



Blended Professionals: Stirred but not shaken

(Working Paper)

***Tony Hudson
Continuum, University of East London
October, 2009***

Acknowledgements

This paper, which is a work in progress, is the outcome of ongoing work at Continuum on the support, recognition and training needs of specific groups of support staff: widening participation practitioners and staff managing student ambassadors and mentoring schemes; and their professional identity.

ESCalate provided funding to enable our initial work with widening participation practitioners to be extended to staff managing student ambassadors and mentoring schemes. In undertaking this work we have also begun to develop a more rigorous theoretical framework drawing on the work of Celia Whitchurch on “blended professionals” – staff who work in both academic and professional domains.

Early findings from the research were disseminated at an invited seminar held at the Higher Education Funding Council in London and more recently at the 2009 FACE Conference.

Thanks are due to the respondents who contributed to this endeavour by completing the online survey, some of whom also participated in the follow up focus groups. In addition we are grateful to colleagues who contributed to the invited workshop at HEFCE and the FACE Conference by commenting on our early thoughts and findings which have helped us in writing this paper and the forthcoming data report

Partnership and collaborative working is central to the mission of Continuum and we were pleased to engage with colleagues working in a variety of contexts and settings in our endeavour to bring together research, policy and practice.

Tony Hudson
Continuum, University of East London

October 2009

Summary

Blended Professionals: Stirred but not shaken was written by **Tony Hudson on behalf of Continuum, University of East London.**

This paper, which is a work in progress, is the outcome of ongoing work at Continuum on the support, recognition and training needs and professional identity of specific groups of support staff: widening participation practitioners and staff who manage student ambassadors and mentoring schemes.

ESCalate provided funding to support work with widening participation practitioners to be extended to staff managing student ambassadors and mentoring schemes.

The changing Higher Education landscape has had a significant effect on the role of academic and professional staff and a profound effect on professional identity.

The aims of the scoping study were:

- to explore the extent of support and recognition for practitioners;
- to identify the learning and training needs of a particular group of support staff.

In undertaking this work Continuum has begun to develop a more rigorous theoretical framework drawing on the work of Celia Whitchurch on “blended professionals” – staff who work in both academic and professional domains.

These niche professionals based in multi-functional teams working on what Whitchurch (2008) describes as “institutional projects” are blurring the boundaries between previously well defined academic and professional domains leading to the creation of a “third space.”

An online survey of practitioners was used to gather data on both the previous learning and training that practitioners had received and to identify their future training needs.

Early findings from the research were disseminated at an invited seminar held at the Higher Education Funding Council in London and more recently at the 2009 FACE Conference

Abstract

The changing Higher Education landscape has had a significant effect on the role of academic and professional staff and profound effect on professional identity.

We set the scene for by reporting on findings from a recent focussed research project on the development needs of staff working in higher education with responsibility for student ambassadors, mentors and mentoring programmes. This work builds on previous research into the development, training and accreditation needs of widening participation practitioner (Hudson & Pooley, 2006).

An online survey of practitioners was used to gather data on both the previous learning and training that practitioners had received and to identify their future training needs. In addition the survey also explored respondents' professional identity and impact of location within their institutional setting. The survey revealed a strong demand for current informal learning activities to be recognised and accredited. These findings were supported by practitioner focus groups which also explored the issue of professional identity in more depth.

These niche professionals working in multi-functional teams working on what Whitchurch (2008) describes as "institutional projects" are blurring the boundaries between previously well defined academic and professional domains leading to the creation of a "third space."

Introduction

The higher education landscape has changed dramatically over the last thirty years not least because of the increasing participation in higher education and widening participation in terms of social class, gender, age and disability. This increase in numbers and what are termed non-traditional learners has dramatically affected institutional provision.

The research on which this paper draws was undertaken at a time when institutions were focussing on, if not drafting, their Widening Participation Strategic Assessments (WPSA) documents for submission to the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) demonstrating how their institution is meeting the challenge of widening participation as well as how much is being spent and on what activities.

The paper is organised in five sections. In the introduction we describe the background to the research and in the following sections we set out the aims and objectives of the research, methodology, and findings. In the final section we draw tentative conclusions on the implications of our findings for various stakeholders including: practitioners, institutions, policy makers and funders.

