0:0:0.0 --> 0:0:1.770
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, I think the recording started now.

0:0:2.180 --> 0:0:2.450
13
Yep.

0:0:2.820 --> 0:0:21.190
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, all personal information, university, position, name, this data would not be collected to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of my participants. So thank you. So I looked at your profile. It's brilliant. what's the secret of success?

0:0:24.350 --> 0:0:27.700
13
being in academia for 1000 years.

0:0:28.210 --> 0:0:35.430
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah. OK. My topic is about the performance measurement in academia.

0:0:48.140 --> 0:0:48.770
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Yeah.

0:0:35.850 --> 0:0:53.340
Shahenda Shehata
Uh, and how this different measures affecting the academics and affecting the way they work, the mental health there, the well-being, how they cope with the system. So I'd like to know what different measures has been used in the university, the current university or the previous ones that you have worked in the UK.

0:1:5.670 --> 0:1:7.120
Shahenda Shehata
Yes, yes, please, yes.

0:1:2.230 --> 0:1:7.980
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So you're focused on UK universities I presume. OK, that's fine, that's fine.

0:1:8.440 --> 0:1:10.590
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Umm and I guess.

0:1:12.440 --> 0:1:27.670
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Well, I've been at Glasgow Uni since 2016. I was at Royal Holloway for a year before that and I was an honorary professor at Saint Andrews University for 10 years before that. So that's probably where I'm drawing from.

0:1:29.210 --> 0:1:30.0
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Yeah.

0:1:31.300 --> 0:1:32.430
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KPIs, performance measures. Well, obviously. Uh, the universities I've been involved with. Have a strong research emphasis, so regardless of whatever management says the research KPI's. Uh, the most important well, particularly if the staff member is a teaching and research staff member. If they're on that track. Uh, so UM. I mean, it's really, uh, what you regard as your best 6? Uh publications that are lodged for REF Assessment. UM. The and Deans of business vary in how they Assist that they either are very hooked to the Charter Association of Business School Journal rankings so they assess you on journal ranking of what your best 6. Or if the university is signatory to Dora. Then they're trying to use some sort of internal external evaluations of your published work by senior academics.

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They also are increasingly placing a huge emphasis on the grant money that you win. That I've observed to have changed over the last 15 years. where probably 10 years ago it was a highly desirable measure. Now it's becoming for the top research universities are real high pressure compulsory requirement for academics and so they're often set targets of number of grants or financial value of grants one say every year, but on a 3 year rolling average. Something like that.

A PhD student supervision, the number, average number and successful completions are another performance measure. On the teaching front, it would be. It varies I mean. Students assessment scores, yes, I think increasingly pass fail rates are also part of that assessment.

0:4:24.480 --> 0:4:24.730
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:4:24.960 --> 0:4:26.880
13
Uh, and then, A general assessment of whether they're actually fulfilling their allocated or if they're fulfilling 100% of their allocated workload model teaching component in terms of time. And then. They're spread of teaching depending on who they are across undergraduate, postgraduate, small classes, large classes. All of the classes. That's probably from the teaching point of view. And then, This also that sort of engagement or service or administration or citizenship universities term it differently, but they're looking for some sorts of continuity. In administrative service within, say, the school or the college. Umm, some sort of for accounting some sort of connection involvement with contribution to community groups, business organizations, professional bodies, that tends to be rather more qualitative, not so much hooked up with metrics.

0:6:1.200 --> 0:6:1.380
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:6:1.150 --> 0:6:2.570
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So that would be. I think if I think about it and I mean, I was only writing a reference for a chair promotion today. So I'm thinking about this stuff all the time. So I suppose I should also comment that I probably write between 10 and 15 references or assessor reports to universities for people that are By the job hunting or promotion hunting anywhere from senior lecturers through the professors. So I'm also quite aware all the time of the types of criteria that selection committees, or promotion committees are laying down so that that. Sorry, I should have given that bit. Early on, that's just more context as to why I've answered in the way I have.

0:6:52.690 --> 0:7:1.510
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, yeah. OK. But how do you see these measures affecting you personally 1st, and then affecting other colleagues?

0:7:4.50 --> 0:7:5.800
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Umm me personally. Right through my career. I've had an attitude that. If you get back, **there was a point in my career where I had a lot of colleagues were leaving academia for the profession because they were paid so badly.**

0:7:29.800 --> 0:7:31.710
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And excuse me, I'm gonna shut the door.

0:7:32.340 --> 0:7:33.140
Shahenda Shehata
That's fine, yeah.

0:7:37.780 --> 0:7:39.830
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All right, my wife just come home from the gym.

0:7:38.770 --> 0:7:41.20
Shahenda Shehata
No worries, yeah.

