



# Research-informed Leadership and Academic Identities in the Post-92 University Sector

A report for the Leadership  
Foundation in Higher Education

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# Executive Summary

This project examined the nexus between research and leadership in modern, post-92 HEIs by focusing on the experiences of senior managers who either retain or develop a research profile (in any discipline) alongside their management duties. We interviewed nine senior managers and surveyed eight senior managers, from Heads of Department to Vice-Chancellors. We wanted to find out why senior managers retain their research profile, what challenges they faced in doing so, what the benefits of maintaining research are to academic leadership, and what Universities and Human Resource departments can do to attract more research-active candidates into senior management positions.

We found evidence that senior managers in Higher Education are increasingly finding strategies to maintain their research, even at a reduced level of output. Most of our subjects spoke with passion about their research area and about the importance of keeping their research going even if they have to work out of hours to do so. Research benefits their leadership skills because it gives them the credibility they feel they need to do the job properly. However, for many of the people we spoke to, research also relates directly to a sometimes very personal sense of academic identity. As one participant put it, if they did not research, then they might as well be running a 'baked bean factory.'

Many of our subjects spoke about the difficult choices they have had to make through their career between pursuing an academic and a management path. Most of these subjects have rejected that choice, they have persisted with research whether or not they have support from their university to do so. What this study does not capture – but strongly implies – is the experience of those academics who make a different choice and avoid management roles because of the impact this would have on their research. The current generation of senior management came into Higher Education at a time of increasing intensification in research activity across the new university sector. As research becomes more deeply embedded in the construction of academic identity, universities will have to find ways of accommodating research at senior management level if they are to attract the best candidates for the role in the future. The evidence is that academics are finding this choice harder, and are refusing it. Only a small minority of the senior managers surveyed would be prepared to sacrifice their research entirely for a more senior role.

## The main conclusions of this study are that:

A research profile is an essential characteristic of most academic senior management posts in post-92 HEIs. However, few posts structure research into the role itself, even at a token level. Senior managers are increasingly resisting the pressure to give up their research. They see research as crucial to maintaining their credibility in the academic community. Research is an indirect contributor to the ability of a senior manager to lead in an academic environment. Senior managers also have strong personal reasons for maintaining their academic identity through research. This means that universities have two main incentives to find ways to structure research into a job role: 1) Because research is an indirect lever for leadership and 2) Because the field for future senior managers will be enhanced if higher expectations of research activity can be accommodated. Universities and Human Resource departments can achieve this by structuring research directly into a job role as an expectation with clear but realistic targets that take full account of the overall workload and expectations of a senior management role.

The following report explains how we arrived at this conclusion and includes the full text of nine case studies together with an analysis of survey results and a discussion of a study of job adverts for senior positions.

# Outline of Project

## We asked four key questions:

1. How do academics recruited into management roles manage the competing demands of leadership and research, and can research-active senior managers support each other in managing these demands?
2. What are the benefits of a manager's disciplinary research to the University at large, including its teaching and organisation?
3. Does maintaining a research profile have any tangible benefits for leadership itself?
4. How can HR departments help universities to develop job specifications and personal development structures that support research-active staff in senior management?

## Summary of Main Conclusions

- I. The majority of senior managers who participated in this project started as researchers and were recruited partly on the basis of their research reputation
- II. Most have maintained their research profile in their management post
- III. Research is seen as an important indicator of academic standing and credibility, so research indirectly supports one of the key features of academic leadership
- IV. Senior management roles do not structure in research as a part of the role despite this perceived benefit to leadership
- V. Senior managers are also motivated to research for strong personal reasons connected with their conception of their own academic identity
- VI. All managers in this study who have given up research would resume their research if given the opportunity
- VII. Time is the most commonly cited pressure on research
- VIII. Research and management needs frequently conflict, and management needs will always win out
- IX. There is a clear (but not universal) view amongst many of the people we interviewed that simply acknowledging research within the job role would be sufficient to attract more researchers into senior management
- X. The field for senior management posts would be enhanced if research could be better integrated into senior management roles

# Methodology

The study began with a comparative analysis of senior management positions advertised in 2009. We compared person specifications with job descriptions to see if posts which require a strong research background offer opportunities to develop that research in post.

We then interviewed nine individuals in five post-92 universities, each one a senior manager with an academic responsibility (i.e. reporting directly to Dean of Faculty or above) who has either stayed research-active or who has given up research. These case studies formed the main basis for this study.

We also disseminated a survey to a number of universities. Unfortunately, response to the survey was low, but some valuable qualitative data was captured by it and the survey by and large reinforced the points made in the case studies.

In order to encourage candour in our subjects, we implemented a strict anonymity policy. Although the research team knows the identities of the participants, only the interviewer (Helen Hewertson) knows who the specific subjects of each case study are. Each subject approved the text of the final case study and any references which might identify the subject were removed or amended.

## Project Questions

### How do academics recruited into management roles manage the competing demands of leadership and research, and can research-active senior managers support each other in managing these demands?

In every case, without exception, we found that senior managers are not explicitly expected to maintain a research profile as part of their role. This means that senior managers are normally expected to conduct research in their own time and there are no direct incentives for them to produce research, or penalties if they fail to produce research. Surprisingly, this includes managers who have a strategic responsibility for research in their own institution. Even at Vice-Chancellor level, we found that managers have had to insist on research being included as part of their appraisal.

However, all of the managers that we interviewed have managed to maintain their research, even though their outputs may have drastically declined. The challenges depend greatly on the nature of the research discipline. Science-based researchers tend to find it next to impossible to conduct lab-based research because of restrictions on time and resources. However, Science has a much more established culture of using doctoral students and post-doctoral research assistants to conduct primary research. Scientists consequently have the opportunity to be senior figures in research teams and can maintain their external profile by being named as co-author on project-based research outputs and on outputs originating from Masters and PhD projects which they have supervised. Managers who come from Humanities and related disciplines are better able to manage primary research tasks. We spoke to managers who write research papers at the weekends or on public transport. However, there is a much less established culture of research assistantship in these areas, and PhD students tend only to add to managers' workloads. There is no custom in these disciplines of students sharing authorship with a supervisor when publishing post-graduate research.

The single most important challenge cited by most managers is, simply, time. Senior management roles are highly demanding jobs with significant pressures to deliver results immediately. By contrast, research tends to be a more long-term activity without nonnegotiable deadlines and as research at this level is rarely critical to the success of the institution, senior managers will also often be under-pressure to put research aside in favour of more important and immediate tasks.

The senior managers we spoke to have found various ways of dealing with these demands. In all cases, they were expected to solve these problems for themselves. This means, in practice, that research tends to be conducted ad hoc, as and when time and opportunity presents itself. Senior managers need to be very disciplined to maintain any kind of research profile, with the consequence that many use their free time and weekends to research.

