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## The Academic Profession in England: Still stratified after all these years?

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# **The Academic Profession in England: Still stratified after all these years?**

William Locke\*

## **1. Introduction**

The higher education (HE) sector in the United Kingdom (UK) gives a good impression of being a single unified system, and academics the appearance of a distinct and uniform profession. In an earlier review, members of the UK research team outlined the main characteristics of ‘the profession’ in the UK, in the light of the key themes of the international study of the *Changing Academic Profession* (CAP) (Brennan, Locke and Naidoo, 2007). In this, we sought to describe the expansion of academia in a system of over 170 HE institutions (HEIs) which differ substantially in terms of reputation, resources and purpose. We argued that academics differ in their responses to the changes and new influences in higher education – whether this takes the form of compliance, resistance or subversion – and that this might partly be explained by differences in status within the academic hierarchy, subject characteristics and generational differences. We concluded that the picture emerging in the UK “...is of an academic profession facing increasing change but also much continuity, and transforming relatively rapidly into a diversified and increasingly stratified sector” (p175).

This paper focuses on the findings from the initial analysis of the responses to a survey of nearly 1,700 academics from a wide range of higher education institutions (HEIs) throughout the UK which was carried out by the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI) at The Open University, with financial support and/or assistance from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Universities UK, Guild HE, the HE Academy, the University and College Union (UCU) and the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA). It includes comparisons with findings from the original survey of the academic profession in England in 1992 as part of the First International Survey of the Academic Profession (Fulton, 1996). Therefore, it concentrates on the responses to the 2007 survey from those employed in English HEIs. The 2007 CAP questionnaire repeated 13 items included in the earlier survey. The report of the 1992 survey sought to investigate institutional diversity and differentiation on the eve of the abolition of the binary divide in the

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UK between universities on the one hand and polytechnics and major colleges of higher education on the other. As such, this initial report of – what amounts to a fraction of – the UK CAP 2007 survey findings, is of an analysis by institutional type utilising three categories: Pre-1992 Universities, Post-1992 Universities (i.e. Polytechnics at the time of the 1992 survey), and Post-2004 Universities<sup>1</sup> and HE Colleges. These analytical categories are also applied to the responses to a selection of other questions in the survey not included in the 1992 instrument. Further analysis of the UK CAP survey responses over the coming months will include analysis of the full UK-wide sample by individual characteristics, such as gender, grade, subject and age/career stage, as well as by a more disaggregated institutional typology for the remaining items in the 2007 questionnaire.

## 2. Key facts about the UK academic profession

Table 1a provides data on key characteristics of academic staff in HEIs in England.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1a: Academic staff at higher education institutions in England, 2005/06**

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
<b>Academic staff: Total</b>	90,330	47,455	137,785
% Female	37%	53%	42%
% Research only	28%	11%	22%
<b>By grade</b>			
% Professors	92%	8%	12%
% Senior lecturers & researchers	89%	11%	22%
% Researchers	86%	14%	25%
% Lecturers	73%	27%	32%
% Other grades			11%
<b>By age</b>			
% Under 35	27%	25%	26%
% Over 55	17%	25%	20%

In 2005/06, academics were a minority (approximately 45%) of all staff in English HEIs. 66% were employed full time, 64% of which held permanent positions. Just under a quarter of academics were research-only and, of these, 86% were fixed term. Another quarter were

<sup>1</sup> The term 'Post-2004 Universities' refers to those higher education institutions in England that have gained university status under the revised criteria for university title permitted by the 2004 Higher Education Act, which eliminated the requirement for research degree awarding powers, among other measures designed to relax the definition of a university.

<sup>2</sup> Data extracted from the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2007). When HESA data for 2006/07 are published, these will be used in future reports, since the survey was undertaken in that academic year. Atypical staff are "those whose working arrangements are not permanent, involve complex employment relationships and/or involve work away from the supervision of the normal work provider".

teaching-only and the remaining half both taught and researched. There were fewer women than men and more of the former worked part-time. 71% of full-time academic posts and 87% of part-time academic posts included teaching as a primary employment function.

Among academics, the higher the grade, the higher the proportion of those on full-time contracts and the fewer women there were. The average age of full-time academics was 43, and 41% were aged over 45. The academic profession in the UK is ageing, but it is not as old as its counterparts in other English-speaking countries. Over a quarter of full-time academic staff were employed in medicine, dentistry or health disciplines.

**Table 1b: Academic staff at higher education institutions in England, 2005/06**

<b>Type</b>	Russell Group	33%
	Other pre-1992 Universities	30%
	Post-1992 Universities	30%
	Post-2004 Universities	3%
	HE Colleges	4%
	Research Institutes	0.4%
<b>Size</b>	Small (under 500 staff)	8%
	Medium (500-2,000 staff)	56%
	Large (over 2,000 staff)	36%

Table 1b shows the percentage of academic staff within different categories of HEIs in 2005/06. Their distributions within the institutional types used in this paper were as follows:

- Pre-1992 Universities: 63% of academics
- Post-1992 Universities: 30%
- Post-2004 Universities and HE Colleges: 7%

Research institutions accounted for only 0.4% of academic staff in England (525 researchers) and the three responses to the survey from such sources have been excluded from the foregoing analysis. The majority of academic staff (56%) worked in medium-sized HEIs each with between 500 and 2,000 academic staff, although over a third (36%) were in large HEIs, employing over 2,000 academics. For example, UCL employed nearly 5,000; the University of Oxford over 4,000; the Universities of Cambridge and Manchester nearly 4,000; and Imperial College over 3,000.