0:7:43.600 --> 0:7:58.300
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And I had to. I did about six months of soul searching as to what I was gonna do, and I decided that I really liked being academic for a whole lot of reasons that I was going to stay, but I decided that I was not going to make my first $1,000,000 by being an academic, so I made a decision that **regardless of the game being played for tenure, promotion via the metrics**. I was going to find a way to do what I wanted to do what I enjoyed a**nd manage the metrics.** This is what I always advise. Emerging scholars and young lecturers to do so. That's an explanation for now why I say that I chose very deliberately what I wanted to teach, how I wanted to do it. I chose what areas I wanted to research in and they were very, very strange. Very weird. I mean, if you look at my track record, it's really old because I've I was in social and environmental accounting when the most liberal academics told me to get out of it, that it was a fan and would be gone tomorrow. So I'm one of the earliest people in that area. I got into areas like accounting communication, accounting history, which a lot of places think is not very sexy at all. I got into public sector accounting when not many academics runner blah blah.

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But I decided no, I've gotta do what I enjoy. Otherwise I might as well go outside and earn $1,000,000. So then. ***I managed my metrics***, **so I used to look very carefully at which journals am I publishing in? What's the current fad amongst business Deans for which journals they like? There was a period where we didn't have journal rankings, so if I published in a North American journal, people would fall about in amazement.** **It's silly, but that's what they did. So I thought right? So I made sure, OK, I'll publish in British journals, Australian journals, North American journals. So that I look truly international.** So in other words, I would look at the way my bosses were prioritizing performance metrics and then I would try to manage my work and profile that actually gave them the metrics they liked, but it still allowed me to do what I wanted to do. So I now say to emerging scholars “Well, that's what you've gotta do. Umm. And it is doable. Yeah, I'll give you an example. If you're in accounting history. **There are specialist accounting history journals, but that don't rank highly because they're specialist journals mean the ranking systems are so inequitable.** Umm, So what are you doing? Well, if you're an accounting historian. **You publish in your specialist journals because you want the senior professors in that field to Pat you on the head and say, yes, you're one of us. You know, you're in our specialist community. Ohh look, you're publishing in accounting history in the accounting historian journal, blah Blah. But also you must make sure that you take some of your accounting history work and you publish it in British accounting review, accounting, Auditing, Accountability Journal.** Accounting, organization and society. you put yourself into the generalist journals where you get a high score from your dean.

0:11:32.890 --> 0:11:36.440
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So that that's the sort of thing I'm talking about now. I do say to them. Look. I have to do that too and there answer mostly is or. No, you don't. I mean, you know, you're a big professor, you know. You're international leading, professor. You don't have to all that. And my answer is I yes, I do. Because I'm very, very old and I'm on contracts and I'm on contract, for instance, at Glasgow as a research professor. So I I'm only as good and desirable to my employer as my last three years metrics. I mean, there's a point where they'll say, well, you know, he's slowing down. He's not as productive as he used to be. He should probably go fishing now. So. I'm staying in academia at the moment because I really enjoy it. I really enjoy the research professor role, the things I do, my colleagues, blah blah blah.

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But **I have to make sure that I'm still producing the sort of metrics that my business Dean expects that I personally will produce as long as with my as well as with my junior colleagues.** So it's a management issue for each individual and **academics need to be street smart**, so to give you another example, I've had a senior colleague at Glasgow say to me, do you believe in publishing volume, meaning volume of output. Uh, because this professor would just focus on, say two projects at any one point in time, aiming for a really, really top journal to end up over A 6 year period with their best six REF items that look really good. My approach is completely different. So my answer was yes, I do. **So I actually publish at a much higher volume than that.** I because I enjoy doing it. **So I'm not. I'm not gonna stay in the game if I can't do what I enjoy, but second, I've actually found as a as a scholar that you never quite know what your best work is and what everybody's gonna love.**

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So I've had experiences where I've worked on a project along with others, but a particular project for say 10 years and then I finally produced it and I sit back and I think this is my finest hour. I am so proud of this. And then I mean it publishes but then sort of have it, it takes a lot of notice, seems to disappear a bit and I think Umm, then there's other pieces of work I've done where maybe because of timing and circumstance. I've done them under pressure. And to be honest with you, I've written parts of papers on planes and in airports, and gardens as well. And the things got published and I thought, yeah, well, you know, it was OK, you know, I'm happy enough. I wouldn't write it, like, right up there. And it's citations go through the roof and a whole lot of scholars. Ohh, this is fantastic. Yeah. Thank God you did that. I can cite that. You think really so. I have an attitude you can see there. I'm doing. I'm doing stuff I love. I'm doing what I wanna do.

0:15:10.510 --> 0:15:10.820
Shahenda Shehata
Uh.

0:15:10.890 --> 0:15:12.980
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But on the other hand, at the same time. I am managing the performance assessment game, the metrics game and I can make that work in my favour, and as you know. Uh, all the time we academics are asked, OK, so would you like to identify your best six and write a blurb as to why each one is in your best 6 and you can change that. So I mean, my publications, they lodge up onto our Glasgow University Library system as per government regulations and then continually every now and then I'm asked. Well, have you reviewed what you said were your best six because you published some more since then. Anything you wanna change? **So you can see that sort of management of profile and outcomes going on both by the university but but also also by me.**

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Sorry about the long answer.

0:16:6.970 --> 0:16:13.20
Shahenda Shehata
No, it's very nice. Thank you so much. So you mean you choose the best, the best 6 publications for you?