We found that most senior managers (but not all) accept and agree that research does not have priority over their core responsibilities. We spoke to a number of managers who demonstrated a degree of frustration that their research was not valued by their own managers and they questioned why their role required a leading academic researcher when the role itself offered no support for research. However, in most cases, senior managers were realistic and professional about research. Research is mainly a personal activity, an out-of-hours hobby, which does not directly influence their core duties. They do not discuss research with other senior managers. Most of the people we spoke to assumed that they were an untypical case, that they had had to solve these problems for themselves, that though they saw value in keeping their research up, they did not expect the institution to share this attitude.

There is clearly an opportunity here to bring Senior Managers together to share strategies and discuss common concerns. However, we found that the practical obstacles to this are very challenging. We originally wanted to form an Action Research Group of senior managers either solely at UCLan or regionally. However, it was not possible to find a common time for even an initial breakfast meeting. Moreover, managers felt uncomfortable about leaving aside their management relationships with each other for the purposes of such an exercise. A future project should look at ways in which senior managers can either form mentoring relationships with equivalents in other universities, or ways in which technology can be used to help create a more anonymous environment.

## What are the benefits of senior managers' disciplinary research to the University at large, including its teaching and organisation?

We found that senior managers' research currently has some direct benefits to the University at large. The majority of these benefits are clearly tied to the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and forward planning for the Research Excellence Framework (REF). Most of the research active managers had been part of a successful RAE submission. One senior manager was very proud that the whole senior management team (except the registrar) went into the RAE. Putting money into research creating research clusters or centres can have a big impact on the university's reputation and its ability to make international contacts. Keeping senior managers research active strengthens the university's credibility as a high quality academic institution and helps towards the management and recruitment of other staff. However, the main motivators for keeping research-active are personal. This raises the possibility that this research is actually a resource which universities are not making the best use of. This finding has implications for managing research at senior management level. Whilst it will always be the case that senior management is a qualitatively different role to that of a career researcher, the appointment of senior researchers into management roles and their continued research activity produces an unplanned resource which universities could make more use of.

## Does maintaining a research profile have any tangible benefits for leadership itself?

All of the subjects felt very strongly that research was something that enhanced their ability to lead in their area. A majority of case studies return again and again to the same theme: credibility. This breaks down into three specific forms of credibility:

- i) Leading as First Among Equals: Recognition by university employees that they are led by a manager with academic standing

- ii) Leading with Understanding: A sympathy for the academic environment arising out of direct experience
- iii) Leading by Example: A personal sense that senior managers should be seen as capable of delivering research to the same standard as their employees

In practice, these three forms of credibility can overlap. It was also rare to find a single person citing all three. For example, Case Study 2 argued passionately that the 'professor' title should not be an honorary one, that even senior managers should continue to fulfil the criteria associated with a professor's research output.

## How can HR departments help universities to develop job specifications and personal development structures that support research-active staff in senior management?

The main finding of this study is that senior research managers have a clear sense of the indirect benefits of their research to their university, but do not have an equally clear sense of the direct benefits. Senior Managers will argue with passion and conviction that they should remain research-active and many talk about this as a duty, to the extent that their 'credibility' as an academic leader is in jeopardy if they do not remain research-active. However, for various reasons, universities rarely benefit directly from the research.

To what extent is the disparity between research's direct and indirect benefits reflected in the way that senior management roles are constructed? To explore this question, we conducted a study of senior management jobs advertised in *Times Higher Education* from January 2009 to March 2010. We compared job descriptions with person specifications to see if there is a link between a research profile as a criterion for a senior management post and a research profile as an aspect of the role. At the outset, we expected a mixed picture, with academic-based management roles such as Head of Department or Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic including a strong element of integration, and more business-focused roles such as Dean of Faculty and Vice Chancellor being more open to a range of candidates. In practice, we discovered a remarkable uniformity across the sector. Typically, person specifications will require an academic with an outstanding record of research, and the matching job description will not mention individual research outputs at all. This is even true of roles which have a direct line management relationship of researchers and a direct strategic responsibility for research at the highest level in the institution.

In other words, the message from Universities seems to be that outstanding research is essential only as a background to a senior management post: it is not required or expected to continue once the applicant has taken up the post. This represents a progressive model of academic promotion whereby research ends when management begins. Research is a rite of passage which can be left behind once a management role is assumed.

This contrasts with the experiences of the managers that we interviewed. All of them have come into senior management in the last 10 years. They represent a new generation of academic managers who have developed their career at a time when research performance has been emphasised to a greater degree than it ever has been. In the past, lecturers tended to choose whether to develop their career in terms of teaching, research or management. The current generation of senior managers are increasingly multi-skilled and resistant to defining themselves in any of these ways. In particular, research has become the main currency of appointment and promotion to lecturer posts across the UK HE sector.

This generation presents a real issue to modern universities. Academics with a strong research profile will have invested a lot of time in building a research profile to match the high demands of today's REF-driven research environment. For most of our interviewees, the decision to move into management was a difficult one to take, and in each case the main risk was to research standing. One subject explained that he initially refused to take the post because of the impact it would have on his research. For others, maintaining a research profile is a strategy for holding on to their pre-management academic identity. This is despite the fact that going into senior management can sometimes be seen by their peers as 'selling out'.

This generation is improvising strategies for staying research-active. However, if universities are to attract a broader range of high quality candidates to senior management posts, they will need to consider offering packages which include research activity as an aspect of the role. None of the managers that we interviewed showed any appetite for rotational positions as is practised in some universities. This would enable researchers to 'do time' as a senior manager and then return to a conventional academic role after a defined period.

This remains a developing area and exemplary models of research-active management have yet to emerge. Defining the problem is one step towards solving it. However, universities could consider the following actions to enhance research activity at senior management level:

1. Include Research activity in the job description so that there is continuity between the role of an academic and the role of a manager
2. Include research outputs in annual objectives and appraisal
3. Ensure that there are opportunities for senior managers to present their research to their university, for example as part of a professorial lecture series
4. Include research outputs on staff web pages for senior managers

## Job Adverts

### LFHE Job description analysis

We surveyed 24 advertisements for Senior Management roles from Jan-June 2009. We then correlated our findings with vacancies advertised in Jan-March 2010. Roles assessed included Heads of Department, Directors of Services, Pro-Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors. The purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which research:

- i) was specifically required as either an essential or desirable characteristic for a post
- ii) is addressed as an aspect of the job description.

In both samples, we found that there is a clear gap between the presence of research in a person specification and its importance in a job description. Put simply, employers wish to attract candidates with a strong research profile but do not include research at all in the job description. Research is an important qualifier for senior management posts, but it is not a skill that is in itself a part of the post.

