

# Barriers to Women Researchers

Post feedback from your groups here

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**Do we make excuses for men in our work and home life? As a female mid manager, I can tell you that my time is spent soothing male members of staff while the women with many more responsibilities get on with it...**

## From my various groups: Home/Work

Dissolving of physical distinction between home and work has led to work being somehow pervasive

Hasn't felt like any consideration has been given to those of us who have needed to radically shift the way we teach and also the content due to the pandemic leading to increased workload

Female manager understands - empathises as she has children she is caring for at home whilst working

Expectation that you can meet anytime as you are working from home

Male manager has assumed that staff can work to his timetable as everyone is at home and therefore available - hasn't considered non-work pressures eg. childcare/primary teaching done by parents

Female friends report that they have been the ones in their partnerships to furlough or allow work to take a backseat during the pandemic - potential to create co-habiting resentment

An expectation that the male partners timetable is prioritised

No clear boundaries - eg. on Annual Leave but still did some emails/work as work just 'keeps coming in'

## Career Plans

A Career Plan has not been discussed. Feel like I entered a job rather than a career (which was fine to begin with)

Wanting to research but on a scholarship contract, researching in my own time has become exceptionally difficult. PhD is underway but largely off of my own initiative rather than through real facilitation of that. However, I will say that there has been some shift in this since January with expressions of wanting to support more research at a Faculty level which is encouraging but needs putting into practice

Progression seen as a potential threat rather than an opportunity - re: seeing redundancies of colleagues who have progressed. This impacts on individuals relationship to risk - esp. if the sole breadwinner with and/without children and/or caring responsibilities

Expectation that a PhD will/can be completed in own time - when own time is being encroached upon by work

Feelings of guilt over taking time to study/research when there are so many other things to do (at work or domestically)

## Time

"There is no way I can do research"

Workload fails to recognise what needs to be done and it has to be filled so end up working the workload job and my real job on top of that which entails on the tasks that are not recognised in the workload allocation or are under allocated in terms of time given

So much administrative work being done that is not recognised in the workload

Currently working 60 hours on a 27 hour contract but even when not in a pandemic was working a good 10-15 hours a week (term time) beyond the contracted hours

## Solutions

Workload planning document should be more robust - recognising options beyond what are represented currently.

Administrators allocated to Courses/Departments to allow for meaningful teaching and research to be done - we want to keep our TEF gold (!)

A review of various departments and their tasks to understand what need to be represented in the workload options (and how long it actually takes). This should NOT be a request from staff to provide a list of these things - that would only add to the workload - it should be done in a way that facilitates that data to be gathered in a realistic and compassionate timescale

Meaningful discussion and consultation across all levels re: decision making that effects staff beyond their ordinary workload

A project that picks apart and builds up a strategy for being 'Super Supportive' towards staff - lets be a beacon of good practice in the workplace

A sharing of main concerns across hierarchical structures - we have such a wealth of knowledge and experience here among staff that some thinking/problem solving around issues of Senior Management from across the staff cohort may enable problems/issues/challenges to be negotiated in innovative or simply pragmatic ways, and should also enable staff to feel part the decisions being made, and to empathise with the challenges of those Senior roles.

Finally, I would like to add that I am grateful for:

- this forum and the work being done re: women and research
- my team of colleagues who work tirelessly to create a super supportive environment for our students
- the staff I have met here who come across as decent, caring and thoughtful human beings
- the managers (male and female) who have listened to my concerns and have done what they can - to an extent ;)

Reinstate admin teams, two or three more staff per faculty, who would take admin work off academics and allow that time for research

A vehicle or forum would be great - communication and consultation is essential - also in terms of testing ideas against the practicalities on the ground

## Solution

- Give us back our admin teams, two or three more staff per faculty, who would take admin work off academics and allow that time for research etc
- We used to have excellent faculty/school admin teams who dealt with purchase orders, recruitment, open days (in terms of staffing and admin), special project and conference admin, disciplinaries. These staff were made redundant leaving a small team who are PAs to deans
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## Solution - Dedicated Admin to specific Teams

The unrealistic administrative duties - if there was dedicated admin to support specific teams this would alleviate a lot of stress.

## Solutions

Actually recognise "added extras" (e.g. doing social media) in workload

Be super supportive to the STAFF as well as students. Changes on policies due to COVID are all about supporting students to the detriment of staff wellbeing

## Solution - Workload Allocations

Realistic allocation for pastoral support

**PhD allocation is inadequate and doesn't compare to the BA allocation for supervision. The workload model isn't working across the board. Time needs to be given over for all the additional roles we take on such as promoting courses, social media roles etc. Line managers may be sympathetic but aren't always able to offer practical solutions.**

Value and reward research, a huge culture change needed here

Space on workload for hidden extras and realistic hours!

## Solutions

Clarity of communication about support available - too busy to explore through searching the website. Proper signposting.

Meaningful hours in workload allocation - there is very little relation between the role and the hours allocated.