The changing higher education landscape has also had a significant effect on the role of academic and professional staff and a profound effect on their professional identity. Whilst the literature on professional identity on staff working in HE is not vast, it mostly focuses on academic staff (Nixon, 1996), whilst very little research has been undertaken and consequently written about professional or support staff (Whitchurch, 2008). In this paper we set out some of the early findings from our scoping study which focuses on a specific group of support staff - practitioners who manage student ambassador and student mentoring schemes in higher education settings.

The aims of the scoping study were:

- to explore the extent of support and recognition for practitioners
- to identify the learning and training needs of a particular group of support staff

As we note in the methodology section the saliency of the research questions and the issues raised is highlighted by the fulsome responses practitioners have given to the open or free text questions in the online survey.

We recognise, as the responses bear out, that within their institutions practitioners are located in variety of settings and undertake work across different specialist areas. A small number of respondents were located within faculties or schools within their institution whilst the majority were located within service departments or units ranging from: Marketing to External & Strategic Development Services.

The actual process of participating in the research process itself was seen as a worthwhile activity which for some has had an immediate impact on their practice.

“Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the forum yesterday. It really helped me personally to focus on who I am and what skills I have to offer in the climate of change and uncertainty that clouds my University at the moment. So, I felt energised and supported by fellow new [learning] professionals in education and I had the opportunity to make new contacts and network with like minded people.”

(Focus Group)

Aims & Objectives

The aims and objectives of the pilot study was to establish the background and roles of these new learning professionals; learning and training already received, including details of qualifications; and identify their perceived training and learning needs, including preferred methods of delivery and accreditation. In addition we aimed to explore integration and recognition within the institution as well as notions of professionalism and the challenges of working across departmental and professional boundaries.

Methodology

Given limited resources and in the absence of a sampling frame it was decided to administer the survey online using the Bristol Online Survey (BOS) tool. The questionnaire was piloted, with minor amendments being made to question wording and ordering, before it was launched. The survey was advertised electronically through short news articles or postings on web sites such as Continuum, ESCalate, FACE as well as specific invitations to practitioners through JISC e-mail groups.

The survey was launched in November 2008 and closed early on in the New Year on 7 January 2009. It was composed of a total of 70 questions divided into eight sections. Whilst the majority of questions were fixed choice there were a number of free text questions to which respondents could either provide an alternative response to the preceding fixed choice question or give a more detailed response. The questionnaire is reproduced as Appendix 2.

Two focus groups were also organised primarily to tease out some of the findings from the survey as well as explore issues of professional identity, which could not be adequately addressed in the online survey. Focus group respondents were drawn from practitioners who had completed the survey and indicated that they would be willing to participate in further research. The focus groups were held in Birmingham and London to enable respondents from across the country to attend. We aimed to run the groups with between 6 – 8 respondents, over recruiting in case of attrition. Ten respondents participated in the focus group held in London and nine participated in the focus group held in Birmingham.

Findings

In this section we present the findings from the survey, which was completed by over 150 practitioners ($n = 152$). As noted in the methodology section above the questionnaire included a number of open questions which allowed respondents to give a more detailed textual response. Quotations from these free text responses as well as quotations from the two focus groups are included below to illuminate the numerical data.

Demographics

We asked respondents a number of questions about their background in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. The age profile of respondents (Table 1 – Age) is clearly skewed to the younger age range, with 44% of respondents aged under 30.

New Learning Professionals

How old are you?		
	Percent (%)	Frequency (n)
Under 25	16.4	25
26 - 30	27.6	42
31 - 40	25.0	38
41 - 50	17.1	26
51 - 60	11.8	18
Over 60	1.3	2
Prefer not to say	0.7	1

Table 1 – Age of respondents

Although we did not ask respondents about their managerial level of responsibility, we did ask about salary as a proxy, and found a direct correlation between younger respondents and lower pay bands.

The gender of respondents (Table 2 – Gender) is predominantly female (74.3%) which is slightly higher than the distribution of females (63%) working in support roles in the sector. (HESA 2007/8)

Are you male or female?		
	Percent (%)	Frequency (n)
Male	23.7	36
Female	74.3	113
Prefer not to say	2.0	3

Table 2 – Gender

In terms of ethnic background the majority of respondents (85.2%) identify as White British, with 2% identifying as White Irish and further 2% as Other White background. This is slightly higher than 82% for the sector (HESA 2007/8)

In terms of disability, 7.2% of respondents reported a disability and of these 11 respondents only one was registered disabled. This is lower than the sector (2%) for support staff particularly when the status of a further 7% of staff is unknown. (HESA 2007/8)

Do you have a disability?		
	Percent (%)	Frequency (n)
Yes	7.2	11
No	90.1	137
Prefer not to say	2.0	3

Table 3 – Disability

Educational background

In this section we report on the educational background of respondents in terms of highest level qualification and subjects studied at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

As Table 4 – Highest level qualification illustrates, the majority of respondents have an undergraduate qualification (94%) whilst just under half (49%) have a postgraduate qualification.