This gap highlights an important tension in the concept of the 'academic leader.' Most of the roles we looked at are presented as academic leadership roles. The person specifications tend to expect a background in academic work which might include research publications, teaching and professional practice (for subjects like Nursing). They lack reference to specific leadership characteristics. Instead, leadership is talked about in general terms. The job description tends to be focussed entirely on leadership roles, with very little (and often no) reference to academic work. The implication is that, on becoming an 'academic leader', a senior manager moves from being an academic to being a leader.

Most roles do not require candidates to have specific expertise in an academic subject. At the lowest levels of senior management (Head of Dept) subject specific research is expected, but research becomes increasingly generic for more senior roles. We also found that the words used to describe academic leadership are less precise for more senior posts.

## General statistics

- Only half the roles mention research as a possibility within the job role
- Less than a third mention teaching as a possibility within the job role
- All the job roles expect some managerial admin experience and all will have managerial admin within the role
- Just over half the job roles expect research experience
- About a third expect teaching experience
- Some of the adverts were so vague that it was difficult to tell if they expected research or teaching experience

## Case Studies

### Case study 1

#### A Research-active Vice-Chancellor

This Vice-Chancellor considered credibility to be one of the key benefits of remaining research-active in her position: "Research gives you credibility because it allows you to talk to colleagues about current developments in your field as well as higher education management issues." She also thinks that keeping in touch with current research gives you balance because it is quite different from management. She was proud to report that the whole senior management team except the registrar all contributed to the recent RAE assessment.

When considering essential criteria in university management recruitment the VC thinks that it is advantageous to have been an active researcher but she admits that this can be hard to maintain in a management role. Generally, she feels like her work life is well balanced between research and management. She also believes that it helps you to understand the concerns and demands of researchers if you have had a research background.

The drive for applying for management roles can sometimes derive from the fear of who you would be managed by if you don't apply for it. The VC wanted to improve the running of the university and make things better for the students. She has kept research as part of the working contract for academics because if it's part of the job role they can make time to fit it in. She feels that is important that they have a balance between teaching and research, but it still comes down to individual inclination if research happens. She suspects that some academics may move into management to get away from research. There is a need for universities to be autonomous so it is unlikely any funding or government initiative will help encourage research in senior managers.

The other major issue in balancing research and management is time: if she does spend time on research she feels guilty. Some academics do not think research is a good use of her time as a VC. She also thinks her subject background makes it easier to continue her research as she doesn't require any special facilities or equipment. She can get a lot done when she travels, as she has more time to read.

In order to stay research-active, she works closely with other researchers in the field: "what allows me to keep going is the fact that I work in partnership, so I co-author things. I have different writing partners for different projects within common areas of interest. If you are able to work in partnership with someone who has more time, it makes it easier to contribute to the writing. My partner gets her stab at the chapter and then it's much easier for me to respond and add to it."

## Case study 2

### A Research-active Dean

This manager has just finished writing a book, is planning to attend several conferences this year and has published book chapters, articles and reviews. She used to have a writing partner but now writes independently as their interests have diverged. This manager considers it valuable to remain research-active. She believes it keeps her in touch with her academic colleagues and helps her to think academically. She feels that it is important for her to keep earning the title of Professor, and this adds to her credibility: "I feel quite strongly, because I am a Professor that I don't want to be a Professor just in a name. I want to actually have the academic credibility to remain a Professor." She needs to understand her colleagues and to relate to the issues they have when they research. She wants to lead by example and feels it is important to continue with her research despite the inevitable pressures on her time: "I don't feel I've got time to do research, but I do it because I think it's important." She mainly conducts her research in her spare time as she can only timetable three days a month away from her other work commitments. This leaves her with little or no time away from her work. It is desirable in her opinion for research-active academics to be managers as they understand the system, but not essential as other non research-active academics have valuable skills too. It is much harder to keep up the research the higher you go in management; however, "I think what is essential is an understanding of the importance of research, even if you yourself are not research-active." Active researchers have skills that are useful for management in academia. These skills include an ability to prioritize, and good time management. For this manager, the big lesson was realising that she didn't need a full day or a sabbatical to do her research. This manager also highlighted the divide between management and research: "people kept saying to me and actually still say to me, you have to make a choice, you have to decide. You either want to be a manager or you want to be a researcher." She doesn't believe you have to do this. She felt the pull of management from early on in her career, and always assumed she would get a position in management. She always had good organisational skills and was efficient and skilled at paperwork. Research can be overwhelming and you can take on too much, so you need to be careful what you say yes to. She says: "I used to say yes to everything and now I don't say yes to everything. I would be putting myself under pressure, and my work load would become unbearable." She aims to balance her work load and research, and not take on anything that would be overburdening. Supervising PhD students is something she still likes to do. She thinks it's important to support them and keep involved in new research: "It's important to give something back; it keeps you involved, and keeps you seeing things." It is also important to get support from your own manager. She says her manager is very supportive of her work and research. Her personal research has been added to her annual appraisal. She says: "basically, research has to be something you prioritize or it won't happen."

## Case study 3

### A Research-active Deputy-Vice Chancellor

This senior manager still does research because he enjoys it: "I get personal satisfaction from doing research and it's one of the reasons I came into the university sector." He also says that it helps him engage with staff, as he may be having the same problems as them. It also helps him engage with other academics at conferences and meetings as they could be interested in the same research field: "A lot of my contemporaries in the post-92s and Russell Group will be research-active in a number of fields that I'm familiar with so that gives you a point of conversational contact." He notes that there seems to be an increase in research-active Deans and PVCs. He believes that remaining research-active helps him to relate to other academics he manages and he is able to relate business process with academic environment more effectively.

This senior manager comments there are aspects of research that are essential for an academic manager, for reasons of credibility: "if your work has been peer reviewed and you're seen as a leader within the field, you have some credibility and without this I think it can be difficult engage." He relates an incident where a colleague said, "it would be difficult to debate with others about the appropriate use of research funding or teaching funding if you couldn't really evidence any leadership in that area yourself." However he also states that you can be a good manager without research, as long as there are other managers with scholarly background within the university management structure. It shouldn't be all business-focused.

Conducting research helps to develop many transferable skills. He mentions that the ability to digest and summarise information quickly in both research and management is important. He goes on to say that, “the ability to be able to question and challenge and not take things at face value is important in both areas.” Presentation skills are also important.

When asked about why he went into management he states that the opportunity to change things and make a difference is a key factor. “I moved into it because it was the opportunity to make changes which I felt needed making and seeing the benefit of those changes.”

When trying to balance his management role and his research the main issue for him is time. He says, “my current role doesn’t include research in the job specification. I had to negotiate that when I was appointed.” His research has reduced over time due to increasing commitments but he is fighting to keep it going at some level: “it’s about balancing your personal time to actually include research and that often means you have to narrow things down a bit.” He still supports PhD students but mostly as a second supervisor due to his reduced availability to see students.