0:16:13.690 --> 0:16:16.110
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What? Well, let's qualify that. Let's say because I'm gaming it. **I'm choosing what I think the external REF reviewers would regard as top level best six, so I have sometimes made decisions where there's a particular paper that I think. I mean I I've got a paper I wrote quite a few years ago now.** Umm, which is about the theory of time in historical method. Now it doesn't have a huge lot of citations because you can imagine it's really what we call a historiographic paper. It's about history method. Well, I mean, they're accounting history community small enough, let alone a specialist article which draws on journals like history and theory at, like outside our discipline. But I've got some colleagues that say they read it three times and they think it's my intellectually it's one of my best pieces of work ever. **But I probably would have never declared it for the REF because I think, Umm, I think a generalist p**rofessorial reviewer for REF m**ight look at it and say, well, you know it's very specialized and how much impact it really made. So I try and think as a reviewer would and I go and pick out of my l**ist.

0:17:46.30 --> 0:17:47.0
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, I got it.

0:17:42.220 --> 0:17:48.750
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What am I think reviewers would think are best six now? I won't put something in that I'm not that impressed with. I mean I, you know, I it it's sort of gotta be an intersection between. Yeah, I want to. I think maybe in my top 20%, But what the reviewers might think is definitely a best six type of paper.

0:18:9.210 --> 0:18:9.660
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:18:9.40 --> 0:18:11.130
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But look, you never know.

0:18:11.820 --> 0:18:13.850
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, sure

0:18:12.570 --> 0:18:21.10
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I can give you an example before the about 2016 in the build up to the last REF round. Uh, my colleagues at Glasgow asked me to would I be prepared to put two of my published papers forward to the research cluster? That's like an accounting research group of all the PhD students and the staff. And they meet once a month. For them to learn how to evaluate from a REF point of view so they can understand about the REF. No. OK, so they said. Can you pick one paper that you think is absolutely sort of a star? And another one that you think is sort of like it's a, it's solid, it just makes it OK. So I picked 2. And everybody got sent the papers. Everybody had to read them. They got given the REF criteria to evaluate them and they had to score them out of 10 or something. And then I was stuck down in Adelaide. I was given a chance to speak for 10 minutes on why I picked these two papers. And then they discussed it all. Then I looked at my score. My best paper did happen to be an iOS. I'd spend about 10 years on it. Uh and they didn't think it was rigorous enough. Yeah. So they downgraded it. All my colleagues love them, but they downgraded it to, I think, marginal A. And the one that I said was marginal. And they said, yeah, probably was. Now I had fellow professors who would never have put themselves under that scrutiny because if that had happened to them, they would have been so angry, you know, like, I've, I've got this top published paper and you'll say me.

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**I didn't mind because I do. I do think academics have to be much more street smart. So not only do I manage my metrics for my business team, but I'm managing my profile and metrics to keep me marketable so that if I decide ohh you know it's been good**. **You know, I've done six years at Glasgow. I think it's time to move on. I want my track record to be marketable to other business teams.** And if I've got for an and I, I mean we shouldn't talk like this, but it's totally anti-intellectual. But if I've got say 3 OSS, I think I have maybe I've got 4.I know down well.That at Dean's going to look at my record and he's gonna go. Good God, he's got three OS's.

0:20:48.760 --> 0:21:10.770
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He's got a contemporary accounting research that's like, right up there in the stars. He's got a he's got two European accounting reviews. Let's get this guy in. So, so I, you know, I when some people expressed concern for me having been, you know, on this little sort of test run having been downgraded by my colleagues, I just smiled and said, that's fine. I know I am marketable.

0:21:14.570 --> 0:21:15.240
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:21:14.600 --> 0:21:18.430
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So I mean not, you know, others may not talk to you this way, but. Yeah. What I'm saying is. I suppose the system universities have become highly commercial, highly corporate. They really, really have. **And so they're operating like businesses. It's all about money. I mean, even the research profile, it's all about money. It's about attracting international students. But international student revenue, it's about attracting government grants and government funding because, you know, you've got fantastic KPIs. Well, you get them out of your stuff.** **So it's regrettable it has a lot of dysfunctional consequences, and I guess in some senses a dysfunctional consequence is that even people like me manage our metrics to comply with this top down commercial style management system. So we are partly selling ourselves to the devil.**

0:22:17.750 --> 0:22:28.390
Shahenda Shehata
But I wonder how the REF committee external one like have different criteria of evaluation. Could you explain this to me like how they evaluated differently?

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Yeah, that that's very. It's very difficult to explain because **they do not reveal.**

0:22:41.480 --> 0:22:41.730
Shahenda Shehata
Uh.

0:22:38.100 --> 0:22:54.900
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I mean, **they do a general report after they've run the REF, but they really don't reveal any specific** **details about how they reach their conclusions. It tends to be kept confidential, so it's opaque**. I would refer you now. I don't know where it is, but I know I've seen it. You might have found them already. There are one or two articles that have been written, published in journals by members of REF panels about previous reference. I'm pretty sure there's a colleague of mine who's now retired Professor Jane Broadbent.

