bit of learning that I had to do. And he said just do what makes you happy. You can still publish in the [management sub-discipline] journals that we were publishing in back then. The problem was the school didn't recognise them. But his view was you're not going to change fields, you're not going to change your whole research area. It's an important topic for business schools, so just keep at it. So I think I followed that advice and over more than ten years, it's still not recognised. Unfortunately I'm still publishing in those journals but they are ranked lower. So it's a two star for example. But I am doing what makes me happy and I haven't changed fields. So I think in that system at an earlier stage, for example, people like you who have come through that business management education, then it's easier. I would imagine that somebody coming from [alternative discipline] into business and management, we're going sideways and then there's a big learning curve there and I think I've never caught up with that. I've tried and I've sort of given up on that, to be honest. So I'm doing now what makes me comfortable in terms of what I can publish, what research I can do. The school gives me the space to be able to do that because we've carved a little niche in the school and that has taken time. I don't think being a woman puts one in a disadvantage. I think the line managers I've had or the heads of our group that we've had in the group have been very good at, let's say, looking after their members of staff and trying to balance their teaching and workload. And they're very people-orientated in that respect. There's a bit of a disconnect with our heads of group and then senior managers and then faculty and so on. I think that's the problem that our school has at the moment.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. So in terms of, so you mentioned something earlier on about your teaching. You said that you sort of gave up teaching on a master's module because it just made sense for your own schedule. You had too much teaching going on and then you've talked about learning how to say no as a skill. Can you just tell me a little bit about the process of giving up that teaching? Was that something you were able to make the decision? Did you have to request it? How did that kind of pan out? I'm just interested to know.

##### Participant 53

So I was doing the undergraduate, second year undergraduate, I was doing two master's modules, the MBA teaching and executive education teaching. And that was fine. I was asked to become programme director for a new programme, an executive education programme. And when I looked, we have sort of a workload model. And I said, okay, if I add that, then I would be way over my allocated or required work for teaching. And so I had a conversation with the person who asked me if I was interested in this directorship. And I said, yes, in principle, but I have to give up something. And he said, okay, well, what would you like to give up? Let's think about this. I didn't want to give anything, to be honest, because I like doing all of them. But I said, okay, if I have to give up something, then maybe it would be the master's modules. And I think strategically, it also makes sense, sort of what we needed to think about within the [management sub-discipline] group. So as a grouping of academics in the area, what are we going to give up? And so then I had a conversation with the head of our division who looked after sort of the [management sub-discipline] group and the whole teaching of the whole division. And I said, I've been offered this, I want to do it because it will help me develop my leadership skills and all that, which is important if I want to get promoted. I've done the teaching. And she looked at my workload, and she said, yes, you have to give up something. What is it that you want to give up? And I said, if I have to give up something, it would be the two master's modules. And she said, fine, not a problem. I had already had a conversation or sort of inquired who would take on that teaching. So it would be somebody from another division who sort of owned that master's programme. So I was more from... divisions like to have their own master's programmes resourced by people within their own division, right? So I was the only outsider, I was from a different division. And so when I proposed it, I said, I'm thinking about giving this module up next academic year. Would that be a problem? Is that okay? They jumped at the opportunity, and said great, we want it. And they had somebody who had just given up a module, so he needed something to replace it with. So it all sort of worked out. So I gave it up. I had to have the conversations with the different people to see who was going to cover it, if it was going to be okay and do all that. And all I had to do was just inform the head of our division. And they were fine. And they said, yeah, this makes sense. You can still work on your MBA stuff, you can still work on your undergraduate stuff, you already know it, you crafted it, and this is a good opportunity then to develop your leadership capabilities. So that's how that change came about, which was fairly straightforward. I was surprised, to be honest, on how straightforward and how people were okay with all those changes. So I was pleasantly surprised with the attitude of the people within the divisions and how they managed that.

##### Researcher

And that programme directorship role that you took on, that role, is that something you're still doing now?

