0:0:0.0 --> 0:0:1.980
9
Who told you to get in touch with me?

0:0:3.60 --> 0:0:18.30
Shahenda Shehata
Uh, doctor Nurul. Yes, she's my supervisor. Yeah, she recommends you. Uh. So the recording starts now. And as I mentioned, I really appreciate your acceptance for my invitation.

So I looked at your profile, your university profile. So you have, like, a very good academic career regarding the accountability. You have a research interests in accountability in different sectors. So I'd like to know how the university measure your work?

0:0:39.390 --> 0:0:40.920
9
Hmm. Ohh it's a good one. Well, I mean, yeah, it's good. So let's start with teaching and you probably have something very similar where you work now. Teaching is interesting. I mean there there's always the, the idea. They say that you know in both my current institution and previous institution you know they'll sort of say that they judge it on a number of factors. But what we find is it ends up and this was done to quite an extreme in my previous institution is that it ends up boiling down to one factor in that tends to be student satisfaction scores. So at the end of the module, students will rate you in a number of categories set out by the institution, ones that don't necessarily link to the quality of teaching, but more or whether the student was satisfied at the end, and they'll rate you on a Likert scale from one to five. And then so say in my in my previous institution, sort of reasonably explicitly, no one ever told you this, but he did. I tell you what it did come up in one of my performance reviews, and in my current institution, sort of a little bit more tacitly. Ohm anything below 4 is considered unacceptable, so you know which is strange because we grade students anything above 80% for a student is considered exceptional, while anything considered slightly below that for us is considered unsatisfactory or worthy of future investigation away or further investigation. So that's one of the things and I that's one of the ways that they sort of try to measure teaching quality.

0:2:16.830 --> 0:2:17.200
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:2:17.130 --> 0:2:26.40
9
I know that also I mean my I contribute to this but it's more on an organizational level that they'll measure teaching quality through things like employability. One of the things is sort of the level of graduate salary, the grads get when they leave or within six months or something like that, and how many went into X amount of jobs. For example, within the six months or nine months, whatever the periods are, I'm not too clued up on the specifics because I try not to take them into account, I try to ignore them. Uh, so that's teaching, even though both of those things, I would say don't really relate to teaching quality necessarily.

0:2:58.540 --> 0:3:2.970
9
The research wise we're obviously assessed through Research excellence framework. It's very much like, obviously, teaching. They bought in that teaching excellence framework as well. But the research excellence framework and basically how that translates to a normal lecturer like myself, is you've got to publish in three star journals or above the institution probably won't submit anything in the two star range to REF to be assessed. So you've got to publish it in three star range or above, basically, and at my current institution that is increasingly getting towards four star or above.

0:3:37.360 --> 0:3:37.710
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:3:37.240 --> 0:3:49.890
9
I can remember Dean in my old institution saying that he wasn't interesting in three star playing, he wasn't bothered about it. And of course when we talk about star rating the management often default to the ABS rankings or sorry AJG are they called now or whatever they are? Anyway, the ABS rankings, you know the journal rankings and we both know that doesn't translate necessarily tell someone's gonna be ranked at REF. But yeah, I mean, **it was taken to an extreme. My previous institution that it was three star. No, nobo9 cares about anything else. Book chapters NO.** **Monographs. No, it was. You know, you've gotta publish 3 star above and it's gotta be ABS ranked.** so that's generally how you assessed with research. Also increasingly important is bringing funding in.

0:4:27.740 --> 0:4:28.260
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:4:27.780 --> 0:4:40.110
9
**So now I'm sort of some kind of fundraiser rather than an academic. I feel a lot of the time, and if you bring big money in, it talks big. It probably speaks bigger than writing quality research now. You know, so the powerful professors are the ones with the big grants because institutions know they can leave and they think can take their money with them. You know, this happened with one of my colleagues who went to Ireland and took a load of money away from the institution.** So yeah, research income is becoming increasingly important as well.

0:4:59.630 --> 0:5:0.150
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:4:59.810 --> 0:5:24.920
9
**Impact and how the hell to measure impacts? I mean, this is something completely ridiculous. Impact is one of the ways my performance is measured as well. I take that as engagement with people outside of, say, mainstream academia. That's how I interpret that. It's so vague. I know there's these things where they impact case studies that were supposed to do as well, but I'm guessing you're gonna ask about those later on. And the evidence of sort of gaming and things like that with impact case studies.**

0:5:25.500 --> 0:5:31.930
9
And finally, there's sort of things not so not so much measured, but they tell us we need to be good academic citizens and also pursue professional prestige, so academic citizens means working extra hours, bending over and you know, really bending over backwards for the institution tomorrow I'm going into work to do open days, for example, things like that. The citizenship they measure up performance on and also, yeah. Professional standing. They call it at my current institutional professional standing basically if we guessed any journals, if we changed things at conferences have we've been invited to speak etcetera. So very much sort of an academic image in the wider community, but it's also inherently **narcissistic** as well. You know, it's very much about appearances, and there aren't a lot of substance behind it. I would say that is the lion share of the ways that we are assessed as a normal, I mean normal, but as a teaching and research academic within a research active role in a research active institution.