### **3. The UK Survey - Methodology**

The generic CAP questionnaire was ‘translated’ into the UK version which involved minor amendments to wording and grammar. Where UK-specific categorisations were required, for example occupational grade, the definitions of the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) were used where possible, so as to facilitate comparison with official verified data on the total population of academics in the UK. In the case of disciplines (i.e. subject of highest degree, current academic department and subject taught), a matrix was developed to map how the UK categorisation translated into both the disciplines used in the generic CAP questionnaire and the HESA categories.

The section (F) on ‘Personal background and professional preparation’ was placed at the beginning of the questionnaire, so that respondents would quickly finish the first section and thus increase the likelihood of fully completed responses. The data from this section will be moved back to the end of the UK data set, so that they match those of other national surveys.

Three UK-specific questions were added to the generic questions in the new Section A (originally F):

- Where did you study for your degree(s)?
- What institutions did you attend during your secondary education?
- What is your ethnic origin?

The survey was accessed on-line only and individual academics were invited via their institutions or via UCU to respond during the Spring and early Summer of 2007. The HEIs were selected to maximise the prospects of achieving a representative sample, according to type, size and location throughout the UK. The institutions were also asked to select samples that were representative of their academic staff in terms of age, gender, ethnic group, grade, subject and whether they worked full- or part-time. The subset of the sample approached directly via UCU was randomly selected. The gross sample included full- and part-time academic professionals who undertake teaching and/or research. 1,667 responses were received. It is not possible to calculate the gross sample size, and therefore the response rate with any great confidence, as a large proportion of the invitations were sent out by institutions and there was no means of recording how many were sent to – let alone received by – potential respondents. Suffice to say, our worst case estimate is a response rate of around 15%, which seems to be in line with other lengthy on-line questionnaires aimed at academics (Bryson and Barnes, 2000).

Nine criteria were used to assess the representativeness of this net sample of 1,667, grouped under personal, professional and institutional characteristics:

***Personal***

1. Gender
2. Ethnic origin
3. Age

***Professional***

4. Subject
5. Grade
6. Mode of work, i.e. full-/part-time

***Institutional***

7. Type (Russell Group, Other pre-1992 University, Post-1992 University, Post-2004 University, HE College and Research Institute)
8. Size (over 2,000 academics; 500-2,000; under 500)
9. Location (UK nation, English region)

HESA definitions have been used for all criteria except 7., 8. and 9. for which additional sub-sets were identified as shown above to assist with the analysis of responses to the survey. In other words, the criteria match those used to define the sample. The responses were then weighted to produce a sample of 800 that is representative of the academic population in the UK for submission to the international database. The following analysis is based on those responses from academics employed in HEIs in England from the weighted UK sample of 800, so as to complement future comparative analyses of the international dataset.

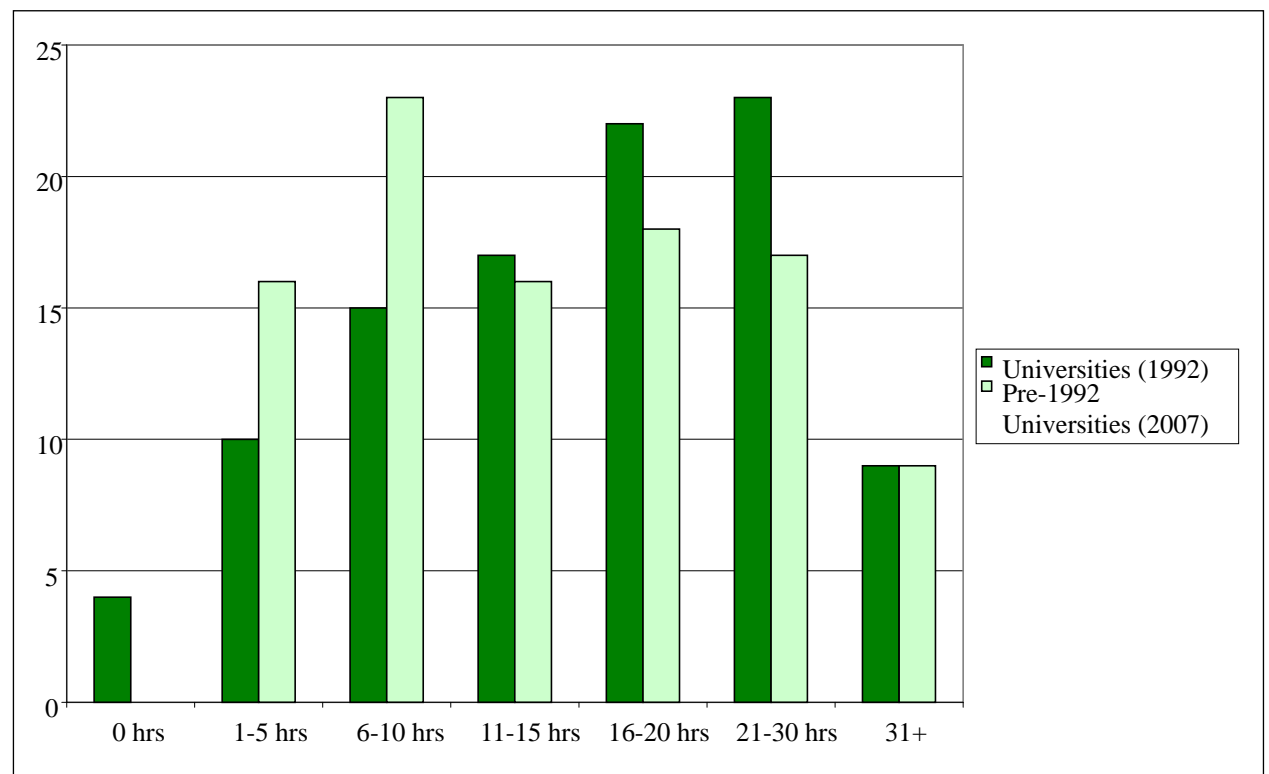
#### **4. The UK Survey – Initial analysis by institutional type compared with the 1992 results**