He praised the university for supporting his research by giving him a research fellow without whom he says his research would not be possible. He also speaks about his work priorities and personal priorities: “the first priority for me has to be the management work and the other roles including research is what I do because I feel it’s important.” Rotating posts can make things easier from a research perspective, but he says this can be detrimental from an institutional perspective. He thinks that it is good to have long term management posts even though research suffers, “it is good to keep up with your subject area but it’s all about managing your workload.”

He has concerns over job role specifications for senior managers and thinks they should be clearer about what they expect from applicants. He thinks it would be better for universities to be up front about what they want the manager to do and why they want particular research credentials. In that way, universities can consider whether they want those individuals to maintain that research trajectory.

This senior manager feels that his self-worth as an academic is linked to his research profile and he would be disillusioned if he had to stop all that. He also says that pedagogic research is a valuable area for a senior manager to develop as this is an external profile which doesn’t necessarily have to be subject specific. He goes on to say, “I’ve always said that people should get promoted based on pedagogic research as well as subject-specific research and of course for some people, education is their subject area.” He comments however that there is a clear distinction between good teaching and pedagogic research. He concludes by saying that you need to be what you aspire to be and hope that the management role will allow you do that. He also says that this can depend where you work as different universities have different expectations.

## Case study 4

### A Research-active Head of School

This head wanted to change things for the better by setting up a new academic School. He saw this as a great opportunity to build something new. He said that he had a decision to make regarding pure research or management: “I felt I’d been doing research for twenty years and the opportunity of a challenge excited me.” He thinks that having a research background is important for management in academia. He goes on to say that the credibility gained from having a research profile makes you better able to support other research-active academics and plan resources. When thinking about his job role he says, “you can understand what is realistic and what you should be doing. I think if you haven’t got that research background you just can’t put it all into context.” However he goes on to say that just being research-active does not make a great manager: “some managers delegate the management role so they can concentrate on research, why go into management if you are going to do that?” He thinks that you’ve got to take on the responsibilities that go with the management role. He does believe however that it is essential for an academic manager to have had experience working in a university. This Head’s level of research has gone down but the university supports his decision to continue some research with the aid of a post-doc and a PhD student. He thinks this help has been invaluable: “I’m not sure I’d have been able to do any research if that hadn’t been the situation, really I put a lot of dependence on my postdoc.” After moving

from pure research into a management position he has realised that there was no way he could maintain his research at the same level as before. He knows he has to be realistic about what he can achieve. He states that when you take up a management role your job has to be your priority and you fit in your research when you can. He enjoys research and he will try his best to keep it going at some level. "The School is my number one priority and I try to put as much time as I can into my research." He would like to do more research but just doesn't have the time. There is too much work in the School and not enough resources to manage the extra workload that's been given to them. He says, "it would help if I had one extra management person on my staff. I know it's not going to happen. We're becoming more and more corporate, without having the resources to manage the associated bureaucracy." He thinks that there needs to be better management of workloads in Schools. He suggests that the university ensures that the management role has been resourced properly and if research is to be part of this role that it is recognised and resources are provided.

## Case study 5

### A Research-active Head of Department

This Head of Department does not see himself as a manager but as a scientist. His role is centred round his research and the duties of Head of Department are in addition to this: "I see the role of Head of Department as an addition to developing the Department as a research-active centre." Research is a central focus for him and he feels a bit disadvantaged having to run the Department as well with all the administrative responsibilities that entails. The Head of Department was not a role he wanted but he took it on in order to get the Department running properly as they had had trouble filling the post. It was only supposed to be a temporary measure until they could fill the post properly but he has been in the role over two years now. He would like to alternate the leadership and research role on a rotational basis, as happens in many Russell Group universities. He would prefer to go back to research rather than progress down the management route.

He feels that research is important as it keeps you connected to the field, and without it, it would be difficult to teach at a high level. Students benefit from being taught by research-active members of staff. For him it is a case of leading by example, he is research-active and so expects his staff to be as well. He finds it difficult to persuade some members of staff to engage with research. Research is also important not only for maintaining the status of the university, and its progression, but also for attracting research students.

This Head thinks it is vital for academic managers to be research-active: "for every academic manager I think it should be a pre-requisite that they are an active researcher." He doesn't really see the importance of transferable skills from research to management. It is the experience of working in the field and knowledge of how to do research that is important in his opinion. He goes on to say that the credibility of an active researcher in the university sector is high as you are leading by example and can understand the plight of others. As the institution where this Head works is a teaching-led university the funding and time for research is not as high as he would like. The university expects a lot from the staff in terms of research output without giving them many resources to do it because they don't have enough funds. The current goals of the university are set too high and without extra staff or resources it is not a feasible target. He considers the current research budgets to be a closed loop. They rarely give money to institutions other than the research-intensive universities. This is detrimental to the newer universities trying to break into research.

Since becoming a manager, he has learnt several valuable lessons including learning what to do if people don't do what you want, and finding ways to motivate people, which he confesses is not always easy. He finds he has to be very diplomatic at times as he might not agree with a policy but still has to enforce it. It is very difficult to manage the demands of the role as you get very little notice for the tasks you get. He doesn't think there is anything senior managers can do to help each other out as they already have enough meetings. The university is supportive in that it has provided laboratory space and equipment for research which is much better now than a few years ago. He admits that as a scientist it would be impossible to do his research without this provision.

## Case study 6

### A Research-inactive Head of Department

This Head focuses on his management role without making time for published research. He says that, “in the way the university has interpreted my role there has not been the time, the space or the priority to be research-active.” The Department is currently undergoing restructuring so he is very busy with his management role and doesn’t have much time for research; however he has managed to fit in a little research despite his workload. He feels like he is doing a better job than in his previous role, as he has the sense of being able to do the job properly.

This Head works hard to keep up-to-date with his subject knowledge as he feels this is important when talking to external stakeholders or clients. He feels it also plays a role in professional development: “I’m not going to just divorce myself completely from the whole spirit of enquiry into where the subject area is going because I don’t think you can do that and be a decent Head.” He also mentions credibility as a reason to keep up his knowledge in an area: “I can’t really be credible in those discussions if I don’t have awareness and understanding of current issues”. He also thinks that scholarship is an important part of his management skill base: “it helps me to formulate a strategy within the Department for the development of research.” He goes on to say that although he may implement a research strategy that does not mean he can necessarily engage in research himself.

He started his career in industry before becoming a senior lecturer and he feels that this was a good way to get the relevant experience. Although he doesn’t think it is essential to have skills and experiences from a higher education background to manage at his level he does think it would be difficult to do his job without it. He says that in industry, research is conducted for different reasons. Companies are more interested in outcomes which give them insights into commercial potential, operational issues, or strategic development. Industry is quite a different environment and it can be difficult for people to make the transition from industry to senior management in academia without getting a feel for academic life. He says, “it is the experience in academic life that’s important not necessarily the research, as teaching is still the main core business, and without experience in that, it would be very difficult to manage a school or department effectively.”