0:6:29.430 --> 0:6:36.140
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, but what impact have the these kind of measurements on you, on your work, on your life?

0:6:36.670 --> 0:6:40.440
9
It pisses me off quite simply \*\*\*\*\*\* me off and one of the things I'm struggling with at the moment, I mean, I work way more than I'm supposed to supposed to work 35 hours a week, supposed to get 30 days a year holiday, which is don't get me wrong. That's great package compared to something like private sector but I am not working. I work weekends. I've pencilled, I say I'm working Saturday, Sunday morning. I've pencilled them to do some work. I was marking exams this time. Normally it's research and writing. And it's all because I mean, at my current institution, they have 10 areas they assess, as I mentioned, the majority of them there, to get promoted. You've gotta be what they call excellent in six. An excellent for me is I mean I don't know anyone who's excellent in such things.

0:7:29.390 --> 0:7:54.40
9
We all limited subjects, you know human beings. You know, we all. I am not God. I am not Jesus Christ or whatever. I am not perfect, OK? It really wasn't excellent. In six areas. You know, we probably very good at one or two, you know, I mean, this is just crazy. So basically there's a if you want to go up the chain and we know we operate on a grade page structure. So if you get up towards the top of your grade. You're gonna have to start doing plenty for promotion and I think you know these, these ways of trying to measure it just basically will stretch you as hard as they can and they'll pull you in a in, in, in all sorts of directions and I mean, Nurul probably tell you this with me, but I mean, ***my mental health has really suffered***.

0:8:17.910 --> 0:8:18.190
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:8:18.600 --> 0:8:24.890
9
**I feel like not getting recognised for sort of who I am, but just what I produce you know.**

What are produced like being defined by that and you know there's a sort of lack of. In something like academia which relies so much on the individual.

So much on that individual and there is now, I mean when you put performance measures in, they sort of trying to assess you on a standard basis. Doesn't work in academia because everyone sort of different and it brings all these sort of. I don't know if we're gonna enjoy diversity in the benefits of it. Then stop trying to make people all play all sing to the hate same hymn sheet and you know I don't know**. That's one of my things. So yeah, it can get me it can get me really, really down as well. I think that's one that's the thing as well it does it does stretch my mental health.**

0:9:8.520 --> 0:9:15.690
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, but for the way you work for the way you do the research for the way you teaching, does it affect this?

0:9:17.240 --> 0:9:21.960
9
Uh, yes, certainly. I mean teaching. You don't wanna. You don't wanna piss your students off. You know that's always in the back of my mind. But at the same time, you've got to be this inspiring and a bit out there. Teacher, you know, so it limits. I tend to see a lot of lectures becoming more like say standardized or vanilla and doing more and more narrow sort of curriculum or narrowing curricular. Sorry. And I tend to see like you lecture is just a lot of a lot of times, especially in previous institutions they didn't push the boundaries, they just talked to in accounting. Talk to professional to the professional qualifications to get students exemptions because apparently that made the student satisfied and happy. So I'm thinking like, OK, so where's the richness of education that's gone? So I think that's one thing.

0:10:11.10 --> 0:10:22.120
9
And luckily I'm in an institution now where I can sort of, I don't know, sail against the wind a bit and do my own thing. And you sort of trusted to do your own thing, but it's getting you do see this creeping in now. With regards to research, well of course it affects me. You know, I'm not a colleague. The other day I'm writing a couple of papers for two star journals. Thought I do for a bit of fun. One was one was, so I can collaborate with someone and learn from them. She's great. This did my collaborator, just wanted to learn from her a bit. And you know, Junior colleague. But you never know what you might learn. And also I'm writing a piece with a colleague of mine or I used to work with at previous institution and it's a bit wacky and it's a polemical piece. It would never get into a three star Journal, I don't think.

0:10:56.310 --> 0:10:56.820
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:10:57.60 --> 0:11:8.800
9
Ohh I still wanna ride this. I wanna. I think I have a point to make. It's about accounting education and how certain bits of measurements are affecting it and how it's making a sort of lean towards, you know, very sort of capitalist realist ontology is what I'd say so, and my colleague said to me said why you wasting your time on those. What do you mean by some me time? Says wasting time won't help your career, so it's not all about my career. It's not all about. Like you know, I'm not gonna keep running up a hill that never ends, you know? Well, it ends with death, basically retirement and then not very long. Much of our lives left. I want to do something that I feel. You know, get a bit of maybe satisfaction out of what we do, so that's research.

0:11:38.820 --> 0:11:39.230
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:11:42.240 --> 0:11:44.990
9
And then, yeah, the impact stuff, it makes you do it, doesn't it?