0:23:14.910 --> 0:23:15.240
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:23:14.620 --> 0:23:19.660
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Uh. She ended up at Roehampton University. But she was a REF panel member for accounting.

0:23:30.410 --> 0:23:31.10
Shahenda Shehata
Yes, sure.

0:23:25.270 --> 0:23:50.80
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And I'm positive that she published an article you could try Google searching her. She published her article about her experience on the panels. I can't remember whether you know it. It could have been in British accounting review, or maybe it was in British Journal of Management or Journal of Management Studies. I cannot remember. But I also think I've seen at least one management panel.

0:23:53.170 --> 0:23:53.460
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:23:51.230 --> 0:24:0.220
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article published so I don't you know, I I really have to go hunting Google search and be my first crack. But have a look around because that could be quite useful for you because they there have been somewhere they've tried to reflect within the confidentiality limits imposed on them, but how they, you know how they really reach their decisions? I used to be an international advisor or It was it was called something else before it was REF for accounting for 2 rounds and I used to be sent what the panel thought were I think it was like the top 10 university departments in accounting.

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And they were looking at and I got sent the complete submissions, so those departments were required to submit narratives on their research, infrastructure and culture. How they build at all. Umm on the proposed or passed in future research strategies, in addition to, you know, the publications profile and the grant winning. So my distinct impression was. And I presume that's still a case that the panel's make a holistic judgment about departments. They don't just look at, you know, the profile or the best publication schools. Like uh, they look at some of these other factors like the research culture, the supporting infrastructure, the strategies that have been put in place.

0:25:47.320 --> 0:25:59.280
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah. So how do you see this measures affecting the work itself, like the choosing of the topic of research, the innovation of research, different topics?

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Yeah. OK. I think there's quite a lot of impacts. They can vary between schools and universities. for example. Some Business School Deans in accounting groups become convinced that they'll get a better score If they are publishing **Exclusively or largely positive as quantitative research.** And though they'll think it gives them even more credibility if they publish it in North American journals. This is not exclusively a British phenomenon. Uh, down here in in Southeast Asia, I mean, I've seen that in the universities, for instance, in Singapore and Hong Kong, where they try to be more American than a North American. I mean it is, it's crazy. It's just all about status or perceived status, so If the business Dean or their group decide that quantitative research 'll get them better scores. That will influence what type of academic they hire, they will put them under pressure to do quantitative research. They'll put them under pressure to go, in particular quantitative journals, and I think going to give the best credibility. So that's one example. I guess, uh.

0:27:36.680 --> 0:27:51.950
Shahenda Shehata
But it is this is not correct because actually they told me the same. They told me if you choose a quantitative method you gonna publish easily. You can have more publications. But I'm interested in qualitative. So why I have to move to quantitative.

0:27:53.280 --> 0:27:54.810
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Uh, and look, that's. Yeah, I mean, I've had it done to me. I've heard it over and over. I mean, that's incredible. That's an incredible urban myth, you know. I mean, I've heard that said to me and other colleagues 30 years ago. And it's wrong, I mean. Uh, I think. In terms of publishing frequency. Over the last 30 years, a think I'm rated in the top. Five or six in accounting globally and all my work well, nearly all. Nearly all my work is qualitative. So I mean it's a complete myth that you can, it's a myth that you can publish more easily because. Gently dances on one of them. Uh, I'm now getting flooded with submissions. Because the Deans tell all their stuff, you must publish. You must publish, so they're all running around madly trying to find a project, write it up, get it into a journal, get a score so they're flooding the system.

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Now in for instance, in my journal, my reviewers are increasingly saying to me, look, this particular study that I've reviewed, it's nice, it's well designed, it's well done, it's nicely written up. You know, methods, good analysis is OK, but it's boring and it's not saying anything new. It's not really significant. Bang. Gone now that's I think an even worse challenge in quantitative research. Because a lot of quantitative research is like counting the number of angels on the head of a pin, you know they make minor variations in variables and then try and run the stats again and then say, oh, look, I found something new. So The challenge of coming up with something new and original that editors are going back and publish when reviewers in quantitative actually think is tougher than in qualitative, and I think actually you can publish more in qualitative, especially if you've done some projects where they're quite if it's quite a large project with some very careful thinking, you can maybe pull out three papers out of the one project, you have to be careful about that. Because the 3rd paper might start looking a bit thin and a bit weak, but you know if you've got good advice you can do that so. I suppose, but the but the there are other impacts of this. These performance measurement systems on academics like.