##### Participant 53

Yes. So I'm still programme director for that. It's an executive programme, so that's still going. So that involves all new stuff for me. So that's still going on and it should finish... two more years, I think. Two more years and I'll finish that.

##### Researcher

And with the sort of mix of scholarship and the teaching, do you find the admin takes up a disproportionate amount of time or do you generally find it quite manageable in conjunction with your kind of core activities?

##### Participant 53

Manageable. I think we're very lucky. So in executive education, because I'm doing an executive education programme, the administrative support for executive programmes, I think from my experience within the school has been the best of the best. So I work with undergraduates, which are good, master's, which are good, MBAs, which are very good, and then you have executive education which are the best, exceptional, outstanding admin support. So in that respect, I don't have to... all the admin is done for me, it is very much, could you do this? Could you do that? So I'm more sort of allocating tasks. And also when I took on that programme directorship, one of the conditions was that I wanted to have a deputy director. And this was coming from what I've seen from another colleague who was, so he was hired as deputy director of an executive education programme, and there was a director for the executive education programme, but then the director stepped away and so the deputy had to do two jobs, the director and the deputy director. So I saw how he was struggling and how he was not happy. And so I said, if I take this directorship, then I want a full time deputy director. And they said, yes. Again, to my surprise, they said, yeah, no problem, we'll hire, we'll make a case for that role. That has helped a lot. There's a deputy director, which is great because I'm also then developing that, mentoring and developing or helping develop somebody. We have fantastic admin support, three people supporting administration. So that's manageable, really. That helps a lot. And then with the undergraduate and the MBA admin, teaching, that's okay, it's manageable. You know when your loads are going to increase, so you just plan ahead your time. So it's not a lot. I think I've learned to keep it to a minimum and when to do it and how much time to invest on the admin.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. So I want to talk a little bit about impact. Something you mentioned earlier on was about when you were sort of thinking about research, looking at going for a KTP and you were told, don't do that. That's a waste of time kind of thing. Obviously, KTPs naturally are very kind of impactful activities. They are directly engaged with stakeholders. So I'm wondering, based off of that, what kind of attitude does the business school take towards impact? Is it kind of spoken about?

##### Participant 53

Now, yes, you have to do impact, now. The KTP thing, that was in the early days when I think KTPs were just starting. So of course the professors had never been involved in a KTP. So they would say they really didn't know what this was all about. So they would say, oh, don't do that, go for EPSRC, ESRC. But of course now in hindsight they say, oh, you should go for a KTP. So now impact is valued a lot in the school. So for example, in this REF I know that, in preparation for this REF, they were very early on asking for impact cases and your contribution and all that. So it is valued and recognised, but I think they're very selective in terms of who they're going to support, I suppose, in developing the impact cases. Because we've had conversations with the impact manager, so they put human resources in that space and a little team of impact people within the school. And we had several conversations with the people involved, who we were going to be working with to develop impact cases. But I think because we couldn't get the exact wording from the companies we were working with, so our impact case was, we said we're going to put it on pause because we don't think it's going to be able to be well developed enough for the REF. But the school has paid a lot of attention to those impact cases. So now it's sort of impact, your research, writing, publishing, and your teaching. The teaching is still quite low. There has been no discussion, for example, on the TEF. I don't know if you recall, the TEF, it was all, this is coming, we have to prepare for it. I think that was going on for one year, a year and a half, maybe two at most, and then I haven't heard anything about the TEF. Silence, complete silence. So I think that indicates that they're really still more focused on the REF and impact and research, publishing and the rankings. Where does the university, where does the school sit in the rankings in that area? Not so much on the TEF.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. With teaching being viewed sort of to a lesser level of importance than research and impact... between research and impact, or should I say publications and external impact, are they kind of on a level playing field? Would you get as much recognition if you did impact versus getting a four star publication?

##### Participant 53

If we're talking from the REF terms of what the school was asking for? So, yes. So they would be happy if you had less publications submitted but also had an impact case.