This Head appreciates the time he has spent on research in the past as it has opened up opportunities and contacts he would not have otherwise had. His work as a researcher has also developed his time-management and analytical skills, and was personally fulfilling. He states that, “it’s important for an academic head to have taught, to have been a course leader, and a researcher because when you manage and lead people who are engaged in those activities, I think it is helpful to have engaged in those activities yourself.”

In an ideal world he admits that it would be valuable to him and enhance his ability to lead if he could find sufficient time to be meaningfully research-active. He believes that research goes to the essence of what universities are about, which is enquiry into knowledge, expanding the body of knowledge and certain disciplines, and the whole process of reflection and development. He thinks that the only way research would happen in a head’s job would be if it was considered to be an important element of the role. At the moment he says without research it might not feel like you are managing a university department: “you could end up feeling a bit like you’re managing a baked bean factory.”

This Head feels that a ‘time out for research’ scheme would give him a different perspective on his job. He thinks that been able to spend some time on research could be refreshing, invigorating and also just give him time to reflect more generally as it can be stressful running a department. At the moment his Department is so busy it is just not possible to fit in research, but he hopes there will be time to consider this in the future. He would also like to offer his Associate Heads the same opportunity. To be a viable option he thinks that research at a senior level has to be considered to be important: “it has to be a university wide initiative to re-emphasise the importance of research.” He believes the departments need resources and support to do the research otherwise it won’t happen or will get “squeezed out.”

This Head believes that the transferable skills he has gained from being research-active are invaluable for managers. He says, “all of those things which you could characterise as elements of research I would have thought are extremely important to the leadership process. Not in the day to day, you know leading the troops process, but from the perspective of developing a vision and a mission and a strategy to deliver that.”

He initially didn’t want to be the Head of Department but accepted the position of Acting Head temporarily. He then became Head of Centre, and then reverted to being senior lecturer again. The next time the Head’s position became vacant

he went for it: "I saw an opportunity there for us to develop as a discipline". Creativity is important to him and he had that opportunity in management to test out his ideas: "I actually think management and particularly leadership in this university is an opportunity to be creative, it was that element of being able to create things and make things happen that attracted me I think to management in that respect." His experiences have helped him in his current role as he can see different points of view, "because I'd had a taste of being Acting Head, I'd been Head of Centre, I'd gone back to teaching, I'd done some research, I could see it from both sides."

He hasn't abandoned research by taking this role as he still has a hand in facilitating research within the Department: "I thought by being a Head I could probably drive forward the areas we were researching and almost bring those more into the mainstream of the Department through curriculum development and course development." He states that it is an important part of his job to develop research capacity within the Department to enable others to do research. He doesn't see research as a stand alone enterprise, it is linked to the other things they do: "For me the dividing line between knowledge transfer and research and professional development and curriculum development and teaching is very fluid."

He feels that the lessons he has learnt have made the Department stronger. He says, "I've learned the importance of identifying creative people and giving them their head and supporting them. I've identified the importance of listening; I've identified the importance of being, as much as one can, open with people. I've identified the importance of asking people what they want." He has also learned not to worry as there is always going to be some problem that needs to be dealt with urgently and there is no point getting stressed about everything as it can quickly wear you down. However, he also says that, "you must still care deeply because if you don't care it doesn't happen." He says that it is useful to share good practice between managers but just talking about research with other managers in meetings may not work. Communication between Heads is a problem: "it's not only just that there isn't an exchange of good practice, there isn't an exchange of basic knowledge."

In the end, time and space for research are still key factors: "I think probably the most effective thing would be some sort of encouragement/directive from above to say this is a critical part of your job. It's okay for you to create this space. It's a requirement; it's an expectation of your job." He doesn't think the sector can do anything to help universities improve the amount of research done at senior management level as they are very different. Some institutions still get most of their funding from teaching and so would have to continue to concentrate on that in order to remain viable.

In conclusion, he thinks the whole business of prioritising the creation of space for reflection, analysis, modelling, gathering information, would not only be personally nourishing but also very helpful in focusing Heads on key elements of their role. He acknowledges that it is easy for them to overlook on a day to day basis the strategic overview of their job. He thinks the university would see great benefits from encouraging, supporting, facilitating, and requiring Heads to be engaged in research for an element of their time at a level that was appropriate to their expertise: "I actually think it would make us better leaders." However, he still feels guilty about making time to do his own research and he often makes sure everyone else gets time before himself. He admits this is a flaw in his logic, He thinks that managers should be make time for research but not him as he surely has something else he should be doing.

## Case study 7

### Research-Active Head of Department

This Head feels that he has to remain research-active, to preserve his academic identity. He says, "I wouldn't feel myself unless I was doing it because I think it's deeply bound into your sense of identity as an academic." He sees himself as an academic who is also a manager and doesn't necessarily draw a strict line between the two. He feels that remaining research-active makes him a better manager as he can empathise with his staff. He also talks about the importance of having credibility as an academic leader. He believes the whole academic experience including teaching has been valuable as it has enabled him to empathise with people. In his view, research experience is an absolutely crucial component of the management structure. He thinks that a university should be making, changing and shaping knowledge. He states that the openness and curiosity of a researcher is part of what makes you a better leader. It also helps you to be strategic and become a better communicator. He believes that to be a good manager you've got to be creative. He sees that the tasks of management are challenging so in order to come up with solutions he has to be inventive. He never gets bored as he can be doing many different things at once. Even though he enjoys management he still makes time for his research. He says, "my research also becomes a place where I can be myself again, that's my time and I value that time a lot more." He has had to make clear decisions on how much research he can do. He says, "I've always been a bit selective and I'd say I've become even more selective about what I will do. I've learned that you have to give yourself enough time to get things done." He finds it amusing that he has less time for research now despite having more control over his time than in the past. He also realises that he has to rely on other people for help: "I make sure that if I'm doing something I have somebody who really knows, who's an expert in that area along with me". For this Head, the priority of his role is to be a good manager rather than an expert: "what I do know is the way to get the right people on board and put the right teams together and manage a project to make sure that it gets the right output". He also says the job doesn't stop when you go home, it is always there. "I realised early on is that this is 24/7 and you just might as well embrace that." He feels he has a good balance with work and research, he is aware that he can't produce as much as he did in the past but as long as his outputs are still high quality he is satisfied. He also has a plan for where he wants to go and what he wants to do. He has a route map for research: "I'm constantly reminding myself in research terms that's where I am heading." He thinks it's amazing that a book can come of a single idea. He likes the tangibility of a research output, such as holding the finished product in his hands. This Head believes that managers have to be predisposed to being research-active in a management position. Mentorship may be possible to encourage others to maintain their research profile but they have to have the motivation. He thinks that it is possible to be a senior manager and do research as he knows a VC who does it, but you have to want to do it. Research is part of his academic identity and part of his self-esteem. His research goes right to the core of who he is. This is why people are very sensitive about research, he says, including himself. It needs discipline to put up with the harsh world of research. Although he accepts that research is hard work he believes the reward is worth "the sense of achievement you get from finally being accepted and people saying nice things about it." This Head feels he is supported well by his manager and his research is reinforced in his appraisal. He can make time to go to conferences and is positive about his status as a manager who does research. He thinks the problem arises when the sector doesn't specify what they mean by leadership and what they mean by management. He says there is potential for the more creative individuals to play important roles in management.