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**Encouraging academics to treat teaching as a penalty and research as the reward.** So you try and get best research scores possible so that maybe the Dean will love you and give you less teaching because you regard teaching as a penalty. **And it also can negatively impact on the quality of teaching, because** **researchers try to minimize their teaching effort to preserve more time for the research.** Now, I should make the qualification there in the UK because you have two tracks of appointment, you have research and teaching appointments, which is sort of what I've been talking about. But you've also got the scholarship track, which is like.Primarily, you're a teacher who does some education related research. You teach more hours. This is not in all universities, but there's a lot. Glasgow we do.And we've got people that have promoted all the way to professor up the teaching track. So for the teaching or scholarship focused academic, **t**he story changes a little because the performance measures and metrics have a lot more emphasis on teaching innovation. New program design, you know, in other words, teaching development work and maybe case studies, surveys, you know, research that relates to the education process but the teaching hours are greater. The research or scholarship required is a lesser proportion of your total time and your total track record. I suppose the other thing is that these performance measurement systems run a risk of. Well, I mean now I'm just gonna tell you stuff like, you know from management accounting and it's like budget control. So you get academics with a very short term time horizon because you know they're up for tenure review within three years or they've got a three-year contract and they wanna get renewed.

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Or you know, so there there's a tendency to go for small projects that you can finish quite quickly, try and get a good score. You know there is a sort of a short term what we call ***instrumental focus*** where you're just doing it to tick boxes. So you know if you've if you've got to show that you've done a bit of external engagement well, just so you're a member of professional body tick, you just do minimum things and particularly a lot of academics probably correctly regard the performance measurement system as heavily research focused and strongly teaching oriented and then the service admin engagement is like you know, third priority, but along a lot less, a lot less. So you know you put minimum effort into that just to make yourself look you know, OK, you know I haven't killed anybody.

Yeah, but I haven't sold my parents. I've done these few things that good enough. Good. Thank you. So, yeah, that, that that's some of the impacts that I've observed. And some of those impacts are written about. You've probably picked up on some of the stuff I've written this. I'm just trying to think there's two papers. Well, there's more coming out, but there's two papers in financial accountability and management that I wrote. If you just sort of, you know, go look for them, you'll find one of them talks about academic impacts of the whole commercialisation of universities, so you'll see some stuff in there and in fact I it might be impressed already, I think, there's a paper in financial accountability management that I've just written about the contradiction between university performance measures on research and engagement that they're telling the world that we've got engaged academics, we care about the community, blah blah blah. But their performance measures are all about research which is very internally focused, not externally focused. So I think check spam impress.

0:35:17.430 --> 0:35:17.800
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:35:17.460 --> 0:35:21.510
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And you might find my papers already out only got accepted a little while back. But it would just. It's saved you some interview time. It would expand for you on what I've discovered. What I think about this particular issue.

0:35:31.590 --> 0:35:44.540
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah. Yeah, but how do you observe your colleagues try to meet the requirements for the REF or the TEF? Like, do they have different means to manage the system? If I could say that.

0:35:44.980 --> 0:35:45.930
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Uh, yeah.

Some, as I've said before, we'll just prune down, reduce down the number of research projects they take on. And try. to only work on limited number of projects that they think will guarantee them into a top journal. So that they get there best 6 REF in very top journals. Because. Even though the REF reviewers say that they're only evaluating content. Apparently the volume of evaluation is getting so high because there's so many people publishing that some of my colleagues suspect that the rank of the journal affects the mind of the reviewer. You know it affects the score they might give. So. I'm saying that not a Max. Everybody just some. I think.

0:36:59.650 --> 0:37:4.60
Shahenda Shehata
But is that a successful strategy to you reduce the number of publications?

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No, it's risky because you could spend five years on a project that you think you're gonna get into OS. And then you get rejected. Then you gotta go to the next journal and you've just lost. You know, 12 months maybe going through the OS process and then suddenly it's not ready for the REF audit date.

0:37:27.620 --> 0:37:28.60
Shahenda Shehata
Umm.

0:37:27.980 --> 0:37:30.170
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So it is a very risky strategy, because you might end up with not enough to even make up a best six. Now I should say that the pressure there has come off a little bit because in the last REF round, a department only had to submit an average of 1 best article per staff member. So for example. **Our REF leader at Glasgow has said to me I want your best six on the list because I might have to use them all.** **Because I think they might be some staff whose best one or two, but not actually very good, so they'll be counted in the number of staff submitting for REF, but I'll use yours. I might have to use your whole 6 to get my one per staff average so you can see the gaming just.** It every risk has gaming going on by the people, the senior managers that are putting the submissions together and by the most junior staff who are trying to second guess how the system's gonna work and how they're going to look. You have to remember that.

0:38:51.50 --> 0:38:51.490
Shahenda Shehata
Umm.

0:38:41.130 --> 0:38:51.860
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Uh, in terms of their own tenure and promotion, they don't wanna be seen to have no publications that are included in the REF at all. That's not a good look.

0:38:52.360 --> 0:38:52.850
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:38:52.990 --> 0:39:4.660
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So yeah, it now in terms so. So I guess in terms of strategies, I think it's become more chaotic since COVID. Because as you know, I mean, COVID imposed massive pressures. I mean, I watched my colleagues have to convert. As yours would have too, to online teaching almost overnight, or almost within 30 days.