0:11:45.690 --> 0:11:46.220
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:11:46.590 --> 0:11:53.460
9
The other thing that I would say is, is it is so such **individualizing performance assessment m**akes. I think it really does breed a sort of **narcissistic accountability**, as John Roberts would call it, in academics, you know, you said you looked at my academic profile. Now I think I need to update it or you know I need to make sure my external images is of, you know, sufficient quality. I'm being. I'm always within the gaze of the other online deviates continues to exist. So I do think it makes it really narcissistic as academics, and it can make us sort of feel like. **Well, most of it jealous of colleagues as well when they get a big paper or all they get a big grant, let's say**.

0:12:36.630 --> 0:12:47.810
9
You're thinking, God, they're not that Good. Why have they got there? Well, but odds are they probably did a really good job and applied for it. You know, when, you know, did really well. But I do think it makes us sort of compete with each other, which is not healthy either.

0:12:48.260 --> 0:12:49.430
Shahenda Shehata
Yes.

0:12:48.720 --> 0:12:51.360
9
I hope that answers some of tose questions? Yeah, those. Yeah.

0:12:53.560 --> 0:12:55.590
Shahenda Shehata
Yes, thank you so much.

0:12:56.710 --> 0:13:0.440
Shahenda Shehata
So what do you observe your colleagues doing to meet the requirements of the TEF or the REF?

0:13:11.230 --> 0:13:20.230
9
my colleagues, do you mean people on the same organisation, AL level as me? You know, just old. Just lecturers, you know, not involved in the management. Or are you thinking more management as well?

0:13:20.590 --> 0:13:24.140
Shahenda Shehata
Management. Of course, everyone, like everyone in the academia.

0:13:24.640 --> 0:13:28.650
9
Yeah, I mean for your rank and file academic like me. REF and TEF can basically just get a parked. I'm not bothered, right? All I gotta do is meet what the institution tells me, so they'll translate their REF goals into targets for me.

0:13:42.910 --> 0:13:58.330
9
So for example, you gotta publish two. I think. I think. I think that my current institution is you've gotta publish 2-3 star papers. No accepted. Sorry. Not published, obviously. You know what I mean? You're academic. You get it. You've got a published bit. Have accepted 2-3 star papers in the three-year period.

0:13:59.30 --> 0:13:59.410
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:13:59.130 --> 0:14:6.740
9
Yeah, they're happy with that. Because, I mean, if you get anywhere near that, you're gonna be getting up near 5 potential submissions for REF. If they're all assessed as three stars and above, you know, and then the maximum you stick in five per person, I think so. Yeah, I mean, you don't have to, but you know you're gonna be well pushing that. So that's what they said to me. I mean, I think it was when my former institution, I think it was 1 over 3 years when he first started and it became 2 over 3 years. So they translate those REF goals down to me and I'll just, I'll just look, I'll I will just try my best to ignore him and write what I wanna write. And of course you see the other thing you see with REF is recruitment as well.

0:14:43.740 --> 0:14:44.50
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:14:44.100 --> 0:14:49.690
9
So just when he's coming up to the REF deadline or at the start of the REF cycle with the new rules. Well, you never used to see at the start, but when it's advantageous to recruit staff in terms of REF. I'll do the old system used to be used to be able to buy publications, cause you just get some person and you've probably you don't really like. But if they've got a strong research profile because you could take your papers with you. You buying it. You know, so you could see Duff Duff figures for professors who were publishing them four star journals because they were obviously bringing quite a lot of money in. **Probably I imagine it could probably result in a lot of identity drift in terms of departments where you just get people in, it probably didn't even fit with your departments.** The other thing, the other thing I do see as well is in accounting, in particular with researchers, a lot of well, not a lot, but even some of my colleagues have more qualitative researchers turning towards quantitative research.

0:15:44.50 --> 0:15:44.420
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:15:43.630 --> 0:16:7.470
9
This is quite sad for me because I think I think accountants, social science and they were all about people, but because of the way the ABS ranking works, you'll know all of this. You're probably just thinking, God, I've seen this. I know what he's talking about. But the way the ABS ranking works, I mean, out of the four star journals for accounting, only two really accept qualitative papers, which is AOS and corner, corner are used to.

0:16:8.290 --> 0:16:8.650
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:16:9.190 --> 0:16:10.660
9
The other four accounts.

0:16:11.370 --> 0:16:31.630
9
And if you look at obviously the finance, it's very quantitative dominance. Even marketing is quite quantitative. The big journals are quite quantitatively dominated. So what we see is either colleagues turning towards using quantitative methods over qualitative methods or publishing in non-accounting journals such as public administration. Work, employment and society. You know, people who people are striving for that four star publication, you know.

0:16:41.670 --> 0:16:42.110
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:16:42.320 --> 0:16:45.440
9
And that the first one you know, so they turn away from accounting journals. But that's not one for us. I mean, that's one for ABS, but that's one way I think that colleagues are interpreting REF demands because the ABS list is almost taken as gospel.

0:16:57.420 --> 0:16:58.930
9
But in terms of referencing.

0:16:59.630 --> 0:17:0.0
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:16:59.650 --> 0:17:1.650
9
I think from my I'd see my colleagues doing it. TEF, let's move on to TEF. I mean, TEF doesn't really mean a lot to me at the bottom level. I will go and I will teach you the best my ability and that is that.