Having an allocated administrator for teams rather than administrators - a more meaningful relationship between different areas of the university.

## SOLUTIONS/CHANGE?

Pop some suggestions on please!

## Meaningful Interventions for Staff with caring responsibilities

Female staff feel guilty for asking for support.

How to actually support without just talking about it.

Grey area in what is works responsibility to support staff with caring responsibility and what is not.

Work should be covered by others if you are not able to attend work and not just pushed into a pile to wait for you.

Rotating teaching responsibilities to give everyone focussed time to move research forwards and this is something everyone can benefit from.

## **Workload Hours not Realistic**

Often those working part time contracts are working full time hours and those working full time contracts are working way over those hours into evenings and weekends. Workload allocations do not seem to reflect reality of the job.

Pastoral support is not accurately reflected and ends up being put upon female team members

No time to actually prep teaching sessions and create satisfactory learning environments.

The administrative workload on academic staff is not realistic at all.

**Worried about going to part time work temporarily as a carer because very likely in the current climate that you will never get the full-time job back.**

**Part time work is a full time job simply with less time.**

**Job insecurity - planning a career is hard when we lurch from one round of redundancies to another.**

**Promotional positions - people being put off applying for career development positions because the hours allocated are insufficient.**

**Pastoral work has exploded - both during the Covid crisis and over the last few years. It's hard to deal with in normal hours and the issues are coming into your home so it's hard to turn off and set boundaries. It's also difficult to adopt the right mood or tone for online work and to switch between modes of caring, domestic work, and student-facing interactions. Consensus was that this has impacted women to a greater extent and that the workplace needs to take this on board and develop policies for dealing with the new normal. There are huge mental toll as well as physical from sitting online for hours but still trying to do lunch or oversee homework at same time. There needs to be accountability for sending emails outside of work hours. There's a real issue with screen time too which is very hard to police.**

**Multi-tasking to the extreme has become the norm.**

**Are you happy with the hours you work? If there is imbalance where is this? Are expectations of what you should achieve every week realistic? If not why not? How many hours are you actually working compared to how many you are contracted to? Where does research and your ability to do it if appropriate for you, fit into this? In what ways has the pandemic impacted your ability to do your work in a satisfactory manner? Do you think that this has been the same for your male peers? Has there been recognition and /or sufficient support from the university over this period?**

**Line managers and teams are often sympathetic and offer warm words but no practical or substantial changes are made. There's still a nervousness to make demands, to say no, or ask for change on the part of many women.**

Management style, language and communication... in certain male dominated industries which have been developed around the needs of men women sometimes find aspects of the dominant style alien? Is there a dominant management style in your department? How is this determined.? it can be the subject matter, the ratio of men and women, even determined by the personality of a dominant leader Has communication been good enough during the pandemic? Networking/informal and formal socialising In some organisations and sectors, personal relationships and networks are very important in developing careers? How relevant are those to you?

Is your career plan the same as it was when you arrived?

**NO. I thought I would combine research with teaching, all my time is teaching and admin because Admin staff have been cut to the bone. Attitude to 'industry' trained staff is belittling and dismissive - unless it gives a tiny bit of good PR.**

Are you on course? If it has changed why is that?

**I have done PGCH x 2. Several teaching related modules. No support/hours to help turn my experience into valid research.**

Are diversity and inclusion policies adequate in the university?

**Not yet, it's piecemeal and box ticky.**

Is there a gap between policy and practice? YES!

## Answers

**Is your career plan the same as it was when you arrived? Are you on course? If it has changed why is that? Are diversity and inclusion policies adequate in the university? Is there a gap between policy and practice?**

I think broadly policies are there but some gaps e.g. there are some academic jobs (pastoral mostly, and outreach etc) that tend to always get given to women

**Pressure of being able to balance research with work and family life with childcare.**

**Careers on track but slowly**

Other commitments

Workloads

Move to Waterside

Children

Covid

Pastoral care of students.

**Imposter syndrome more prevalent for women?**

Broadly still on track but got derailed when i first started by focusing on the wrong things.

**Space not being made for research to happen institutionally**

Workloads do not allow for research to really happen

Values of university are teaching based - not research based

**Not having a strategic plan - finding oneself in different roles - related perhaps to a lack of confidence.**

**Finding a voice as a female academic can be difficult - ideas 'dismissed' only to be proposed by another colleague later and accepted.**

**Workload allocation prevents completion of research degree.**

**Questions:**

•Is your career plan the same as it was when you arrived? Are you on course? If it has changed why is that?

•Are Diversity and Inclusion policies adequate in the university? Is there a gap between policy and practice?

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**Are you on course? it has changed why is that?**

**Is your career plan the same as it was when you arrived?**

**Felt like it was a choice between a job and a career having a child**

**Can we have the questions put up somewhere please?**

**Having a child changed focus and career plans - needed to work on a career that would enable childcare.**

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