0:39:27.830 --> 0:39:28.190
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:39:22.320 --> 0:39:52.110
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And normally, if you're going to create an online course, you need about six months work to set it all up. Prepare it. So for instance, our business Dean, you can't quote this bit, but he declared a non-research year the first year of Covid said relax, don't worry, I'm your friend. I'll look after you. It's a non-research. You just do the you know focus on the whole transition to online teaching, blah blah blah. But I kept saying too. Colleagues, don't believe him. Alright, might say that, but in another year's time he'll go looking for your research output. He'll go back into the normal evaluation routine and you will say ohh but you said 2020 with a non-research here. Ohh yes, yes, yes of course. But now it's 2022.

0:40:15.920 --> 0:40:16.240
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:40:15.790 --> 0:40:16.510
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So. What I've found is that my colleagues, many of them are still under pressure because we then went through a transition where business Dean said Ohh well covid's nearly gone, which we know it's not. We want everybody to come back. So then they started a compelling a hybrid teaching. So they ordered my colleagues back into the classroom physically, but at the same time said I would. You must teach online as well because it'll be some students can't get there and initially in fact, very few students were turning up face to face. At my university, they were studying online, but the academics had to do all the preparation. That was a different sort of preparation for face to face in the classroom as to online. So really over the last three years, **the time of available for research has shrunk massively.**

0:41:19.340 --> 0:41:24.90
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And so even the best strategies for you know. **Trying to position individuals themselves for 10 year old promotion or next contract has become very difficult because they just don't have the time.** Uh, so I think the. It we don't know.

0:41:46.650 --> 0:41:46.910
Shahenda Shehata
Umm.

0:41:44.50 --> 0:41:51.900
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How Deans are reacting yet whether they're adjusting their expectations downwards to take account. All the pressures of the last three years or not is very difficult to say. I haven't seen any evidence of them downward adjusting their expectations. So as suppose we could say that if we looked at, say, the last six years in the UK that The workload has intensified hugely. And the performance expectations have remained high.

0:42:22.800 --> 0:42:23.250
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:42:22.650 --> 0:42:26.380
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In in many cases, in many cases now of course. There may be a layer and you may discover this, depending on who you interviewed. There may be a layer of universities where. Thy are. University is strategically adopting a stronger teaching emphasis with a, you know, adequate. What they regard as adequate and satisfactory accompanying research emphasis. Now, if that's the case, the pressures may be different. Uh, and I think that's something you might wanna be alert to.

0:43:28.980 --> 0:43:29.360
Shahenda Shehata
Umm.

0:43:1.940 --> 0:43:32.630
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Uh in in terms of who you interview and just looking at where they are, which university see because, I mean I'm at Glasgow. So we're Russell Group, you know in fact I think in the last rankings we were ranked 14th in Britain. So now our university principal dear chat is determined that we must now drive to become in the top 10. So having achieved spec quite spectacular results.

0:43:32.940 --> 0:43:33.240
Shahenda Shehata
Umm.

0:43:33.370 --> 0:43:37.630
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And again, you know this from budgeting literature.

0:43:36.120 --> 0:43:38.550
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:43:38.770 --> 0:43:52.680
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You know, at the standard gets raised further. Well, if you're that good, you can be even better. And so the press, the pressure increases. But I think and I'm not gonna name universities, I don't think that's right. But I think there are universities. Uh. Say in northern England, for example, that.The that pressure won't be the same because they will have consciously at the organization level, decided on a different strategic profile a, you know and and that. Then changes the expectations and what? Before its measures, they're asking staff to meet.

0:44:21.930 --> 0:44:22.270
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:44:22.330 --> 0:44:28.480
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So you might you might wanna look out for that in case you see any real differences turning up, depending on who you interview.

0:44:28.910 --> 0:44:37.710
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, sure. Thank you. But how the Deans like, vary in, in the evaluation like from different deans?

0:44:40.980 --> 0:44:41.490
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Well. I think, uh. Do you meet now when you say how they vary in evaluation, do you mean between universities or between staff levels or between universities?

0:44:54.930 --> 0:44:56.100
Shahenda Shehata
Yes.

0:44:59.780 --> 0:45:0.570
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It's difficult. For me to say uh. Except I suppose. From a point of view of writing reference reports and watching what appointment committees do. So. I watched appointment committees in let's say. Top 20 universities. Reject applicants. Who within 3-6 months had senior posts offered to them in universities outside the top 20. So I think. There are conscious differences? That are applied to performance metrics by senior management. Depending on where they see their university ranked. This means that. They often failed to recruit or they lose existing talent. Which is actually very high performing and extremely talented. So. I've had the experience of writing references on applicants, be it for promotion or job. Where I've declared to the panel. This person. Is has a sparkling track record. What they are a rising star. Uh, I strongly recommend their promotion or appointment if you choose not to. You will not get the opportunity again. Because my assessment. All of the marketability is such that within two years. There will be multiple universities wishing to appoint them and you will not have the chance to get them again. Now I've literally written that on quite a few assessments in accounting, particularly in accounting.

0:47:24.120 --> 0:47:28.530
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And I should say, if you look at jobs.app.uk. You will see that there are accounting academic posts from lecturer to full professor. Some weeks I look and there's as many as 20. There are lots of vacant posts and UK it's a very hot market. Uh, so I'm continually saying to some colleagues, look, you know, I'm not telling you to leave you university. I don't want you to, you know, blah blah blah. But if you can't get the deal you want, if you can't get the recognition you think you deserve, put yourself on the market because somebody else is going to buy you very probably. But yet there are differences and I think the differences are attributable to the universities own perception of its own ranking in the status rankings.