New Learning Professionals

What is the highest level of qualification that you have achieved?		
	Percent (%)	Frequency (n)
GCSE	1.3	2
A level	2.6	4
Undergraduate degree	44.7	68
Post graduate certificate/diploma	20.4	31
Masters degree	23.0	35
PhD/ Professional Doctorate	5.9	9
Prefer not to say	0.7	1
Other (Please specify)	1.3	2

Table 4 – Highest level qualification

Just under three-quarters (71.1%) of respondents were first generation HE, many of whom would have benefited from Aimhigher or its precursor programmes. When responding to questions about why they applied for their current job a number of practitioners noted that they had been student ambassadors or mentors whilst studying and some that they had been mentored.

In terms of subject studied at undergraduate level, only twelve respondents had studied science, technology, engineering or maths (STEM) subjects. The majority of respondents had studied an arts or humanities subject, followed by social science, modern foreign languages and business studies.

One respondent had noted this and commented:

*Widening participation tends to attract staff who do not have a STEM background. To increase the number who do have such a background would help adult and continuing learners considerably.
(Pre '92 institution)*

When recruiting to these posts senior managers may wish to reflect on the whether their team reflects the diversity of their institution in terms not only of gender and ethnicity but also the disciplinary background of practitioners.

Just under one third (31.6%) of respondents were undertaking some form of study at the time of completing the questionnaire. The majority were studying at postgraduate level, although a couple were registered for a specialist BTEC in widening participation. In terms of subject most appear to be work related.

Work

Of our 152 respondents, 39% were employed by pre '92 institutions, 42% employed by post '92 institutions and 7% employed by Further Education Colleges (FECs). Of the respondents who identified their employer as "Other": three were employed by charitable organisations, two by Aimhigher Partnerships, two by colleges and one by a specialist HEI.

Please select the type of institution that employs you		
	Percent (%)	Frequency (n)
School	2.0	3
FE College	6.6	10
Pre 92 HEI	39.1	59
Post 92 HEI	41.7	63
LEA or equivalent	5.3	8
Other (please specify)	0	0

New Learning Professionals

Prefer not to say	5.3	8
-------------------	-----	---

Table 5 - Employer

When asked what motivated them to apply for their current job the majority of respondents (43%) stated that their motivation was a passion for widening participation. Three quarters (75.6%) of respondents had previously worked in education and 41% had previous experience of widening participation work.

We were interested to ascertain where practitioners were located within their institutions and whether their institutional setting had an impact on their work.

What department are you in?		
	Percent (%)	Frequency (n)
Student support	6.6	10
Marketing	6.0	9
Quality	0	0
Schools liaison	7.3	11
External relations	3.3	5
Widening participation	37.7	57
Other (please specify)	39.1	59

Table 6 - Department

Not surprisingly the majority of our respondents (39.1%) did not identify with the nomenclature above and gave wide range of responses in the category "other."

In responding to the follow up question some respondents focussed on physical location whilst others focussed on organisational structure. With hindsight we recognise that this question was ambiguous and could have been made clearer. However we recognise the importance of physical location, which can, as our respondents reported be advantageous or challenging in terms of the work they do. A number of our respondents also noted the strategic advantages being located in certain service departments afforded them but also, as noted below, this was sometimes at the expense of being detached from academic colleagues.

For some, location within the institution hindered their ability to work across the institution:

*We are seen as being part of "the centre" which many academic departments dislike and are reluctant to cooperate with us.
(Pre '92 institution)*

Conversely a respondent located within a faculty commented:

*Although I work in a faculty I am not part of a specific WP team and therefore can feel isolated at times.
(Pre '92 institution)*

A number of respondents based in marketing departments or student recruitment departments felt that this diluted the focus of their work.

New Learning Professionals

We are driven heavily by student recruitment and the emphasis on our work comes a significant second.

(Post '92 institution)

We are based within the marketing department, which means that all of our work tends to have a marketing focus.