0:17:13.890 --> 0:17:28.320
9
Now I know that my old institution, that there was a drive towards more teaching focus and away from research, certainly in Accounting, mainly because of well, partly because of the journal issue that we just talked about and the lack of four star sort of quality in accounting in which I don't think is actually there. I think it's artificially constructed through the ABS rankings.

0:17:35.840 --> 0:17:36.530
9
Bought.

0:17:37.350 --> 0:17:41.460
9
Also, I would say **there was a move to bring more teaching focus specialists in and these are people who have previously taught in the private sector. And at the end of the day, have done off PhD, don't even have masters, they just have a professional accounting qualification and they come in and they teach the professional accounting qualification and they teach very little outside of that areas such as sustainability theory.** They're often considered, I mean, theory, much of a many of them can't teach that. But sustainability is often considered as just an afterthought. And I think the quality of education that the there is this idea again, this is constructed idea that these people are better teachers and they lead to better satisfaction which helps us with TEF and I think it's just a an absolute falsehood, but this this idea is resulting in a poorer standard of accounting education delivered by universities and also dangerously taking post 92's on middle market universities towards professional training providers in terms of the services they offer.And that will be. It will be their own undoing. You know it will be their own sort of. They will sign their own death warrant. By doing that, I think. But there you go.

0:18:56.460 --> 0:18:56.880
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:18:56.720 --> 0:18:59.450
9
You did you mention. Were you talking about KEF as well?

0:19:0.30 --> 0:19:2.420
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, yeah. KEF is included also.

0:19:2.700 --> 0:19:5.810
9
I'm gonna make you. I'm gonna make laugh now I know sod all about KEF.

0:19:6.200 --> 0:19:6.650
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:19:7.80 --> 0:19:15.50
9
Oh no, it's knowledge exchange knowledge excellence framework. I know next to nothing about it. I know there's been a drive in my institution towards knowledge exchange activity got cancelled. The workshop I was supposed to go to because of the rail strikes.

0:19:20.740 --> 0:19:21.80
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:19:21.270 --> 0:19:26.650
9
And nothing's come out of it again. And you know what, as an academic, I'm not gonna go chasing it. I'll do what I can do in my turn out was extra that I work at my 45-50 hours a week that I work. If I'm going to do knowledge exchange as well, God, I mean I'm gonna be, you know, I don't know how you fit it all in. So for me the management, they can keep it for the time being. If someone tells me I have to do it, then I'll try. But. Yeah. Love to do that as well. I'll be working 10 hours a day or a week and you know I'd have to. I'd have to. Your names only don't even make all the words, but there you go.

0:20:18.300 --> 0:20:31.130
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, that's for the academics level, for the management level. Does this have like a certain ways of transferring or changing the way the attitude, the way they respond to the REF, the TEF, the KEF?

0:20:31.710 --> 0:20:32.290
9
Management.

0:20:32.660 --> 0:20:33.200
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:20:33.350 --> 0:20:37.410
9
All, they're all playing games only, I mean, season, role-playing games. Of course it playing games. I mean, even professors are playing games with terms of impact in impact studies. **I had one I knew one professor from one institution who I've never worked with, who basically explained to a colleague of mine how to fake an impact case stu9.**

0:20:52.460 --> 0:20:53.150
Shahenda Shehata
Oh really?

0:20:53.310 --> 0:20:53.740
9
Yeah.

0:20:54.520 --> 0:20:55.560
Shahenda Shehata
Oh my gosh.

0:20:57.30 --> 0:21:1.500
9
I'm not gonna say who it is, but all I'll say is this person is quite close to you. Uh, but out of fake and, you know, impact cases, but management will be gaming all the time. Their gaming, the gaming things like staff-student ratios.

0:21:13.50 --> 0:21:26.320
9
They'll be there, you know, they'll be playing the game in terms of, I don't know anything that can be manipulated. I mean, we're accountants. We know that things are even if they have rules, they're still rules, are still. They're open to interpretation.

0:21:27.70 --> 0:21:27.460
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:21:28.140 --> 0:21:36.210
9
So yeah, gaming going on. Told you about the recruitment practices for one. That's definitely one that sort of used to go on. I don't know how much now, but it goes on. Behavioural sort of considerations recruiting people with funding as opposed to recruiting the best minds or the best people who will work well with the group. I think, yeah. Diversion of sort of research focused towards these areas that are more commercially viable**, you know, we've just got a centre for audit. I mean, there's about three people in the department to do audit research out of 40 or something like that, but you've got the Centre for audit. Like why? Cause it brought a lot of money and brought £1,000,000.**

0:22:13.240 --> 0:22:19.970
9
But management, yeah, I mean management will obviously have their goals. They'll have what they wanna do, accreditations, play a part as well. Obviously tied in with things like TEF, people wanna come with accredited triple accredited business schools as well and yeah, management will try and institute sort of their sort of controls etcetera as well. But I'm gonna be honest, as an academic, It really alienates me. I haven't got time for it.