The key results reported in this paper mainly relate to the *attractiveness* of the academic profession, issues of *relevance* and the nature of the *management* of institutions.

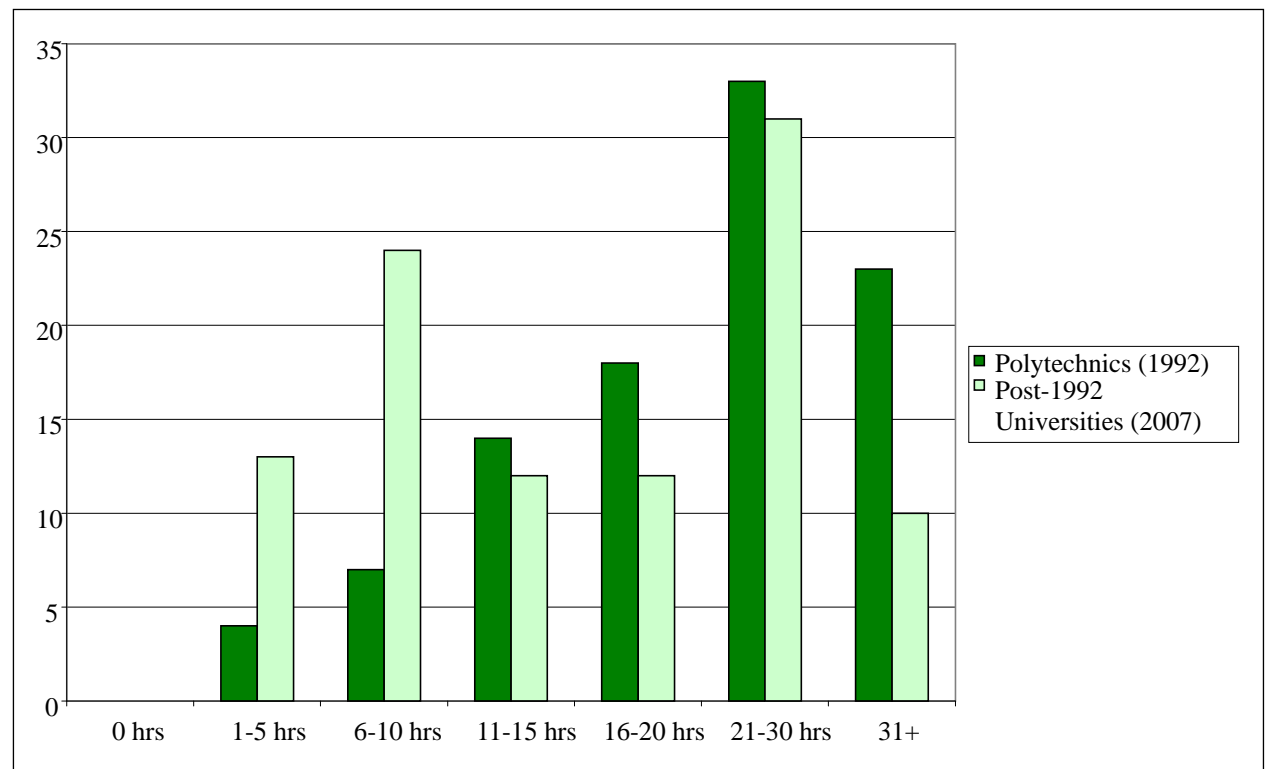
*Hours spent on different activities*

Respondents were asked *how many hours they spent in a typical week on five main activities*, including teaching, research and administration. Charts 1a, 1b and 1c show the hours per week spent on teaching in term-time in 1992 and 2007, by institutional type.