(Post '92 institution)

They [marketing] don't really engage or truly understand what our work is about. We sit under marketing; this has been a new move. Before that we were under Teaching & Learning which I believe we are better suited.

(Post '92 institution)

Others saw this as a positive benefit:

As part of the student recruitment team I am at the forefront of the university and accessible to all prospective and current students, as well as members of staff.

(Post '92 institution)

Our team is based within the Student Recruitment Office which has a positive impact on the work we do as this is well organised and well respected department within the institution.

(Pre '92 institution)

We have just moved into the marketing department, it appears to be a much better fit for my work than my previous department an academic school.

(Post '92 institution)

Yet others were more reflective seeing both advantages and disadvantages.

Both positive and negative. Positive in that being in a central position does not alienate us from certain areas of the university and can aid the [mentoring] schemes. Negative in that this can sometimes prove difficult to get buy-in from certain areas.

(Post '92 institution)

A number of practitioners responded to this question in terms of physical location and facilities, which was also informative.

I am not based in the same building as the rest of my team so it is hard to keep up with what is going on.

(FE College)

Right on campus, so lots of contact with the University.

(Pre '92 institution)

Asking whether being located within a different setting would enhance their role, the majority of respondents indicated that it would not. Of those that did respond the main concerns were around credibility and engagement with academic colleagues, understanding of the work and access to resources

New Learning Professionals

Having more recognition and support from academic staff across the faculties would really help in my work, but I don't know how this can be improved at present.

(Post '92 institution)

Other than greater support from academic teams I believe we are well positioned within the university.

(Post '92 institution)

Possibly based within Marketing would give us greater access to the resources that we use... but I do feel that we have more credibility in the setting that we are already in.

(Post '92 institution)

The majority of respondents agreed (46.6%) or strongly agreed (9.9%) that they had sufficient resources to perform their job effectively.

Do you have the resources to perform your job effectively?		
	Percent (%)	Frequency (n)
Strongly disagree	4.0	6
Disagree	17.2	26
Neither agree nor disagree	17.2	26
Agree	46.6	70
Strongly agree	9.9	15
Other (please specify)	5.3	8

Table 7– Resources to perform job

In terms of contracts of employment the majority of respondents 103 (68%) were employed full-time and with 44 (29%) permanent, 33 (22%) fixed term and 6 (4%) temporary.

When asked about security of employment, despite the number of staff on fixed term and temporary contracts 48.7% of respondents indicated that they felt secure in their employment, compared to 25% who did not feel secure.

When asked to comment on other issues regarding their job and number of respondents noted concerns around security of employment:

Concerned about future funding and the impact it might have on my job and the Student Ambassador scheme

(Post '92 institution)

Training & Learning Needs

In this section we report on the training and learning needs identified by respondents as necessary in order to perform their role more effectively and to progress their career, as well as any perceived barriers that may prevent or need to be overcome in order to undertake such activity.

As noted previously 31.6% of our respondents are already undertaking some form of learning and training. As Table 9 – Importance of learning and training for career development illustrates, the majority of respondents (59.9%) viewed further learning or training as very important and 30.3% as quite important to their future career.

New Learning Professionals

How important do you think some learning or training is to your future career?		
	Percent (%)	Frequency (n)
Very important	59.9	91
Quite important	30.3	46
Neither important nor unimportant	5.9	9
Quite unimportant	3.9	6
Very unimportant	0.0	0
Don't know	0.0	0

Table 8- Importance of learning and training for career development

In terms of personal and institutional barriers to undertaking further training and development the majority of respondents (119) cited time pressures from work as the biggest barrier, with time pressures due to family circumstances cited by 59 respondents and costs by 77. Despite these barriers, as we have noted previously, a significant number of respondents have overcome these barriers to study.

Support and Recognition at Work

Respondents were asked whether they felt a strong sense of affiliation to their institution; whether they felt their work was valued and who supported them.

Do you feel a strong sense of affiliation to your institution / organisation?		
	Percent (%)	Frequency (n)
Strongly disagree	2.6	4
Disagree	3.9	6
Neither agree nor disagree	15.8	24
Agree	45.4	69
Strongly agree	29.6	45
Other (please specify)	2.6	4

Table 9 – Sense of affiliation to institution

In terms of affiliation 45.4% of respondents agreed and 29.6% strongly agreed that they felt a strong sense of affiliation to their institution, see Table 9 – Sense of affiliation to institution. When asked whether they felt supported in their role (see Table 10 – Support in role, below) the majority of respondents, 71.7% stated that they felt supported in their role, 53.9% strongly agreeing and 17.8% agreeing.