0:22:38.860 --> 0:22:47.800
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, but for the gaming process itself. How? Why they do that, why they responding, doing that, how the process itself happened?

0:22:48.310 --> 0:22:59.250
9
Ohh God, I mean you probably have asking manager. I mean I've never done it myself or I don't think I have probably contributed to. You probably have to ask a manager that. I mean, why do they do it? It's quite obvious we're in the marketized sector now in the UK. I'm only speaking from a UK perspective, but we're in the marketized sector where we and I don't believe this by the way, but other people have sort of come to me and said we. Out to say we are in a market for students and we are competing with other institutions for both students in that market now. I think this is a completely perverse way of looking at what we do. We're supposed to be education providers. We're not. You know, we're not a bloo9 factory or something like that. We're not competing in a market, we're not a manufacturer, are we? But and I think that's what drives a lot of the gaming. There is such a reliance and COVID-19 made this purely made this very, very visible. There is a massive reliance for UK institutions on tuition for you income and historically in the UK Chinese student fee.

0:23:56.880 --> 0:23:57.140
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:23:57.210 --> 0:24:1.10
9
Because they can charge them pretty much what they want. I think they're on cat. Tell me. I don't know what Southampton charge, but you can go up, like 20 grand old for a year. You know, for international, should they call for three years and they do a masters, you've got the best and if you count accommodation as well, you've probably got the best part of 120 grand out of these people. You know, we're getting into the US territory of fee levels, you know.

0:24:30.30 --> 0:24:30.430
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:24:21.110 --> 0:24:38.630
9
Yeah, I don't have to preach to you. You know you've probably come and stu9 in the UK. You know, you might be on a hope you on a scholarship or something like that, but you probably you're international. So I think it's because there is such a reliance on fee income and such a move away from government funding now.

0:24:39.230 --> 0:24:39.590
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:24:39.970 --> 0:24:51.120
9
Universities are cutthroat in terms of how they compete, and any metric that is used to measure universities against one another. For example, that appears in rankings. It will be played too. We can get an extra step if we can get above X in the ranking tables we'll attract potentially so many extra Chinese students next year, or Indian students now. I mean, they've diversified a little bit, thank God due to COVID, but yeah. UM, but yeah, I think it's that. I think it's the marketized sector that drives us as big, quite, quite structural factors that that the blame lies firmly with the government. Of how they do it, how they administer our sector. That's for me. That's one of the big drivers. I'll give you one example of the gaming.

0:25:25.770 --> 0:25:26.140
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:25:26.410 --> 0:25:35.850
9
Got his previous institution and I'm sitting in a staff meeting. It's the first ever staff meeting I've been to. I'm not even on the staff. I'm a temporary lecturer, you know. I'm just sort of doing a bit of, like, I don't know, casual work. What's this staff meeting? I was invited, so I went. Uh, and the Dean comes up and the Dean says our current ratio of home students to international students is 80 to 20% international students. We wanna raise that to 30% because we need extra income and we can't allow, we don't want the staff student ratio to change. So we don't want to take more students. We just wanna take ones that pay more fees.

0:26:2.210 --> 0:26:3.980
9
Now, if that's not gaming. I don't know what it is and also there was zero consideration of the extra support that these students would need from academics, I can't speak Mandarin. I have 0 crucial capital with Chinese people. Apart from I knew someone had in my PhD and you know and we sort of went through it together and I've got some colleagues now and there was no consideration of any of that qualitative stuff. It was simply just fewer home students, more international students, more money, same metric that would be measured on.

0:26:33.400 --> 0:26:33.670
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:26:33.610 --> 0:26:38.20
9
But if that's, that's the best tangible example I could give of management gaming these kind of things.

0:26:42.300 --> 0:26:50.410
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, would you like to explain more about the fake impact case stu9 and how manipulation of the staff-student ratio? Because I didn’t get it actually.

0:26:50.560 --> 0:27:6.860
9
I haven't got a clue. I don't know how and I don't ask. Like I say, I don't do impact doesn't really come into my agenda at this stage in my career. You know, I'll do what I can, but I don't know. I honestly don't know. But I can just remember a professor talking to another professor who I knew and afterwards, the guy who I knew came over and they told me about this is how to fake or to pretty much fake impact case stu9. And I don't know. How to do it? I wouldn't know because I've never done an impact case stu9, so I don't know. Maybe for your stu9 it might be worth looking at the process of putting an impact case to do together and look at which aspects could be gamed.

0:27:27.860 --> 0:27:31.570
9
But that may lie. I can't give you that answer, but you may be able to find it.

0:27:32.170 --> 0:27:42.650
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah. So can you think of a time you had an experience with the REF or the TEF whether the experience is bad or good and how do you respond to that?

0:27:43.220 --> 0:27:44.450
9
REF or TEF?

0:27:44.840 --> 0:27:46.510
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, a personal experience.

0:27:46.990 --> 0:27:52.110
9
I mean not directly again at my level. I tried to keep a distance. I tried to stay on length.