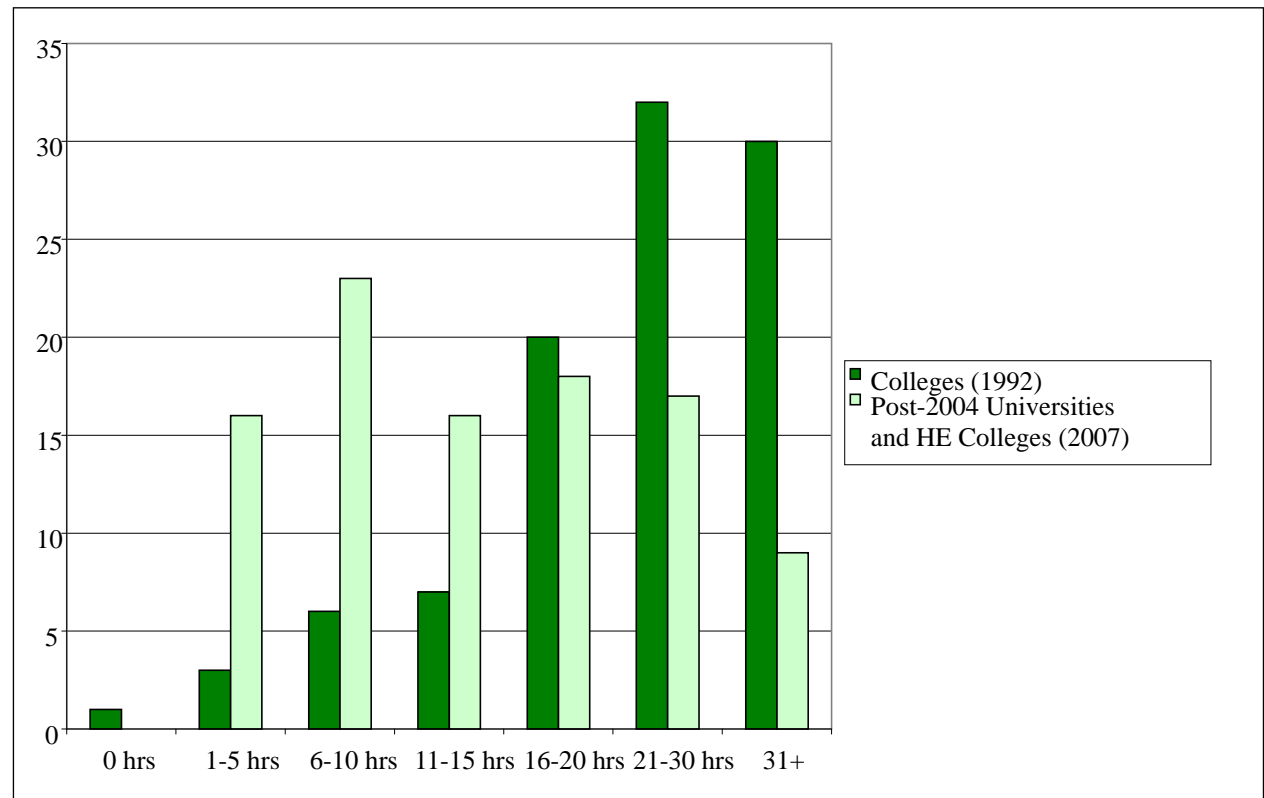
**Chart 1a: Hours per week spent on teaching in term-time in 1992 and 2007, Universities (1992) and Pre-1992 Universities (2007)**



**Chart 1b: Hours per week spent on teaching in term-time in 1992 and 2007, Polytechnics (1992) and Post-1992 Universities (2007)**



**Chart 1c: Hours per week spent on teaching in term-time in 1992 and 2007, HE Colleges (1992) and Post-2004 Universities and HE Colleges (2007)**