Do you feel supported in your role?		
	Percent (%)	Frequency (n)
Strongly disagree	3.9	6
Disagree	8.6	13
Neither agree nor disagree	11.8	18
Agree	53.9	82
Strongly agree	17.8	27
Other (please specify)	3.9	6

Table 10 – Support in role

When asked who they felt supported by the majority of respondents (119) stated that they felt supported by both their line manager and colleagues whilst just over a third

New Learning Professionals

(63) also felt supported by senior management. Fewer staff felt supported by academic colleagues.

<i>Who do you feel supported by?</i>	
	<i>Frequency (n)</i>
Line Manager	119
Senior Managers	63
Colleagues	111
Academic Staff	40
Other (please specify)	21

Table 11 – Supported by

The limited number of comments in response to this question hinted that support by academic colleagues was also not consistent.

*To an extent academic staff but this isn't consistent
(Pre '92 institution)*

*Some academic staff but not all
(Post '92 institution)*

Although as noted previously a number of respondents indicated that they would welcome academic engagement and support.

<i>Who could be more supportive?</i>	
	<i>Frequency (n)</i>
Line Manager	24
Senior Managers	56
Colleagues	13
Academic Staff	61
Other (please specify)	9

Table 12 – Who could be more supportive

We also wanted to find out what networks and professional organisations respondents belonged to or participated in. The multidisciplinary background of practitioners was reflected in the range of “other” networks and organisations that they were members of or participated in. In addition to those listed there were additional trade union organisations (GMB, ATL) and professional bodies (BCS, CIPD) as well as other network and membership organisations (EAN, UALL, HEEON, SRHE). Some 23 respondents reported that they did not participate or were not members of any professional organisations or membership bodies. Interestingly, Action on Access was cited by the majority of respondents.

Conclusions

Our early findings from the online survey and the focus groups raise interesting and important issues for practitioners, staff developers, institutions, policy makers and funders.

Continuing Professional Development

The respondents to our survey, despite personal and institutional barriers, were undertaking part-time study to enhance their practice and further develop their career. In addition to formal learning, supporting findings from our previous research (Hudson & Pooley, 2006), the survey revealed a strong demand for current informal learning activities to be recognised and accredited. These findings were also echoed and supported by the two practitioner focus groups.

The activities undertaken by this group of practitioners are recognised as important, if not fundamental by many institutions as part of their widening participation and student support activities. Institutions and staff developers need to consider how best to recognise and accredit such informal and work based learning at an appropriate level. Institutions may have suitable mechanisms and credit frameworks which could be adopted or adapted for this purpose. The Association of University Administrators (AUA) has already recognised that there is a need for a common professional framework and consequently is currently in the process of developing one for support staff.

Embedding and sustaining

Whilst respondents were seemingly content with the resources available to undertake their role a number commented that the uncertainty of funding was problematic both in terms of staffing and delivery. With the unlikely prospect of Aimhigher funding continuing beyond 2011 existing Aimhigher Partnerships will need to work closely with their institutional partners to identify funding streams for the areas of work or "Aimhigher type" activities that contribute to the institution's mission in terms of widening participation

Professional Identity

Although limited in terms of the total number of respondents our two focus groups revealed the complex way in which individuals position themselves in relation to their institution. Whilst only a few of our respondents had begun to think about and reflect on their professional identity they clearly saw that their identity was fluid and multidimensional rather than fixed. They distinguished themselves by what they did (not determined by job descriptions and job titles) and how they did it. Many saw themselves as working across institutional boundaries.

Cross boundary working

There still appears to be a desire from practitioners to have greater support from academic colleagues. Whilst there are undoubtedly individual academics and departments who are supportive of such work there appears to be a feeling from some of our respondents that this support or engagement is not as consistent or widespread across the institution as they might hope for. This may be an unrealistic expectation. However practitioners will need to continue to think of innovative ways to engage academic staff and would benefit from institutional support in overcoming barriers.

Further Research

The findings from this study will be used to further our ongoing research on support and recognition for support staff as well as our developing work on professional identity. In terms of the latter our next step will be to begin to develop a more rigorous conceptual framework which can be used to theorise the empirical data.

Appendix 1 – Bibliography

Nixon, J., (1996). "Professional Identity and the Restructuring of Higher Education". *Studies in Higher Education*, 21(1): 5 -16.