##### Researcher

Right.

##### Participant 53

So they were willing to sort of balance those out. So you didn't have to have all the publications and an impact case. So they said, okay, give me an impact case and two publications. So that was very good. Because the REF doesn't focus on the teaching, so that has always been... it's not TEF. The teaching is... you hear the teaching alarm going off every time when it's almost the end of the year where the students have to submit their student satisfaction survey. That's when it happens. Please remind your students and teaching is valued and it's very important. So that's when it sort of comes to play... and the other place where I think it also comes in is the promotion process. So one of the things that the school and for example, the faculty, looks at is your teaching performance as well. So, for example, what has changed in my times in the same university is what the faculty have been trying to do is put teaching on a level playing field with research in terms of esteem, so that you are recognised. So they've changed the promotion guidance and the promotion criteria significantly I would say. It seems that at least the teaching one has been changing more regularly. And so, for example, if you're on a teaching and scholarship track, there are three main criteria that they look for, but apparently you only have to submit your strongest two. So your teaching - for example, your scores - your external engagement - which I suppose would relate to your impact - with practice, and your leadership. But you only have to submit your strongest two in terms of all that criteria. So that has changed and they are trying to put it on a level playing field if you like. But I've seen colleagues that are on a teaching and scholarship track being pushed back in their promotion by the school. So I have colleagues who have gone two or three times and they've been rejected, they're not being put through, even though they claim that they have met all the criteria. So I think the impression I get is that the members of that panel or committee are mainly research, teaching and research, that's where they have come from. That's what they know. They don't recognise somebody who is on that teaching and scholarship route. And so therefore, they're being rejected, or the criteria, the wording of that criteria is subject to interpretation. So that's certainly what's happening in our school, but it has improved a lot. There was a period when senior lecturers had gone on a teaching and scholarship route and had gotten promoted to professors, and they themselves say that they wouldn't get promoted now with that panel, with that committee. So something's definitely going on there. And I think it's that education that needs to happen because there's a lot of criteria that is interpreted in so many different ways. I have a colleague who's on a teaching and scholarship track who says, well, you don't have to publish. It doesn't count for anything. You don't have to do research. It doesn't count. That's not what the criteria says. You can publish, you can do research, and it does count if that's one of your strong areas. But a lot of people have that view that I don't have to publish. There are other individuals, for example, professors who have come through that teaching and research track, who say you have to publish. If you don't publish, you won't get promoted even if you are on a teaching and scholarship track. So there's this sort of miscommunication there and misinterpretation of the guidance. I suppose that's happening in our school. And of course, that sometimes makes for very unhappy employees who are being pushed back regularly. But it's getting better. It's getting better.

##### Researcher

I'm glad to hear that it's kind of improving, the situation. Obviously, something that may have kind of disrupted the environment in quite a big way is obviously the pandemic and the complete shift of the way that universities and HE is working at the moment. Obviously, working from home and stuff has become the norm recently. But in terms of, I guess, your working life, in terms of your kind of priorities and the kind of things that you're focusing on in terms of your teaching, scholarship, admin, have things changed for you at all since or because of the pandemic? Have you had to take on more responsibilities in certain areas? Have you seen your workload change at all? Have you been experiencing more stress?