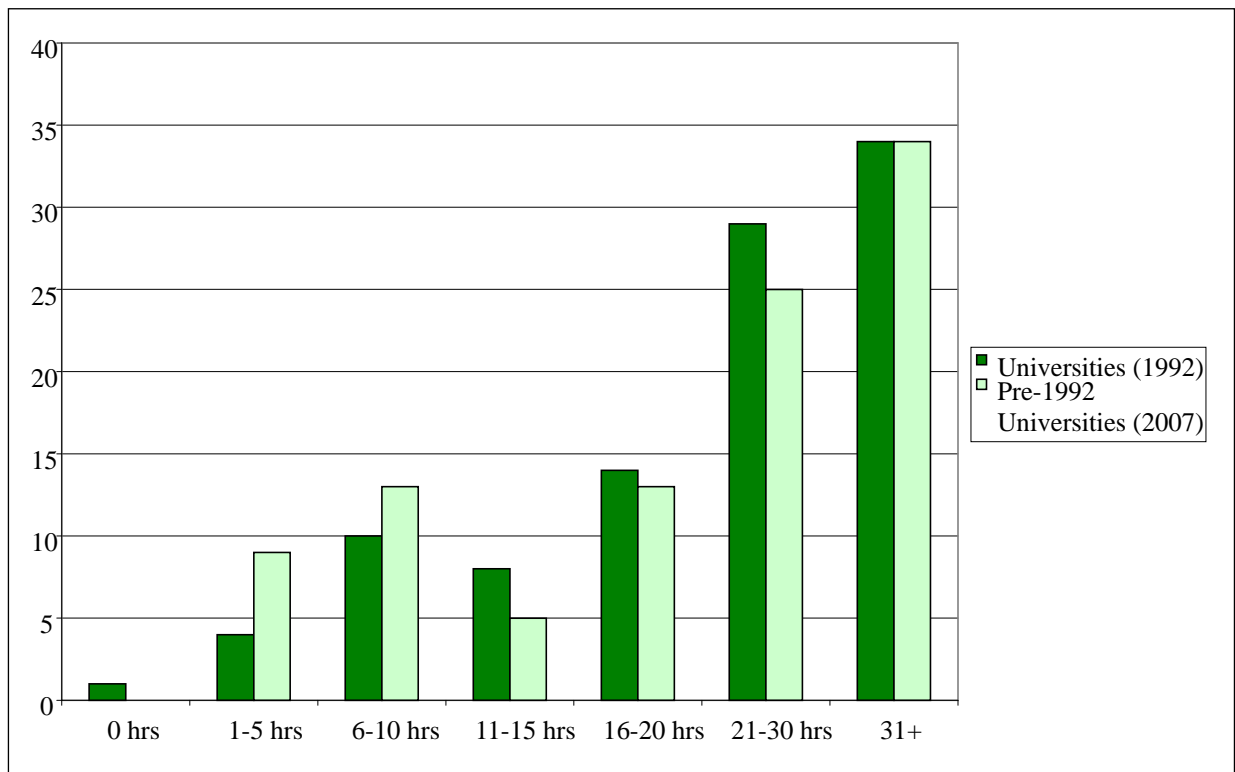


Overall, fewer 2007 respondents report spending 21 or more hours per week teaching during term time than the 1992 respondents. In Pre-1992 universities this has fallen from nearly one third in 1992 to just over a quarter. Many more Post-1992 university respondents spend this amount of time each week teaching (40%) but this has fallen by 16% over the period. The biggest fall in the proportions spending 21 or more hours per week teaching during term time, however, is in Post-2004 universities and HE colleges, from 62% in 1992 to only 26% in 2007. The majority of respondents in these institutions (55%) now teach between one and 15 hours per week.

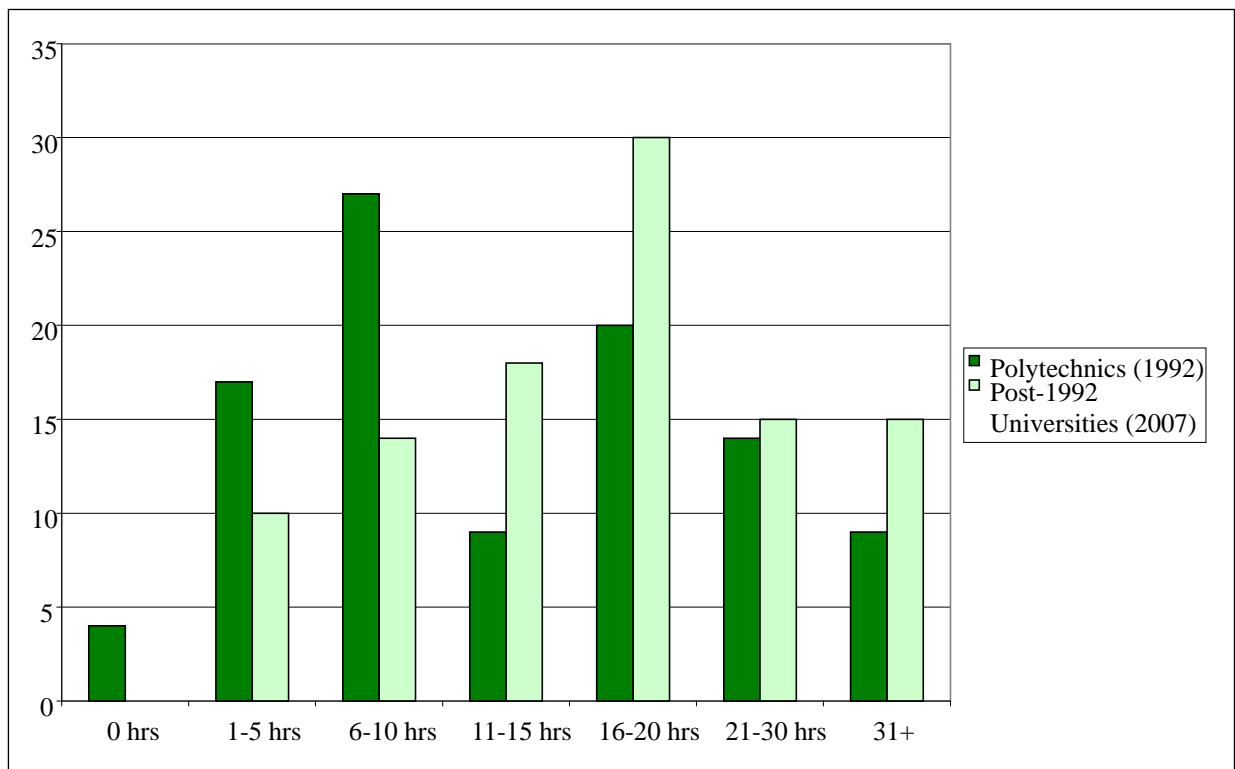
Charts 2a, 2b and 2c show the hours per week spent on research in the vacation in 1992 and 2007, by institutional type.