0:48:25.80 --> 0:48:33.710
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**Think it's also depends on the degree of bureaucratic rigidity within the university**.

0:48:35.40 --> 0:48:37.330
Shahenda Shehata
But what? What do you mean by bureaucratic rigidity?

0:48:39.600 --> 0:48:42.410
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Very often there are processes. Required to appoint or promote anybody. Which are very closely overseen by the human resource department. And regardless of market competition. Threats of losing people, they will not vary from they will insist on following the process through which sometimes makes unrealistic judgments about people or takes too long. And by the time even a correct judgments being made, that person's been lost. So that's what I mean by bureaucratic rigidity. So in other words, the decision makers say a Dean or a department head are they shackled by the bureaucratic processes that they must go through so they can't react quickly enough. I mean, again, it's not for printing, but you'll get the idea. I can give you a personal example.

0:49:52.210 --> 0:49:57.940
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I resign from one of my an Adelaide University because I live in Adelaide. And I took. Uh, the fractional research post at RMIT University in Melbourne. A colleague of mine who was head of accounting at Royal Holloway, saw that. Emailed me and said I didn't know you were prepared to move or prepared you. Look, I didn't know you were prepared to do that, so. Ohh yeah, you said Gee. What? What if I? What have I created job for you? How about you? Do you know? 20% for me said. Well, OK. He had to go through an entire process of creating a post. Advertising it. I had to go through online interviews, presentations and I mean, I didn't even want it. Staying at Glasgow.

***They actually drafted a job advert, put it in front of me and said do you like that? We said, yeah, it fits me. Then they advertised it, then I had to apply, go through interviews, make presentations. I even had colleagues at other universities phoned me up and say we've seen that advert that was written for you.*** It wasn't it. Well, it seems to be, but you know, so we had to go through this whole bureaucratic process now because I was happy enough to sit around because I didn't. I was happy. I wasn't looking for jobs. You know the process took ages and they got me. **But I have watched in many universities where they have that bureaucratic rigidity, they lose candidates or they lose. People have already got over and over because of the the timing factor.**

0:51:33.170 --> 0:51:45.480
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, yeah, I see. But how do you do you think this performance measurement, whether the REF or the TEF or others influence the advancement of the academia or the scholarship?

0:51:48.370 --> 0:51:51.110
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Can you explain a bit more what you mean by that question?

0:51:51.570 --> 0:52:5.270
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah, like how does this adds to the improvement of the knowledge accumulation, to the quality of the teaching, the quality of the research, which is I think it's mostly important.

0:52:5.790 --> 0:52:6.390
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Yeah. I think it might to some degree, but I think there are huge risks that it has a dysfunctional, DIYS functional impact. That is to say, on the research front, it produces higher volumes of publication. On less and less important issues. With more and more marginal, or with more findings of marginal significance. So there is a risk that we start sort of over expanding our literature. But the number of really significant. Ohm results become less and because academics are pushed so hard on their internally focused metrics, they lose sight of any practice, policy, profession, business, society, application. So the risk is that these more and more publications that are discovering less and less also are not translating into contribution to society, community, business, government. So that's the risk on the research side. On the teaching side, the risk is that it becomes a compliance culture that there are now so many rules and regulations and so many accountability reports. Academics have to fill in.

0:53:35.240 --> 0:53:47.460
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**Uh, and so many approvals they have to get for which textbook they use, what assessments they're using, what their pass rates are the little kitties. I'm sorry, students, are they happy?** That, that they pursue those metrics. So in other words we get.

0:53:58.690 --> 0:53:58.930
Shahenda Shehata
No.

0:53:55.130 --> 0:53:59.880
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Goal displacement, which you'd be familiar with in management account. So in other words. The means or the supposed means to create better quality teaching like faster turnaround of marking, more consultation with students, you know, count the number of consultation hours. All, all those sort of things that are measured. Uh are designed to improve the quality of teaching, but in fact they can actually limit the quality of teaching. Because it also, if the bureaucracy is so great in terms of the control over teaching processes, then the scope for innovation in teaching, trying new things out can actually become less and less because you have to get too many approvals. It takes too long to get the approvals for this semester's course. It chews up too much time from your research, so I don't think I'll bother. So there, there is a risk that.

0:55:23.210 --> 0:55:23.580
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:54:58.280 --> 0:55:24.620
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You know, even if evaluators come through, they will evaluate and this you will understand the control system and we can show. Ohh yes, the controls are all here. Look, we've got all these reports. We do all these things but the outcomes may actually have become worse, not better. So I think on the teaching and the research side they're the two risks of this sort of metrics obsession.

0:55:25.100 --> 0:55:25.730
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

0:55:25.640 --> 0:55:38.130
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And it's not. And it's not just British. I mean, we see probably even worse. We see the same thing going on in Australia and New Zealand. I don't think it's quite so bad in the US but there, I mean it's beyond the scope of your study, but it's just a comment.