Whitchurch, C. (2008) "Shifting Identities and Blurring Boundaries: the Emergence of Third Space Professionals in UK Higher Education." *Higher Education Quarterly* 62(4): 377-396.

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire

As noted in the methodology section the questionnaire was administered online so it is not possible to reproduce the instrument in the same format and layout. We reproduce below the questions and responses.

Section 1: Your Work

1. **What is your job title?**

2. **Please select the type of organisation that employs you**

- School
- FE College
- Pre 1992 HE institution
- Post 1992 HE institution
- Local Education Authority or equivalent
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

2. a. **Please write the name of your employer**

3. **What department are you in?**

- Student Support
- Marketing Department
- Quality Team
- Schools Liaison
- External Relations
- Widening participation Unit
- Other (please specify)

New Learning Professionals

- 3. a. How does your institutional setting impact on your work?**
- 3. b. Would a different setting in your institution enhance your role?**
For example by giving you greater access to resources / more credibility / more power.
- 4. How long have you been in your current job?**
- Less than 1 year
 - 2 years
 - 3 years
 - 4 -5 years
 - More than 5 years
- 5. What kind of contract are you on?**
- Part-time
 - Permanent
 - Fixed-Term
 - Temporary
 - Other (please specify)
- 6. What amount best reflects your salary?**
- Under £20,000
 - Between £21,000 – £26,000
 - Between £27,000 – £30,000
 - Between £31,000 – £40,000
 - Between £41,000 – £50,000
 - Over £50,000
 - Prefer not to say
- 7. Where do you think you will be working in five years time?**
- In the same job
 - In the same institution
 - In FE in a different institution
 - In HE in a different institution
 - In a school
 - In the education sector generally
 - Outside the education sector

Section 2: Your Professional Identity and Role

- 8. Do you consider yourself to be a professional?**
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know

9. How would you describe yourself using one or more of the following categories?

- Knowledge Worker
- Educator
- Change Agent
- Project Manager
- Liaison Officer
- Student Support Officer
- Widening Participation Practitioner
- Administrator
- Other (please specify)

10. Do you feel a strong sense of affiliation to your institution /organisation?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Other (please specify)

10. a. Do you feel a strong sense of affiliation to your profession?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Other (please specify)

11. What type of activities are you engaged in daily?

- Access
- Outreach
- Retention
- Recruitment
- Student Support
- Other (please specify)

11. a. What sort of work does your job involve?
Please specify briefly.

12. Are you responsible for managing any resources?

- Budgets
- Staff
- Materials

12. a. How many staff members do you manage?
(Not including Mentors/Ambassadors)

12. b. How many Mentors / Student Ambassadors do you manage during the course of the year?

13. What motivated you to apply for your current job?

- I was passionate about working in widening participation
- A post became vacant in my department
- I was a Student Ambassador / Mentor myself
- I just fell into it / by accident
- Other (please specify)

14. Did you work in the area of widening participation in education in your previous job?

- Yes in WP
- Partly in WP
- Yes in education, but not in WP
- Not in education or WP
- Other (please specify)

14. a. If Yes or Partly, how long have you worked in the area of widening participation?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- More than 10 years

14. b. What was your previous job if not in widening participation / education?

Section 3: Support and Recognition at Work

15. Do you feel a part of your institution?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

16. Does your institution recognise your work in widening participation as an important part of the work of the institution?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

17. Do you feel valued in the role you perform?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

18. Do you feel supported in your role?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Other (please specify)

18. a. If Yes, who do you feel supported by?

- Line Manager
- Senior Managers
- Colleagues
- Academic Staff
- Other (please specify)

19. What networks / professional organisations do you belong to?

- Action on Access
- ESCalate
- FACE
- HEA
- HELOA
- AUA
- UCU
- Unison
- Other (please specify)

20. Is there an opportunity for career progression in your current role?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

21. Please select the option for each row of the table to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

21. a. Does your salary reflect the work that you do?

Please select one answer from the list.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Other (please specify)

21. b. Do you have the resources to perform your job effectively?

Please select one answer from the list.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Other (please specify)

21. c. Do you feel secure in your employment?

Please select one answer from the list

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Other (please specify)

21. d. Do you have a lot of knowledge about education policy?