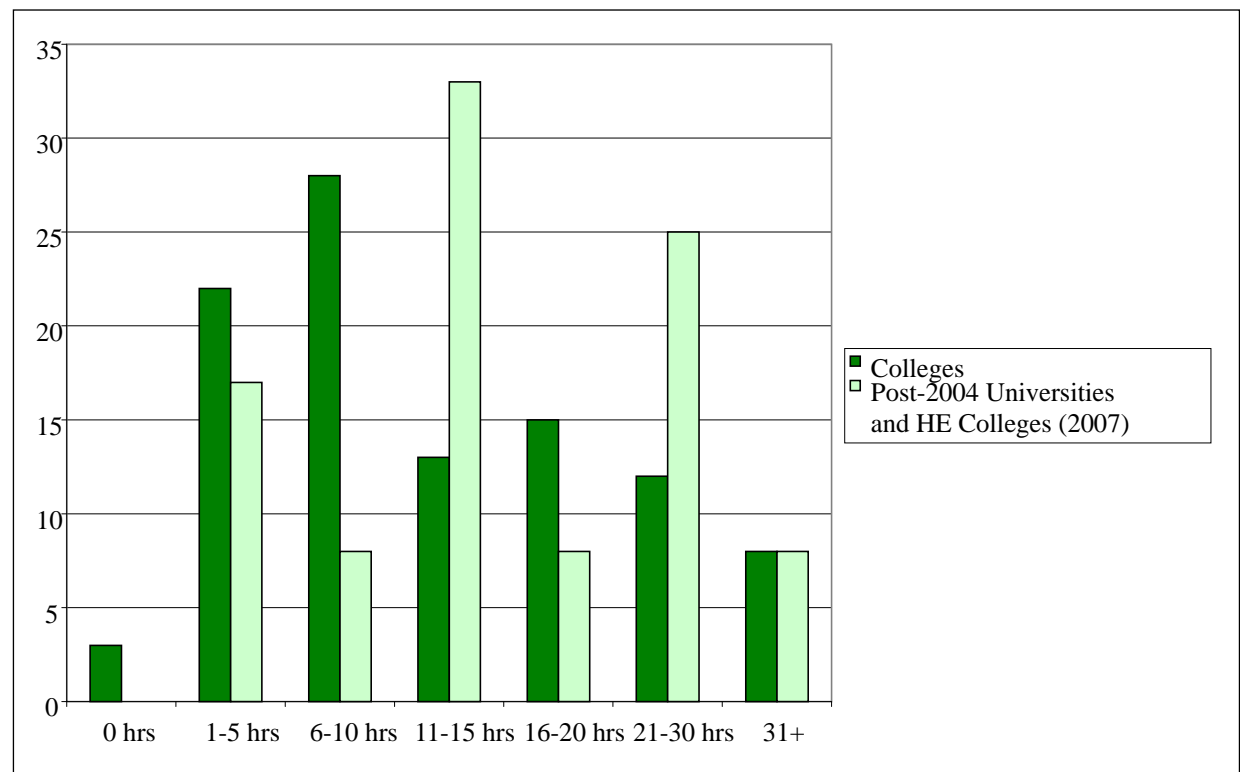
**Chart 2a: Hours per week spent on research in the vacation in 1992 and 2007, Universities (1992) and Pre-1992 universities (2007)**



**Chart 2b: Hours per week spent on research in the vacation in 1992 and 2007, Polytechnics (1992) and Post-1992 Universities (2007)**



**Chart 2c: Hours per week spent on research in the vacation in 1992 and 2007, HE Colleges (1992) and Post-2004 Universities and HE Colleges (2007)**



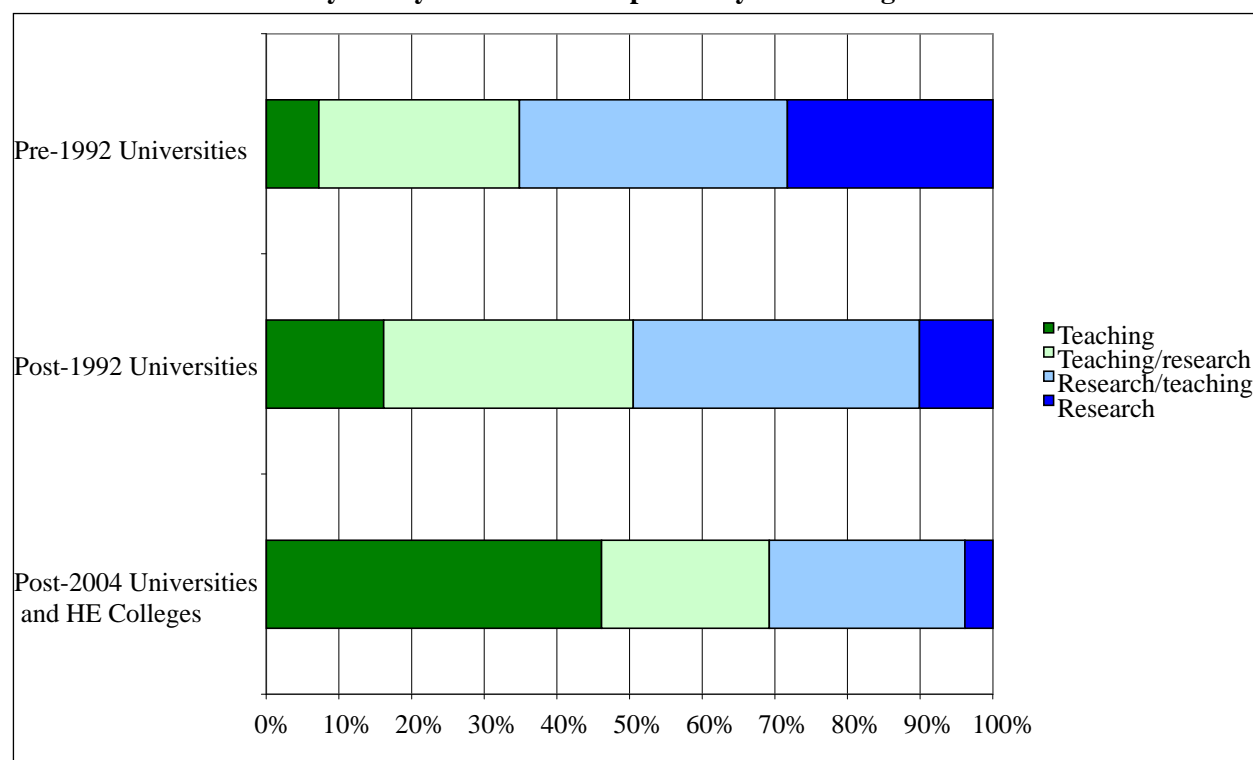
Fewer respondents from Pre-1992 universities report spending more than 11 hours a week on research in term-time and during the vacation than in the 1992 survey. In contrast, more respondents from both Post-1992 universities and Post-2004 universities and HE colleges are now undertaking research for more than 11 hours a week. Looking at the median responses for research, these have remained largely static for Pre-1992 university respondents between the two surveys, at 12 hours in term-time and 29 in the vacation. However, those from Post-1992 universities now spend more time on research during the vacation than in the first survey (20 compared with 13 hours per week in 1992). Respondents from Post-2004 universities and HE colleges also spend more time researching than in the 1992 survey, at 6 hours in term-time and 15 hours during the vacation. Interestingly, across all institution types, the median responses for hours spent on administration has not changed overall between 1992 and 2007.