0:55:37.830 --> 0:55:46.500
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah. But if there is no measures at all in academia, would you work differently? Or would other academics work differently?

0:55:46.990 --> 0:55:55.890
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Ohh yes, I think you know if we go to the other extreme where there's no measures at all, then yes, academics would work differently and mighty we would see, you know, a bigger proportion of high profile cases of poor performance or unsatisfactory performance. Going on my experience over, you know, the 1000 years. It would still be a minority. Umm, in in my experience in universities and I think back to even watching this, I mean I used to be a Dean in the OHP thing about this. Uh, in the 1980s I was a Dean. In the 1990s, I was ahead of school. And I saw universities create new control systems. **To try to stop bad academic behaviour because one person had been naughty.** **And done an unethical thing or a unsatisfactory performing thing. So they brought in a new set of procedures, a new set of roles to stop that ever happening again.** The problem was that the controls then proliferated and they got applied to all the academics. And then the motivation of the majority of the academics and the time available for innovation, creative thinking, all fell. Because the system was overreacting to a small minority.

0:57:31.990 --> 0:57:41.890
Shahenda Shehata

Sorry. Is it a bad behaviour in research, teaching or like dealing with other colleagues?

0:57:43.960 --> 0:57:56.270
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Well, probably one of the more common ones was in the teaching area. Maybe too slow to release results to students not providing adequate consultation time.

0:58:3.460 --> 0:58:4.10
Shahenda Shehata
Ohh.

0:57:56.730 --> 0:58:12.980
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Uh. A pass rate of 60% instead of the highly desired 80%. You know, I could go on the most, the most observable situations where the rules and regulations and controls proliferated has been in teaching. Umm. And I think that's.

0:58:23.850 --> 0:58:24.510
Shahenda Shehata
Yes, please.

0:58:18.540 --> 0:58:47.810
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That's had a negative impact. I mean I can give you a personal example. I mean, when I first went to now unfortunately this is not a British example. But when I first went to a university in Australia as a brand new professor, I was 35 years of age, brand new professor. I wanted to bring in some new courses, new innovations. But this university had a system where you had to go through some course evaluation panel full of people not in your discipline. It didn't really know what your discipline was about. And I started getting told no, I hadn't. I hadn't followed the proper processes, so I decided I wouldn't do anything, so I stopped all teaching innovation and said, well, we'll run the courses that we've got. So the chair of the panel, who was a law lecturer, came to see me and said, you know, why? Why? Why have you stopped all, you know, new course development is similar. I haven't got time or motivation to go through these ridiculous processes that you're imposing.
So I'm not going to which? He replied. You can't do that. To which I replied. Watch me and I became Dean there as well, and I spent three years there and I did not introduce one course. I just got the staff to maintain the existing courses they were teaching, teach them well. But I stopped all innovation and I published because. And again, we're back to managing the metrics and I have colleagues, they've only repeated this to me, who've made professorships.

0:59:50.130 --> 1:0:0.790
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In the last five years and they've said, my God, you know, we remember as young academics, you saying to us, just remember doesn't matter what university management tells you, doesn't matter what the performance measurement system is. You publish or you perish. That's the key to your marketability. Uh, so I, you know, I confess, you know, that's I've been involved in reacting to those sort of things exactly that way. And I should also comment that **the proliferation of controls and control tools is also a reaction to the commercialization of universities**. **I'm sure you've heard the phrase used, at least in some of the universities you've been involved in, the student as customer**. The student is A Customer, **this is completely incorrect. This is a myth that's being created by commercialized, corporatized university management who want maximum s**tudent recruitment, maximum pass rates, maximum revenue, and that's the relationship. That's how they see you get it. So to them the student is a customer. Now the difficulty in that argument and you'll find this written about and you've probably come across it in the academic literature that the students, not a customer because.

1:1:12.310 --> 1:1:15.110
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As you know, if there are first year undergraduate. They don't know what day it is. I mean, they don't know anything about accounting. So how can they be an informed customer? How can they judge what they need to learn in first year and what's good for them? Or what's gonna set them up for their professional career? They don't know anything. Maybe, maybe. You know, by the time they're in the final year, they're starting to get a better knowledge base that would enable them to make this sort of a customer judgment but it but the proliferation of control tools is because university management are trying to force. The best customer orientation and happiness from the staff performance. So there's a couple of things that promoted this sort of stuff going on.

1:2:9.550 --> 1:2:9.880
Shahenda Shehata
Yeah.

1:2:11.70 --> 1:2:20.330
Shahenda Shehata
Thank you so much. It was so interesting. I think it's one of the best interviews I've ever conducted. Thank you so much. May I stop the recording now, please?

1:2:20.950 --> 1:2:21.680
13
Yeah, sure.

1:2:21.990 --> 1:2:22.550
Shahenda Shehata
Thank you.

1:2:23.20 --> 1:2:25.370
13
I hope wasn't too depressing for you.

1:2:26.730 --> 1:2:27.760
Shahenda Shehata
Not at all.