## Case study 8

### Research-active Senior Manager

This manager studied and worked as a post-doctoral researcher at a traditional red-brick university before taking up a post at a new university. He found the transition to a post-92 university very different to his previous institution. He thinks that getting the balance right between research and teaching is very important. In his current position he thinks that staying research-active is still vital because: "You can only take people where you go yourself."

He has tried to keep his research going in his management position but has inevitably had to make some sacrifices to help other research projects succeed. As a researcher he was quite prolific, obtaining research grants, writing papers for high impact journals and supervising post graduate students. He is hoping that this experience will help in his management role: "we need a more strategic common research environment." He is also hoping that his experiences lend him a sense of empathy to others doing research, and can help him to manage researchers' needs.

He talks about his credibility when discussing research with people: "the only way I feel I can continue to have that conversation with people is if I'm able to maintain my research throughout this period." It helps that he has PhD students and post-docs to support his research projects. He agrees that there are transferable skills from research into management: "researching gives you really good project management skills which can actually transfer over into other areas." He says it suits him best to try and understand where people are coming from and to make them aware of the kind of authority he has. He says the big difference between working in research and management is that he has to have a wider perspective. Although he is now working in a management role it is important for him to remember where he came from: "hopefully I can still maintain the grounding and the clarity of what it means to be a researcher."

He initially went for this management role and didn't get it, and then when it came up again the university had to coax him into it. He was reluctant to take on all the responsibilities of the role in case his research suffered. He agreed to take the role on part-time basis at first but he's now doing it full time. As part of the agreement he insisted on having research support in the form of his PhD students and post-docs. Although he fell into the role initially he finds it interesting now. He feels like he is making a difference, that the role is worthwhile and he can't see himself doing anything else at the moment.

This manager has always felt at home in the university environment, so this progression felt like a natural career choice. He says "I've always enjoyed organising and managing things." Outside of his academic life he has events and youth groups he is involved with, so the organising part of him is a constant presence. He never planned to become a senior manager and a few years ago he would have laughed at the prospect, but he is very glad he got this opportunity.

Balancing his management work and research can be tricky. There is a lot going on in the management role which doesn't always get done on time, and so management work becomes a priority. He tries to timetable in 6 or 7 hours a week for meetings with his research students and groups, but if something comes up he may have to reschedule the research meetings. He comments that, "I think no matter who you are in academic roles you always wish you had more time to research."

When he took up the role he was surprised at the reaction from some of his colleagues. They think he has sold out and is too good to talk to them anymore. He thinks this is odd as he hasn't changed. He blames it partly on the fact he now has to wear a suit and has a direct line to the Vice Chancellor. He doesn't think there should be a barrier between academic staff and senior management, but believes that people like to erect one and you can be perceived to be out of reach. He says, "there's still that little bit of tension. If you go down the managerial route, you are selling yourself; you're sold to the devil." Moving into a management role has taught him to have a thick skin: "you've got to know where people are coming from, but also hopefully also not trifle at the fact that I'm on the senior management team."

He says he has not seen any courses or meetings on how to balance your management role and your research. He would appreciate support in this area as it can be very tricky to balance things. He says you have to think ahead

regarding projects and funding, otherwise it can be easy to gradually drift away from the research. He would be interested in attending a course about balancing management and research as he would like to see how other people are dealing with these issues.

He is glad of the support the university is giving him, with access to resources and post-docs, and he hopes it will continue.

He says there should be some help for managers not only to continue research but to get back into research when they have lapsed: "some people just think they've got so far down the line that the universities are never going to support them again." It would have to be very clear what skills and support was needed to help people to get back on track. He is interested in what they can do as a university to help people manage their research and workloads and if there are any methodologies out there to turn this around and help people kick start their research again. He feels it is a definite problem and needs to be looked at in detail.

## Case study 9

### A Research-active Deputy Vice-Chancellor

This manager has a prolific research background having written several books. He is currently concerned that he is not doing as much research as he wants to as his job is so busy. He finds his research has to be done in between those busy times. There is little room in his working day for research so he collaborates with other colleagues a lot more. He thinks this is the best way to get things done, "I don't work with students but I do work with other colleagues, so my work has shifted towards large research projects where I may lead the project but there may be as many as 20 researchers." He has worked with groups as big as 29 researchers across as many countries. He says this would not be possible without email and the internet as he has not had the opportunity to meet most of these people face to face. He thinks that keeping up research in senior management is very important: "it's something which you have to do if you wish to maintain your credibility in the academy, and you have to have research credentials and academic credentials i.e. teaching and learning." However his job role isn't dependent on research so there's no onus on him to undertake research activity in his current role. He believes that this is a key difference between post-92 universities and red brick universities as the latter expect research from all their managers. He goes on to say, "there is a distinction which is made clearly within the pre-92's that many of the senior positions are rotational and are actually seen as a poisoned chalice by the people that get them." These people don't want the responsibilities of management to interfere with their research. He mentions the term "publish or perish" when referring to the traditional universities. He deems research to be very important still as his colleagues relate to him better than other managers who don't do research. He finds the whole process of academic management easier if he is research-active as he can "hold his own." He says the problem with post-92s is that you can have people pretending to do research without actually having any outcomes. His research gives greater academic standing to the university and better credibility but he doesn't think there's a great deal of correlation between the quantity of research work and the quality of management skills. He does however think that respect is a key factor and people are more likely to work with you if they consider you to be a fellow academic, not just a manager. There is a big difference between managing an academic department or a university compared to managing a corporate business. He states that, "all universities are concerned with creating added social and academic value to the environment, whereas businesses are concerned with making money". It therefore follows that a highly efficient business manager is someone who'll make profits for the business. However a successful senior academic manager is someone who will add value to the university and add to its esteem and its reputation. He continues, "in universities you manage by persuasion and diplomacy, not fear or intimidation." He knows of a few business managers that came into universities and didn't last 12 months. He reiterates his point about academic credibility being essential for academic management as they need to understand the complexities of the environment. He says the key things he has learned are to be erudite, persuasive and approachable. He says the only transferable skill he can think of from research is the ability to read and absorb lots of information and to be able to write policy papers. Credibility is important. He dislikes the kind of managers who don't write their own papers, and delegate a lot of the jobs they should be doing themselves. He originally moved into management as he thought he could do a better job than those above him: "it's not the