#### *Primary interests*

The mission drift towards more research in the ex-polytechnics in the mid-1990s, followed by greater selectivity in funding and the gradual but profound sundering of teaching and research may have created a number of crosscurrents in relation to *where academics' primary interests*

*lie, in teaching, research or different combinations of both.* The results for 2007 are shown in Chart 3.

**Chart 3: CAP 2007 survey – Do your interests lie primarily in teaching or research?**



**Table 2: CAP 2007 survey – Do your interests lie primarily in teaching or research?**  
Percentages, by institutional type

	All Institution	Pre-1992 Universities	Post-1992 Universities	Post 2004 Universities & HE Colleges
<b>Primarily in teaching</b>	11	7	16	46
<b>In both, but leaning towards teaching</b>	29	28	34	23
<b>In both, but leaning towards research</b>	37	37	39	27
<b>Primarily in research</b>	24	28	10	5

In 2007, more academics in Pre-1992 universities state their primary interest lies in research than in teaching, although the majority still profess an interest in both with a leaning towards

one or the other. In Post-1992 universities, the vast majority include both, while in Post-2004 universities and HE colleges a substantial minority (46%) favour teaching. In these HEIs, only 5% are primarily interested in research.

In Post-1992 universities there has been a fall since the earlier survey in the proportions of respondents whose interests lie primarily in teaching, or in both but leaning towards teaching, from 66% to 50% in 2007. Among Pre-1992 university respondents, there has been a fall in those whose interests lie in both but are leaning towards research. In all types of institution more respondents in 2007 expressed a prime interest in research: a 5 or 6% rise in Pre- and Post-1992 universities, but a smaller 2% rise in Post-2004 universities and HE colleges. In the latter types of institution, a huge fall in those with an interest in both but leaning towards teaching (from 52% to 23%) was accompanied by both a sharp 22% rise in those primarily interested in teaching and a 6% rise among those with at least a leaning towards research. This suggests some differentiation in Post-2004 universities and HE colleges between those primarily interested in teaching and those undertaking or even focusing on research, with both groups of respondents representing around 50% of the total respondents from this institutional type. We will be exploring this further with a more disaggregated analysis by institutional type and through qualitative research.

#### *Scholarly contributions*

Both 1992 and 2007 respondents were asked how many *scholarly contributions* they had completed in the last three years. Across all types of publication, from authored and edited books to articles and conference papers, fewer publications are recorded from Pre-1992 universities and Post-2004 universities and HE colleges in 2007 than in 1992. In contrast, those from Post-1992 universities now appear to be producing substantially more than in 1992. In terms of contributions per individual, they now rival Pre-1992 university academics for authored books and research reports and monographs for funded projects. This confirms the wide spread of research activity among academics, even as funding for research becomes increasingly selective and the definitions of what counts as research and who is counted as an ‘active researcher’ have narrowed.

#### *Nature of the profession*

Respondents were asked for their views on a series of statements about the academic profession. Table 2 shows the percentages of those who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

**Table 3: CAP 2007 survey – Percentages agreeing or strongly agreeing with statements about the academic profession**

	<b>All institutions</b>	<b>Pre-1992 Universities</b>	<b>Post-1992 Universities</b>	<b>Post-2004 Universities and HE Colleges</b>
Scholarship is best defined as the preparation and presentation of findings on original research.	62	65	50	57
Scholarship includes the application of academic knowledge in real-life settings	71	68	77	90
Scholarship includes the preparation of reports that synthesise the major trends and findings of my field.	66	63	78	68
This is a poor time for any young person to begin an academic career in my field.	49	47	56	59
If I had it to do over again, I would not become an academic.	27	24	34	39
My job is a source of considerable personal strain.	52	50	59	72
Teaching and research are hardly compatible with each other.	28	26	40	14
Faculty in my discipline have a professional obligation to apply their knowledge to problems in society.	63	59	75	86

Those from Post-1992 (50%) and Post-2004 universities and HE colleges (57%) are less likely to agree or strongly agree that ‘Scholarship is best defined as the preparation and presentation of findings on original research’ than those from Pre-1992 universities (65%). The former are more likely to agree or strongly agree that ‘Scholarship includes the application of academic knowledge in real-life settings’ (77 and 90% respectively) than Pre-1992 universities (68%).and that ‘Scholarship includes the preparation of reports that synthesise the major trends and findings in my field’ (78% and 68% respectively) than Pre-1992 universities (63%). This difference is even more pronounced in their views on whether ‘Faculty in my discipline have a professional obligation to apply their knowledge to problems in society’. 86% of respondents from Post-2004 universities and HE colleges agree or strongly agree with this statement, compared with 75% of those from Post-1992 universities and only 59% of Pre-1992 university replies. There are clearly different conceptions of

scholarship and professional responsibilities in the constituent parts of the English higher education sector. This would benefit from further qualitative and in-depth investigation.