0:27:52.710 --> 0:27:53.80
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:27:52.780 --> 0:27:54.540
9
That's a finding in itself.

0:27:55.100 --> 0:27:55.400
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:27:55.610 --> 0:28:6.200
9
But I mean, I've told you about my previous institution where let's expand it. Then. When I was talking about more professional tutors being brought in, obviously budgets are finite. You know. There's only so much money we can make, and there's only so much money we can pay staff. The other motivation for bringing these people in is they talk twice as much as research active academics. So what happened at this institution was in this so-called drive towards teaching focus over research, so I'm assuming TEF is one of the motivations for this because this was a TEF gold institution and they were very proud of this. So they're obviously played to the TEF tune.

0:28:34.600 --> 0:28:34.970
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:28:35.450 --> 0:28:40.780
9
It meant that research focused academics, really good quality research focused academics were sort of being forced out. And you know. Off the record, please with this, you know, one went to Southampton, one went to Sheffield, one went to Birmingham. One went to Holland. You know, people spread, everyone left. one went to Cardiff. You notice something with this? Apart from the Dutch won the Russell Group universities. So the research school should just went in favour of this TEF instead. I believe all the teaching driven things that I assume map to TEF.

0:29:8.110 --> 0:29:8.420
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:29:8.600 --> 0:29:12.600
9
And that is one that certainly drove me out of my previous institution. In our institution now, TEF doesn't get mentioned that much. I'll be honest with you.

0:29:17.650 --> 0:29:17.980
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:29:18.260 --> 0:29:24.740
9
**The program director that we've got knows how to sort of translate it into a language that academics will be more engaging with. while the previous institution, it was just TEF TEF TEF all the time. Without any substance behind it in terms of what it was supposed to. What was supposed to represent?**

0:29:37.450 --> 0:29:44.20
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, so are you on a balanced contract or teaching focus or research focused?

0:29:44.730 --> 0:29:47.700
9
I'm a teaching and research. Yeah, supposed to be balanced so.

0:29:47.840 --> 0:29:48.270
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:29:48.490 --> 0:29:56.780
9
Yeah, I got. I got like, I mean, I'm supposed to work something like 1600 hours a year and I get 600 and something. I think it's the old 40-40-20%.

0:29:57.350 --> 0:29:58.540
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:29:57.890 --> 0:30:0.840
9
Something. Yeah. So 20 for a bit of admin, but the rest is sort of. Come. Yeah, 40% of my time is for research, roughly.

0:30:4.620 --> 0:30:5.20
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:30:6.650 --> 0:30:12.80
9
If I wanna be professor then 40% ain't gonna be enough. You know. I've gotta work like, say, work weekends. OK.

0:30:12.670 --> 0:30:14.800
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, I do work in the weekends.

0:30:14.760 --> 0:30:27.230
9
I know what you mean. Basically, I've gotta turn into Collins at Southampton. You know, I used to work with Collins and he, I have lots of stories about him working, like, really late into the night. I hope past 10:11 o'clock. And I'd still be in the office with him.

0:30:28.50 --> 0:30:28.420
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:30:28.170 --> 0:30:32.490
9
You know, I mean basic kind of work ethic that you think God have. We gotta do that to get along. But yeah. So yeah, I am on the, I am on supposed to be on a balanced contract, yeah.

0:30:38.140 --> 0:30:43.950
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah. So do you think if there is no TEF, no REF, no KEF, would you work differently?

0:30:48.730 --> 0:30:50.0
9
Yeah, I think it would remove a lot of the stigma around publishing in lower ranked journals, publishing things like book chapters, publishing things like monographs and writing books. I think it would be a lot more sort of freedom in terms of not only what we write in terms of academic freedom, but also where we wanna publish this thing and who we wanna speak to. I haven't just gotta keep targeting 3 stars journals all the time. I think that would be a really good thing. But to be honest with you again, I'm gonna draw a bit on the things that I write about. If there was no REF, something else would replace it. Some of the evil, you know, some of the kind of. You know, they always say a phrase I really like is what happens to the day after the revolution. So let's say we tear down these things. What crap replaces it? That's just as oppressive. Maybe in different ways, but it's still, you know, an oppressive sort of thing, **a restrictive thing**. So. I say I wouldn't go for the for the bigger things, or maybe they're just be another way of ranking things, I don't know.

0:31:49.860 --> 0:31:52.880
9
And for me, bringing TEF in was a bad idea. I think teaching they really need to rethink how they cause TEF doesn't measure teaching quality, exposed measure teaching quality, but it doesn't. I mean the metrics in there just don't. And you can't really manage it. Teaching quality based on satisfaction. It's perverse, you know. We were something to measure teaching quality. A lot of the time based on something that would be adequate for asking someone if they were satisfied with the taste of a Mars bar. Yeah. Did you enjoy it? Was it what you expected? You know, like no ads are not in. And it tasted like snack at. You know what I mean? Like, it's ridiculous. So I think there's that.