##### Participant 53

So I haven't had to take on more responsibilities at all. What has changed? Less meetings, fantastic. Unbelievable. Less meetings. So that sort of clears your agenda, which is very nice in terms of workload. It's the same courses, but because they have been done virtually, online, so I did have to change the design and change the content during that. So I would say personally say during that prepping time for those courses, the workload did increase significantly because it's a different way of delivering content. There were definitely more teaching hours involved because at least in our school they offered seminars as well. For this year, it was online, every day I had some teaching to do, so that sort of disrupted, I suppose, my planning or when I could do more writing. So term one, I did no writing whatsoever. I couldn't fit in any research. So that definitely changed during the pandemic. And I don't think that the school really understood, I don't think the faculty really understood that, because we were, all of us, having to do the work... we were being asked to do things, which I don't think the people making the decisions actually realise how much work it involved, because I don't think they do any teaching, to be honest, they stopped doing teaching ages ago. So we were all complaining. This is a lot more work. If you want to do a video, a well done video, it takes longer, you need to edit it, you need to do a script. There was some that you would just do on the fly, but they were dreadful. So, yeah, so that changed. What else has changed? I think for me personally, I feel like I've been more productive because I'm not spending time travelling, not that I live that far away from the university, but that commuting hour is gone now, so I'm being more efficient in terms of my time. My diary has larger chunks of time to be working on certain things, whereas previously there were little bits of writing here and there. It was very busy. Now I can actually consolidate it a lot more. So that has definitely changed, which is good for me. What else has changed? I think I've always liked working from home, so I did my PhD from home, like you. So I'm used to that. I'm used to working on my own. I don't need the social environment, although some people prefer that. I don't. I'm happy to be on my own with a book, so that hasn't been that hard. I think I'm going to find it difficult going back, actually, to the office... I'm not sure I want to do that. I'm quite happy. I have sorted my space and I think I have been more productive, actually, during this time.

##### Researcher

Yeah. I think it's going to be a bit of a shock for everyone going back.

##### Participant 53

I feel for the students, of course, but as an academic, no, I quite liked it.

##### Researcher

Just to wrap up, because we have sort of covered everything I wanted to talk about, which is great. The final thing I just wanted to ask was kind of about your view for the future in terms of you and your career. I'd be interested to know what you perceive as being the kind of next steps for you in terms of progression. And perhaps if you've got a view in your mind of how you sort of are planning to get there. Any particular strategy of things that you need to do in terms of prioritising activities or whatever, or you might not have a strategy, it might be more of a day to day thing, but I'd be interested to hear?

##### Participant 53

So this has also changed actually from the time my colleague said, oh, do what you want, what makes you happy, work in whatever field you like, and just follow your passion, right? In a way, I'm still doing that, but I'm being more strategic. So during the time that there were all these redundancies taking place within our university, the atmosphere was so low. Morale was low. I was thinking, clearly, they don't value the work that I've been doing. So I'm going to look somewhere else. I looked for another job at another university. I got offered an interview, I went for an interview and I got offered a job and then I said, oh, that's nice. Actually, my work is valued and it's recognised somewhere else. But then I looked at, the pay scale would be different, I wasn't entirely convinced about the colleagues I would be working with. So I was thinking, should I accept or shouldn't I? But because I had already informed my line manager, just to let you know I'm applying for this job, and I'm having the interview, so that you're prepared that, if I do take it, then you need to source out all that teaching and all that stuff. So through that, I was offered a promotion. So, it was like, don't go, would you stay if we give you [more senior role]? And the head of school came to see me, which again was quite surprising, to say we really do value your work and your contributions. I wasn't on the naughty list, so that was okay. So I thought about it and I said, yeah, okay. So I decided to stay and that's how I got my promotion. Since then, I thought, okay, now you have to be really strategic with your career. Previously, I was just going with the flow. You know, you'll get recognised, you'll get promoted because of the work you will do and people will recognise you. That's what would happen in any other job, right? Outside academia. You do a good job, you'll get promoted or you'll have a salary increase. So since then I've now been very strategic. My husband says that I'm being very ruthless in terms of my approach. So what I do is I have the promotion criteria printed out on my desk. I understand exactly what it is. So I take, I have this, I have this or I need to work on that to develop... if somebody asked me to do something, because of my nature, I say, oh, yes, that sounds really exciting. I really have to reign myself in and say, oh, let me think about that, let me get back to you, really try hard. And I say, okay, sounds really interesting. Promotion criteria. How would that help me get promoted? If it does, I'll say yes. If it doesn't at all, then I'll say, I'm very sorry. Yes, I think that is strategic, because at least in the university or at the school, they're not going to promote you or recognise you just because of... you have to do, you have to show it, you have to blow your own trumpet, promote yourself, market yourself, which I find personally very hard to do. But hey, that's what one has to do. So I do that, yeah. So, yes, more strategic. And I suppose bold would be the word. So, for example, in this programme, that directorship of the programme that I work in, I sent an email to our head of school, saying it's gone really well, because they're an external client, they're very happy. The academic team have been fantastic just so that she remembers me, we're doing all this work, by the way, which I would have never dreamed of doing before, because the reality is, nobody's going to tell senior managers what one is doing over here, unless you have, you need to have a sponsor, unless you have that, who'll say, oh, they're doing this great work and who promote you. But my sponsor has left, so he's retired, so I don't have that sort of voice anymore, so now I have to do it. So, yeah, it's definitely more strategic. If you want to progress and have a career in academia, you have to be. And you have to be, another professor told me, you just have to think about yourself. Unfortunately. That was the advice. Oh, great. What about being collegiate? I don't know. Just think about yourself. What is going to help you get promoted and do it that way. Yeah, I think that's the reality, at least in our school. Okay, hopefully that won't be the same in other schools, but in our school, that's how it is. Every man for himself or herself, you have to swim to the top. Yeah.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. Thank you for sharing that. Thank you very much for your honesty and giving me your time. So unless there's anything else you can kind of think of that you might want to add that you haven't had a chance to talk about, that you think might be relevant to this sort of general topic or anything that you think I could have asked about that I haven't... that you feel is relevant and I should know. I'd be interested.