best people who get these top jobs you know, it's the people who are prepared to do it." Most academics he thinks wish to carry on with their research or teaching and don't want to be a vice-chancellor. They are not doing it for the money, they like the intellectual environment. This manager considers himself to be a late developer as he has tended to apply for jobs that will give him interesting experiences rather than a direct career route. He has held a range of positions in different universities and feels he is better prepared because of that. Unlike some other senior managers he says work doesn't interfere too much with his life outside work as he finds his experiences and skills enable him to manage his work efficiently. Due to his varied experience most of the problems he comes across he has dealt with at some point before so he hasn't really seen the sharp learning curve that other managers have reported. He also thinks that it helps being at a smaller institution as there isn't the same volume of problems you get at a bigger university. He tends to go for positions he knows he can do and has all the relevant skills and knowledge he needs. He is always planning ahead for the next step he might take in his career. He develops himself in the areas he feels necessary, as there is always something to learn. When considering how much time he can devote to his research he says he has to think, "so what's the minimum I can do on the research side to maintain my level or profile as a research-active individual?" He admits that he doesn't have the time to do large projects at the moment. He thinks that it is difficult to move from post-92 universities to more traditional red-brick institutions. He goes on to say that there is less incentive in post-92 universities for senior managers to do research, but if you're in a post-92 not doing research there's very little chance you'll ever move into any other part of the sector when research is expected. The ethos and focus of the university you are at can influence your ability to do research but it is generally down to the individual to make the decision if they are going to be research-active. This manager feels his university is quite supportive as they give him time to go to conferences, but his workload is still there when he gets back. He often finds he ends up taking work home in the evenings. He doesn't believe that everyone who works in a university is capable of doing research, "there's a misconception that everyone who works in a university is capable of doing research and they're not." He doesn't think that all managers should be allowed to do research. He comments that some people take time off for research and don't publish anything, they read a book or write a newspaper article and to him that is not research. He agrees with the RAE/REF benchmark on research: "we know that institutions are spending an inordinate amount of time on research activity for extremely small returns in research terms." He thinks that there needs to be a valid research output, otherwise it is a waste of time and resources.

# Survey

To supplement the case studies, we disseminated a survey to senior managers in post-92 universities. Although there was a low response-rate to the survey (8), the answers below correlate very well with the findings in the case studies and supply extra data that reinforces the study's conclusions.

## Analysis of Results

### Profile (Questions 1-4)

Most of the respondents (75%) are between 40-55, with a significant minority aged between 40-44. If 25 is taken as a typical starting age for academics, this means that most of the sample began their career in Higher Education after 1980, with a significant minority entering the profession between 1990 and 1995. The Research Assessment Exercise was first implemented in 1986 and the Polytechnics were changed into Universities in 1992. A large proportion of these respondents have consequently begun their career in HE at a time when research activity was being intensified across the sector.

The respondents' original research areas are split very evenly across the disciplines: there is no evidence that certain disciplines produce candidates more predisposed to management. Indeed, Business is the least cited discipline (12.5%).

### Research Activity (Questions 4-8)

A clear majority (87.5%) have maintained their research output, with most producing 1-3 research outputs a year. This is a sufficient level of output to make them potentially submittable to the Research Excellence Framework. A significant minority claim to produce 4-6 outputs a year. All of these respondents were from Business, Social Science and Science where collaboration on research outputs is more common. All of the respondents have stayed within their own discipline.

### Staying Research-active (Questions 9-12)

75% of respondents have experienced a direct conflict between the demands of their research and the demands of their role. As is clear from the accompanying comments, time is the biggest pressure on research, and in every case the conflict was resolved by either abandoning or scaling down research demands.

Only 12.5% of respondents would sacrifice research entirely in order to gain a more serious role. A significant proportion, 37.5%, say they would never give up their research even if it checked their career ambitions. That 50% of the sample answered 'don't know' is significant and is evidence that most senior managers are genuinely conflicted about this issue.

### Giving up research (Questions 13-16)

Only 13.75% of respondents have given up research entirely, citing pressure of time as the main reason for doing so. They would resume their research if given the opportunity.

### University support for research (Questions 17-20)

A clear majority feel that the University does support their research, however when this is broken down a more mixed picture emerges. Only 12.5% can apply for a research sabbatical to support their work, and 50% are ineligible for internal research funds. A majority of respondents have research discussed as part of their appraisal but a significant minority (37.5%) do not.

### External research activity (Questions 21-26)

A majority of respondents maintain a healthy relationship with external bodies in their subject area and also take opportunities to present their research to staff and students at their own institution. This suggests how important it is for senior managers not just to research, but to be seen to research, to maintain their credentials as an academic leader.

## What more could be done to support research at Senior Management level? (Questions 27-8)

A clear majority (75%) feel that the field for senior management positions would be enhanced if research was better supported at this level. However, most respondents believe that research resources should be targeted at academics rather than senior managers. All but 12.5% believe that senior managers should remain research active and that senior managers should demonstrate a collegiate understanding of research. These are mixed findings. There is a clear recognition – even an insistence upon – the importance of research activity in a senior management role, but no appetite at all for providing resources to enable this. Rather, a picture emerges of a senior manager taking on research as part of the demands of leadership. In the accompanying comments, respondents suggest that small, incremental steps would be enough to integrate research more fully into the role. For example, a research day or week could be awarded, or research could be recognised in a workload model.

## Survey Results

1. Age		Response %
1	20-24	0%
2	25-29	0%
3	30-34	0%
4	35-39	0%
5	40-44	25%
6	45-49	12.5%
7	50-54	37.5%
8	55-59	25%
9	60-64	0%
10	Over 65	0%

2. Gender		Response %
1	Male	50%
2	Female	50%
3	Do not wish to say	0%

3. Discipline		Response %
1	Arts	0%
2	Humanities	25%
3	Business	12.5%
4	Science	37.5%
5	Social Science	25%
6	Professional	0%
7	Other, please specify:	0%

## Current role

### 4. Please select the title which best characterises your current role.

Response %

1	Head of Department or School		12.5%
2	Head of Faculty Service		0%
3	Head of University Service		0%
4	Dean		12.5%
5	Pro-Vice Chancellor		12.5%
6	Deputy Vice-Chancellor		25%
7	Vice-Chancellor		12.5%
8	Other, please specify:		25%

### 5. Was distinction in research an appointment criteria for your current position?

Response %

1	Yes		87.5%
2	No		12.5%

### 6. Are you research-active?

Response %

1	Yes		87.5%
2	No		12.5%

### 7. How many research outputs do you publish a year on average?

Response %

1	0		0%
2	1-3		62.5%
3	4-6		37.5%
4	More than 6		0%

### 8. Is your current research discipline the same as the one you identified with before your appointment to senior manager role?