0:32:31.180 --> 0:32:42.110
9
KEF at the moment I'm quite I've managed to shield myself from KEF so I couldn't say, but I think I think they'll just the amount of managerialism in academia now. They just replace it with something else.

0:32:42.840 --> 0:32:43.210
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:32:43.320 --> 0:32:48.350
9
And it'll be something else, you know, I mean, I mean, REF itself was a replacement for the RAE, wasn't it so?

0:32:49.640 --> 0:32:55.810
9
Yeah, vessel evidence that research, assessment exercise just became REF. And then REF will probably become something else in. Could be 10 years.

0:32:58.120 --> 0:32:58.730
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:32:58.670 --> 0:33:0.670
9
When someone else is looking for a promotion, yeah.

0:33:2.320 --> 0:33:9.830
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, how do you think this kind of performance measurement influence or impact the advancement of the scholarship? whether negatively or positively, whatever.

0:33:17.810 --> 0:33:24.680
9
I mean certainly, I mean positively it means that we end up I think we end up doing more research. You know, and maybe we end up publishing more and there's more variety stuff out there. Negatively. Quite a lot, certainly with this. Certainly with like again the emphasis on ABS rankings and getting so many star publications. I think that. The problem you get is and I'm guilty of this myself. I'll be honest, I am getting better with this. I am pushing myself a bit more, but too many people play it safe. In terms of what they write, how they write it and where they publish it. So I know I can get. I recognize I could get 5 three star papers if I publish and financial, accountability and management.

0:34:8.250 --> 0:34:17.210
9
Because it's a journal that's always been receptive to me, to my area, but it's never gonna be four star journal. Not that. No chance. It's got more chance of getting downgraded and upgraded it.

0:34:18.30 --> 0:34:18.320
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:34:18.100 --> 0:34:34.550
9
So all accounting forum was always one as well. You know you could I, I knew it would be received well there. So I could try accounting forum and bought again that was we were always worried about that getting downgraded or being close you know not I think he's got a lot better now but people play it safe they play it safe also things like theoretically. Umm. And you know so? It's difficult to find. I think it's almost difficult to find reviewers. And you will be questioned really. You'll be questioned quite stringently if you try to introduce a new theoretical perspective on a phenomenon.

0:34:56.720 --> 0:35:8.670
9
So you know, for example like I could write the best paper ever with a different theory and then it'll get sent to reviewers 3 star journals. He'll say why aren't you use unimin odwyer for NGO accountability? I'm thinking because I wanna do something different and I don't see the world they're working. But again, to get published and to meet your performance standards, you'll probably just do what the reviewer tells you.

0:35:21.700 --> 0:35:22.60
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:35:21.870 --> 0:35:30.780
9
You know, so I think people end up, you know, I mean the, my old colleague asked and used to say to me, one of my old supervisors, to say **just do what the reviewer says satisfy the reviewer**. And again, there's not worth satisfaction coming back. It's like I don't wanna satisfy the review. I wanna have an argument with them. And OK, if I'm wrong, I'm wrong, but I if I wanna have an argument I wanna have an argument in a debate and stuff. That's what academic inquiry should be about.

0:35:47.0 --> 0:35:47.320
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:35:47.850 --> 0:35:51.700
9
I think the drive towards performance and more performance management. Is also, I mean you could Nurul might have pushed you onto a colleague, but I can recommend some colleagues to speak to.

0:36:0.630 --> 0:36:1.280
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, please.

0:35:52.390 --> 0:36:3.420
9
They've sort of they sort of taken away. Sort of some beautiful aspects of academia, and some people might think I'm being a bit of a romantic here or, you know, trying to romanticize what we do. But the space is for conversation. The space is for.

0:36:17.90 --> 0:36:23.620
9
You know, like having these sort of researcher away days, but not formalized and not with people in the department. They've got no interest. Like Formula Research Group and having a conversation or for a day now, underperformance under strict sort of performance management, even if you don't have to do this technically tacitly, you'll be accounting for your time.

0:36:38.720 --> 0:36:48.490
9
It was thinking is this worth it or should I be preparing those lecture slides so that I finally get my module specification finished? Should I get that marking done that's been sitting around for ages and they're chasing me for?

0:36:48.980 --> 0:36:49.320
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:36:49.390 --> 0:36:58.780
9
I'm so I think that as well, I think it is taken away from the idea of academia more towards something that can be managed and administered.

0:36:59.580 --> 0:37:4.50
9
And yeah, I do think we've lost that you know, gone are the days of sort of returning to walk through some campus like Oxford or Cambridge with classical music playing and **you are having a position status as an academic, that's gone**, though I think we're just managed employees. It is a shame and these things contribute to it. They have to contribute to it.

0:37:19.330 --> 0:37:19.610
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:37:19.860 --> 0:37:26.470
9
But to make that link you need someone who deals with them on a day-to-day basis and that I I never really did.

0:37:29.510 --> 0:37:34.940
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, but for the theoretical you mentioned that they play it safe theoretically. Could you explain more?