##### Participant 53

Yeah. I think what makes a difference in the school, if you're working in a really good collegiate grouping, so you know that the schools will have, at least our school has, the divisions or departments and within that group you'll have different groupings. So we are organised in terms of teaching. So you would have a group of HR and they do their HR teaching, you have a group of organisational psychology, you have a group of management, decision science and so on. So you have different groupings. And I think those small groups that are well gelled, that are well led, thrive. So, for example, from an outsider, I look at our organisational psychology group, they're so friendly, they get on really well as colleagues, they have constructive conversations in their meetings, they're supportive of each other, so their experience must be completely different to mine. So I didn't have that. I've never had a grouping like the organisational psychology or the HRM or the international business management groups, who have a common thing that they can talk about, they can share, they go out to lunch together. I've never had that. So I have individual colleagues from different groups who I meet and I get together with, but not as sort of a group itself. Our group is quite individualistic, I would say. We do have meetings, but it's more to inform, this is what's happening, what do you think? And that's it. But there is no cohesion there, if you know what I mean. So I think that, I would imagine that must make a huge difference to the experience of working in higher education, because that's how you build your networks externally, or you get recognised as well. So I haven't had that. So I think that would be the only thing I would add to bear that in mind, where do you sit within the school? Do you have a grouping that's supportive, that's encouraging, that develops you, helps you develop as an academic? So you see, in those groupings, they have their PhD students, they hire their PhD students as RAs, they develop them, they get their lectureships and so on. And that's how it should be, I suppose. That's how I would have expected it to be. I think that would make a difference to how people perceive their experiences as well.

##### Researcher

That's a really interesting final point to think about. You've given me a lot of food for thought there which is really helpful and I've got a huge page of notes which is always a really good sign.

##### Participant 53

Good, I'm glad. Yeah, well, I wish you luck with your research.

##### Researcher

Thank you.

##### Participant 53

I hope I haven't put you off going into academia. We haven't talked about the good things. Flexibility is a fantastic thing. It has a lot to offer, it's good and bad.

##### Researcher

Yeah, definitely. Well, thank you very much for your time. I do really appreciate it. I will let you go and best of luck with everything.

##### Participant 53

Thank you.

##### Researcher

It was lovely to talk to you and enjoy the rest of your week.

##### Participant 53

Thank you very much. Good luck.

##### Researcher

Thank you. Thank you. Bye.

##### Participant 53

Bye.