Response %

1	Yes		100%
2	No		0%
3	Not applicable		0%

## Research-active respondents

### 9. Have you ever experienced a direct conflict between the demands of your job and the demands of your research?

		Response %
1	Yes	75%
2	No	25%
3	Not applicable	0%

### 10. If you answered yes to the last question, how did you resolve this conflict?

(6 total)

- 1 time pressures mainly - additional hours
- 2 I've had to set aside my designated research days on occasion to accommodate work requirements.
- 3 My Head of School role has always taken priority
- 4 by putting research on the back burner
- 5 Not really resolved. I work until mid-evening most weekdays and also during the day most weekends. I constantly remind my line manager and others that I am bought out by external funding for a certain percentage of my time and that means that I have to take the time to deliver the projects for which I have funding.
- 6 By cutting down ambitions for research output

### 11. Would you give up your research if it enabled you to take a higher profile role in senior management?



		Response %
1	Yes	12.5%
2	No	37.5%
3	Don't know	50%

### 12. What are the benefits to you of remaining research-active?

(7 total)



- 1 Engagement with wider academic community;
- 2 Engagement with community; intellectual interest; opportunity to change tracks if desired; staying true to the title of "professor"
- 3 Credibility, also the ability to support research development in my School
- 4 credibility with academic colleagues; the opportunity to work on something besides policy and management issues
- 5 I remain an enthusiastic academic rather than merely being a reluctant manager, and I am able to bring grants into the university. My research outputs enhance the reputation of the university nationally and internationally. This attracts students to the university. My research feeds through into my teaching.
- 6 Personal satisfaction and improved teaching and learning
- 7 Research is related to my role.

## Non-research-active respondents

13. Did your research cease when you took up your current post?		Response %
1 Yes		16.7%
2 No		83.3%



14. If YES, why did your research cease?		(1 total)
1	insufficient time	



15. Would you like to research if given the opportunity?		Response %
1 Yes		100%
2 No		0%



16. Do you envisage yourself returning to a more research-focused role in the future?		Response %
1 Yes		25%
2 No		75%

## Support for Research

17. Does your university support you in your research?		Response %
1 Yes		87.5%
2 No		12.5%

18. Do you have the opportunity to take or apply for a research sabbatical?		Response %
1 Yes		12.5%
2 No		87.5%
3 Don't know		0%

19. Are you able to bid for internal research funds?		Response %
1 Yes		50%
2 No		50%

20. Is research discussed as part of your appraisal?		Response %
1 Yes		62.5%
2 No		37.5%

## Presentation of Research

21. Are you active in your subject research associations?

Response %

1 Yes		50%
2 No		50%

22. Do you present your research at national and/or international conferences?

Response %

1 Yes		87.5%
2 No		12.5%

23. Do you participate in your University's research culture? For example, do you attend research seminars, guest lectures and so on.

Response %

1 Yes		100%
2 No		0%

24. Do you present your research to students?

Response %

1 Yes		50%
2 No		50%

25. Do you present your research in person at other Universities?

Response %

1 Yes		87.5%
2 No		12.5%

26. Do you present your research in person at your University?

Response %

1 Yes		62.5%
2 No		37.5%

## Future

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Responses
Senior managers should maintain their research profile to demonstrate academic leadership	50% ( 4 )	37.5% ( 3 )	0% ( 0 )	12.5% ( 1 )	8
Research is a distraction from critical senior management duties	12.5% ( 1 )	12.5% ( 1 )	62.5% ( 5 )	12.5% ( 1 )	8
Research resources should be targeted at academics not senior managers	12.5% ( 1 )	62.5% ( 5 )	25% ( 2 )	0% ( 0 )	8
The field for senior management positions will be enhanced if research careers are supported	12.5% ( 1 )	62.5% ( 5 )	25% ( 2 )	0% ( 0 )	8
It is impossible for senior managers to wear 'two hats'	0% ( 0 )	12.5% ( 1 )	87.5% ( 7 )	0% ( 0 )	8
Senior managers should demonstrate a collegiate understanding of research	62.5% ( 5 )	37.5% ( 3 )	0% ( 0 )	0% ( 0 )	8
Statistics based on 8 respondent(s)	0 skipped.				

### 28. What could the sector do to better support research by academics in senior management roles?

(4 total)

- 1 Difficult, because we "price" ourselves out of external competitions if they are FECed. Encourage senior managers to take a research day, as well as designated "research weeks".
- 2 Recognising a workload model with support for research
- 3 Build research and scholarship into the role.
- 4 Put more effort into researching organisational development.

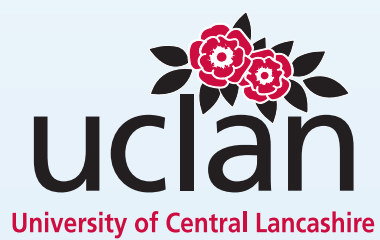
# Conclusions and Recommendations

This project examined the nexus between research and leadership in modern, post-92 HEIs by focusing on the experiences of senior managers who either retained or developed a research profile (in any discipline) alongside their management duties.

Through the case studies and survey common elements emerged. Research seems important to all managers even if they are not research active. A large majority are still research active from the sample we have taken, but most find it difficult to balance their research and their workload. This is mainly due to time pressures and work requirements. The research always has to give if their managerial workload is high. Maintaining credibility is the most important reason to keep research active, with engagement with the academic community and personal satisfaction and links with academic identity being other common reasons. The only reason given for ceasing research when in a managerial position was insufficient time. All managers mentioned they would like to be able to do more research. The most popular suggestion on how to better support research by senior managers was to build research into the job role and allocate time within the role for research. A suggested workload model would have research days planned over the academic year and/or research weeks in times when the managerial workload is lighter. More administrative support or a deputy to share the workload would help allocate time for research.

The job roles advertised were often very vague and it was hard to decipher what these universities were expecting of their senior managers. The only common element was that the jobs required some managerial administrative experience and would all have managerial administrative duties within the role. The amount of research and/or teaching experience needed varied with more wanting research experience than teaching experience. It was not clear in many of the job specifications if appointees would be able to continue to research or teach, or if it was an expected part of the role. We found many instances where job descriptions and person specifications conflicted with the actual duties of the post when put in to practice. When creating job descriptions and person specifications, they must be very clear, as this confusion can lead to decreased applications for the post and dissatisfaction with the role when appointed if expectations differ widely.

This report has highlighted a significant issue in the recruitment of senior managers from the current pool of academics many of whom are increasingly using research to define and structure their careers. More research is needed to establish a national framework for supporting senior managers who retain a research profile. This will lead to an improved field of candidates for senior management positions and will help HEIs to better manage the career expectations of new appointments to senior management positions.



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