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## **Recognising and rewarding academic citizenship**

### Abstract

This study's purpose is to develop an understanding of how universities recognise and reward academic citizenship, the non-research or teaching aspects of academic work. To do this, the study looks to see how the term is being used and interpreted by universities' human resources policies in evaluating and rewarding academic staff, in the UK and internationally. Analysis of policy documentation indicates that there are four main ways that universities classify academic citizenship. The second stage of research is to interview key informants to develop a deeper understanding with respect to the interpretation and implementation of academic citizenship policies including the impact on gender equality in academic work.

### Objectives and background

This paper explores the ways that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) recognise and reward academic citizenship via workforce policies and practices. Academic citizenship, known as 'service' in US higher education, refers to a set of attitudes and activities connected to internal and external service work supporting the infrastructure of academic life and the wider civic mission of the university (Macfarlane, 2007a; 2008; Nixon, 2008). These attitudes and activities are central to institutional success and student satisfaction but are challenging for HEIs to evidence (Macfarlane, 2007b). This is partly due to the increasing emphasis on performance indicators in relation to teaching and research (Courtney, 2013) and the conventional absence of comparable direct evidence in relation to academic citizenship.

Academic citizenship is relatively under-explored in the literature on the academic profession, with notable exceptions (e.g. Macfarlane, 2007a; 2007b; 2008; Nixon, 2008) focusing on defining the concept (Macfarlane, 2007a), its importance to the function of the university (Nixon, 2008) and the link with prestige (Macfarlane, 2008). More recent literature has focused how neo-liberalism, managerialism and massification have impacted academic citizenship from the perspective of the academic profession (e.g. Courtney, 2013; Kligyte & Burrie, 2014; Richards, 2014). However, the literature has largely ignored how HEIs are influencing the behaviour and values of the academic

workforce through their rewards and recognition policies and procedures. The decision whether or not to reward academic citizenship can have potentially important impacts of the academic profession. For example, women are seen to exhibit higher levels of academic citizenship (Misra et al, 2011; Burg & Macfarlane, *in press*). Yet, women represent just 21.7 per cent of full professors (Equality Challenge Unit, 2014) despite being in the majority at the postdoctoral level (HEFCE, 2016).

A growing number of HEI's in the UK and internationally have incorporated recognition of academic citizenship within their appraisal and performance frameworks. These include, *inter alia*, Manchester Metropolitan University, Durham University, York University and the University of Birmingham. Internationally, in addition to the mainstreaming the evaluation of academic citizenship, some institutions have implemented staff awards (e.g. University of Witwatersrand, South Africa) and modules within academic staff development programmes (e.g. University of Auckland, New Zealand). These institutional initiatives point to the growing recognition of the importance of academic citizenship indicating the need for a systematic analysis of evidence as to how universities define, evaluate and reward academic citizenship as a third mission with research and teaching.

#### Methodology

This research explores how HEIs define, evidence and reward academic citizenship together with the risks associated with incorporating these forms of academic activity into performative frameworks. The research also considers the relationship between prestige and academic citizenship and the potentially gendered nature of expectations.

The research draws on a review of the HR policies of 30 HEIs (20 UK and a further 10 international) and interviews with expert informants in HR departments and other senior managers in identifying best practice in respect to the reward and recognition of academic citizenship. The first stage of this work involved identifying institutions that include academic citizenship (or proxy terms including 'service') within their workforce policies. This was done through desk based Internet searches of HEI's websites and other publically available publications. A typology was created indicating how HEIs currently reward and recognise academic citizenship.

#### Preliminary findings and discussion

HEIs approach and interpret academic citizenship in their reward and recognition policies for academic staff in a number of different ways. This reveals the way academic citizenship is defined formally or informally through use of examples and the extent to which it appears as central or more peripheral in policy documents. The four basic approaches appear common in representing academic citizenship are:

1. **Headline criteria** (ie research, teaching and AC) (eg Birmingham, Nottingham, York, Strathclyde)
2. **Sub-criteria** (eg within, say, 'leadership') (eg Bristol, Portsmouth, Western Australia)
3. **Stand alone awards or payments** (eg Harvard, Leeds, Royal Holloway)
4. **As a required behaviour** that is not formally assessed (eg Aston, Durham)

Headline criteria is where the HEIs list academic citizenship as a major component, on level with research and teaching, in academic job descriptions for purposes of appraisal and promotion. Sub-criteria indicates that academic citizenship is important, but it is listed as a component of a larger assessed area, for example leadership. Stand-alone awards are when HEIs recognise the contribution of academic citizenship through special recognition or a bonus payment, but it is not otherwise part of the mainstream promotions and appraisal system. Whilst other universities may require academic citizenship behaviours they do not formally assess it. It is outlined as a benchmark expectation (or esprit de corps) of the performance of academic staff. Thus, whilst it is expected there is no direct reward for doing it.

#### Conclusion

The first stage of this research has revealed differences in the approaches of HEIs to recognising and rewarding academic citizenship. The more fine grained implications of these policies in terms of practice and implementation will be explored in the second stage through field visits to selected institutions as a means of collecting more practice-based evidence including selectively interviewing key informants in senior HR and university management roles. This stage of the research will help to create case studies on institutional practices and explore the complexities and effectiveness of university policies.

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