Please select one answer from the list

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Other (please specify)

22. Are there any other issues with regards to your job that you would like us to know about?

Section 4: Your educational background

23. What is the highest level of qualification that you have achieved?

- GCSE level or vocational equivalent at level 2
- "A" level or vocational equivalent at level 3
- Undergraduate Degree level (or level 4 equivalent)
- Masters level (or level 5 equivalent)
- PhD / Professional Doctorate
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

23. a. What subject / field is your undergraduate degree / qualification in?

23. b. If you have a postgraduate degree/ qualification what subject / field is it in?

24. Are you currently studying?

- Yes
- No

24. a. If yes, what qualification and subject are you studying for?

25. Does a lack of funding / lack of organisational support prevent you for studying the subject / qualifications that you want to?

Section 5: Your skills

26. What skills do you currently use in your work?

Please specify.

26. a. What skills would you like to gain to enhance your effectiveness at work?

26. b. How important are managerial skills to your work?

- Very important
- Important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Unimportant
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)

27. Do you use research skills as part of your job?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

27. a. How much research do you use as a percentage of your work?

- Under 5%
- Between 5 – 10%
- Between 11 – 15%
- Between 16 – 25%
- Over 25%
- Difficult to quantify

27. b. Is your work informed by secondary research? By this we mean do you use other people's published research to inform your practice?

28. Do you use evaluation skills as part of your job?

- Yes
- No

28. a. How much time do you spend evaluating your programmes / your work?

- Under 5%
- Between 6 – 10%
- Between 11 – 15%
- Between 16 – 25%
- Over 25%
- Difficult to quantify

28. b. How much time do you spend evaluating your own practice?

- 0 - 5%
- Between 6 – 10%
- Between 11 – 15%
- Between 16 – 25%
- Over 25%
- Difficult to quantify

Section 6: Training and Professional Development

29. Have you been trained in any of the following?

- Mentoring
- Education Policy
- Management Training
- Project funding and sustainability
- Strategic Planning/Strategy
- Pathways to HE
- Child protection
- Equality & Diversity
- Disability
- Working with Schools & Communities
- Health & Safety / Risk Assessment
- Research and Evaluation
- Event management
- Other (please specify)

30. Please identify and other training and learning opportunities that you have received through your work?

31. Have you received any on- the –job training from colleagues?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

32. Are you able to attend all the training and professional development opportunities that you to?

- Yes
- No

32. a. If no, why not?

- Pressure of work
- Lack of support from employer
- Cost of training
- Personal commitments
- Other (please specify)

33. How likely are you to do some further learning or training relevant to your work?

33. a. What barriers are you likely to face in completing further learning or training?

33. b. Please add any further comments you may have on the professional development, training or learning opportunities you have or would like to access.

Section 7: Learning Needs and Future Learning Plans

34. What additional skills, knowledge or learning do you think would help you to perform better in your job?

- Mentoring
- Education Policy
- Management Training
- Project funding and sustainability
- Strategic Planning/Strategy
- Pathways to HE
- Research and Evaluation
- Working with Schools & Communities
- Behaviour Management
- Child protection
- Equality & Diversity
- Disability
- Press, Publications and Advertising
- Event management
- Health & Safety / Risk Assessment
- Other (please specify)

34. a. Would you like these learning opportunities to count as credit for a module, which could accumulate to become a professional or academic qualification?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

35. How likely are you to do some further learning or training relevant to our work?

- Highly likely
- Fairly likely
- Fairly unlikely
- Highly unlikely
- Already studying
- Don't know

36. How important do you think some further learning or training is to your work and career?

- Very important
- Quite important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Quite unimportant
- Very unimportant
- Don't know

37. What barriers are you likely to face in completing further learning or training?

- None
- Time pressures from work
- No support from employer
- Cost of training
- Time pressure due to personal commitments
- Lack of personal motivation
- Other please specify

Section 8: About You

38. How old are you?

- Under 25
- 26 – 30
- 31 -40
- 41 50
- 51 – 60
- Over 60
- Prefer not to say

39. Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

New Learning Professionals

40. Did your mother / father / guardian attend higher education?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

41. Do you have disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

41.a If yes, are you registered disabled?

- Yes
- No

42. Please identify your ethnic background

- Asian British
- Asian Indian
- Asian Pakistani
- Other Asian background
- Black British
- Black Caribbean
- Other Black background
- Chinese
- Mixed White and Black African
- Mixed White and Asian
- Other Mixed Background
- White British
- White Irish
- Other White Background
- Information Withheld
- Other (please specify)