0:37:35.600 --> 0:37:46.110
9
Try. I'll give you an example. Take the journal like take one journal. OK. This journal has published the same authors in it doing the same thing for a long time. yeah. And it's it, you know, so if I submit that journal and I'm in that field and I wanna do something wacky in different and I see the world completely differently from these people, I'm gonna have a really hard time getting it through. But if that journal is desirable to me in terms of performance measurement. I'll probably end up just reverting to whatever the review is telling me.

0:38:12.130 --> 0:38:27.10
9
So a lot of people, I don't know, I'm playing it safe as well. A lot of people will instead of shooting for the big journals, the Big four-star journals, let's say they'll just publish in three stars just so that they know they can meet their minimum requirement with their institution. You know, their KPIs. Should never be academic somewhere where the bare minimum should never be encouraged, I think.

0:38:33.300 --> 0:38:33.650
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:38:33.820 --> 0:38:42.300
9
You know, so I think that's a problem as well. No, let's say to get a job at my old institution and certainly at my current one, you need a three star paper.

0:38:43.80 --> 0:38:43.450
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:38:44.860 --> 0:38:51.230
9
That's going to encourage you to publish in a three star. It's not going to necessarily encourage you to publish in a four-star. Why? Because that will take you two years or three years or four years or five years with AOS. in a 3 star paper might get it in within 12 months, 16 months, 18 months?

0:39:1.560 --> 0:39:1.950
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:39:1.820 --> 0:39:10.450
9
Just don't. I've got a job. Thank you. You know, I can buy a house and have a family and actually try and have a life, isn't it? I think that's. I think that's another one as well. The way things are measured and where they set the standard probably doesn't help. Doesn't encourage. It's probably encourages a bit of 9sfunctional behaviour. We're gonna talk in management accounting.

0:39:22.380 --> 0:39:32.80
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, it seems that it kills innovation. You know, if someone want to innovate another way, different method, different approach. It kills innovation 100%.

0:39:32.400 --> 0:39:37.310
9
So, like, let's say you're a new colleague and you've got some. Let's say you got some really talented young researcher there. And they haven't got this three star publication. You can't give him a job. And yet you can see they're going to be the next big thing. They're gonna be awesome. We can't give him a job. You'll end up rejecting quality talent. And then when they do come in. And they impose these performance sort of requirements on them, saying you must get a three star paper within X number of years. You're essentially encourages in them not to gamble with the big journal. That might take five years.

0:40:5.960 --> 0:40:6.320
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:40:6.480 --> 0:40:27.770
9
Really, if that's their intellectual potential, they should be encouraged to just express it the best way they can. So the amount of you know the amount of times you'll do your thesis. And then when you're, you know, if you're gonna try and get a job in the research at the university. I don't know why you got publications alrea9, but you'll probably churn out a three star to get yourself a job. Then after that you'll be OK. But it's sort of.

0:40:28.970 --> 0:40:32.760
9
This is nothing what academic academia shouldn't be spoken about in these terms.

0:40:33.420 --> 0:40:34.450
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:40:33.910 --> 0:40:38.340
9
academia should be the pursuit of knowledge or the development of knowledge or discovery or whatever you wanna call it

0:40:40.340 --> 0:40:44.0
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, but when you mentioned the recruiting process? And what do you mean by the like? Play it in the recruiting, they buy the professors who published?

0:40:51.710 --> 0:40:56.900
9
Yeah. Well, under the old dress used to be able to take your publications with you.

0:40:58.210 --> 0:40:58.730
Shahenda Shehata
OK.

0:40:58.180 --> 0:41:11.0
9
So if I in the REFs cycle, I think in like 7 year REF cycle or whatever it is 6-7 years. Isn't it a REF cycle? But so if someone if there's a professor out there who got 4/4 star publications.

They know deep down they can come out with a very high salary by moving jobs, because that has value with it because it links to the research funding and also the research ranking and profile of the university. So you are an extremely powerful you're in a very, very powerful position if you've got those papers and you could take them with you now, they stop that with the last one. But it just works the same. I mean if you.

0:41:38.770 --> 0:41:45.160
9
I was, I was off the job that I should not have been offered for because I didn't meet the requirements, but because I had so many papers under review. They said this guy's going to bring all these papers. He's gonna publish them under our name and we haven't paid him to do the research here. You know, I could they were looking to Take Me Out.

0:41:56.620 --> 0:42:8.670
9
I might have not been the best fit for them. I might not been the I probably was. But even if I wasn't, they still be taking it off, you know, thanks to lead to again, more quantity colleagues, getting jobs as well. Quantitative focused. Again. Gun if they. If they could bring our renals with them. They can bring, revise and resubmits with them. I think it makes them quite attractive.

0:42:19.820 --> 0:42:25.950
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah. OK. Thank you so much. I really appreciate it. Is it OK if I stop the recording?

0:42:26.0 --> 0:42:28.850
9
Yeah, if you if you got more questions, that's fine, yeah.

0:42:26.860 --> 0:42:29.340
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah. Thank you.