A surprisingly large proportion (49%) of all 2007 respondents believe 'This is a poor time for any young person to begin an academic career in my field'. It will be important to analyse this by subject discipline, age of respondent and length of time working in higher education. Those in Post-1992 universities and Post-2004 universities and HE colleges are more likely to agree with this statement than Pre-1992 university respondents. In 1992, the order was reversed, with university respondents (45%) more likely to agree with this statement than those from polytechnics (37%) and colleges (35%). In 2007, this negative view is reinforced by 27% of all respondents who agree or strongly agree that 'If I had it to do over again, I would not become an academic', including a greater proportion of respondents from Post-1992 (34%) and Post-2004 universities and HE colleges (39%). This is an overall increase from 1992, when 19% of university and polytechnic respondents and 23% of college respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement. Also in 1992, around 50% thought 'My job is a source of considerable personal strain'. In 2007, over half of all respondents agree with this statement with, again, a greater proportion of respondents from Post-1992 and Post-2004 universities and HE colleges (59% and 72% respectively) than those from Pre-1992 universities (50%). The statement that 'Teaching and research are hardly compatible with each other' is believed by 28% overall, but 40% of Post-1992 university respondents, although the figure is much lower for Post-2004 university and HE college respondents (14%).

**Chart 4: CAP 2007 survey – Statements about the academic profession**

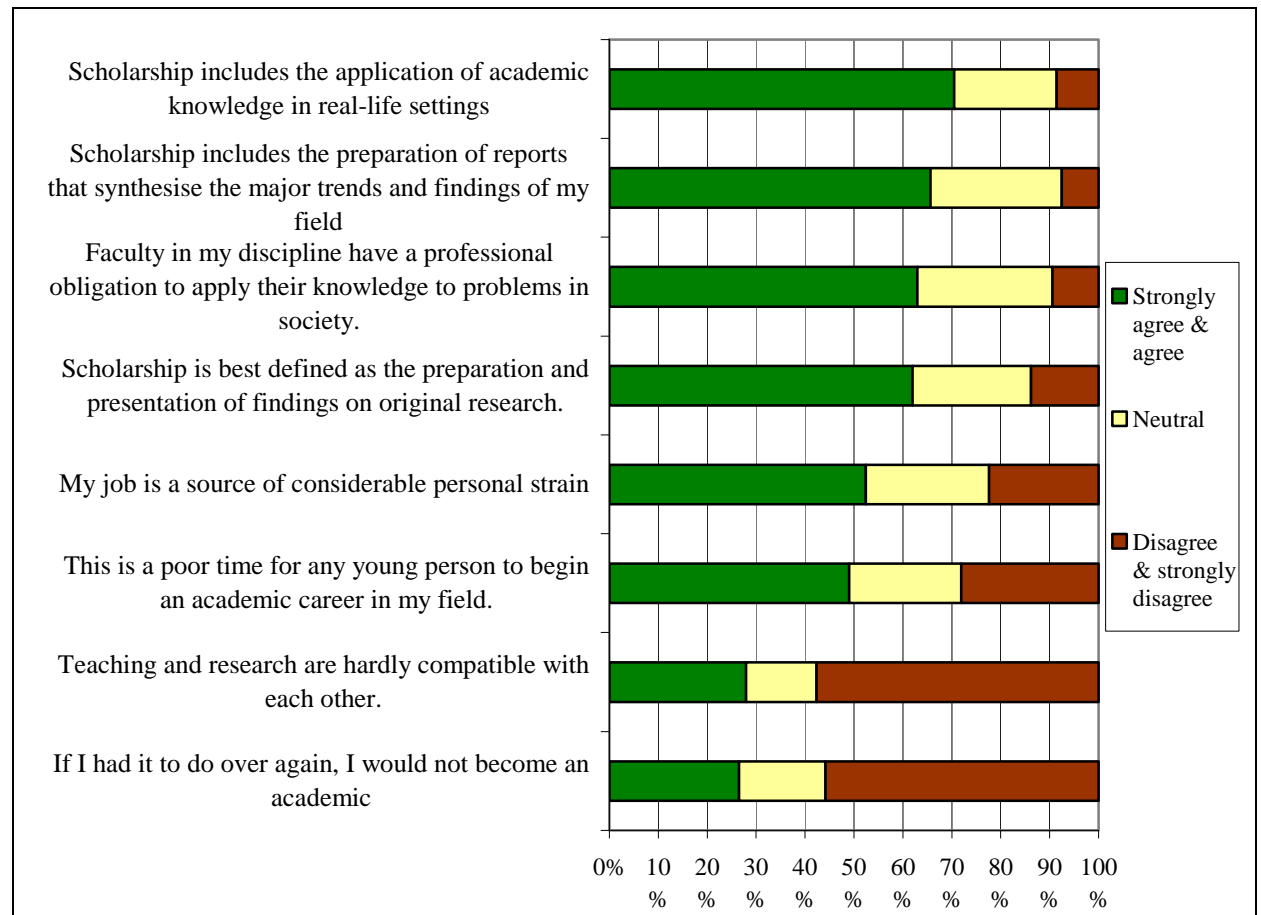
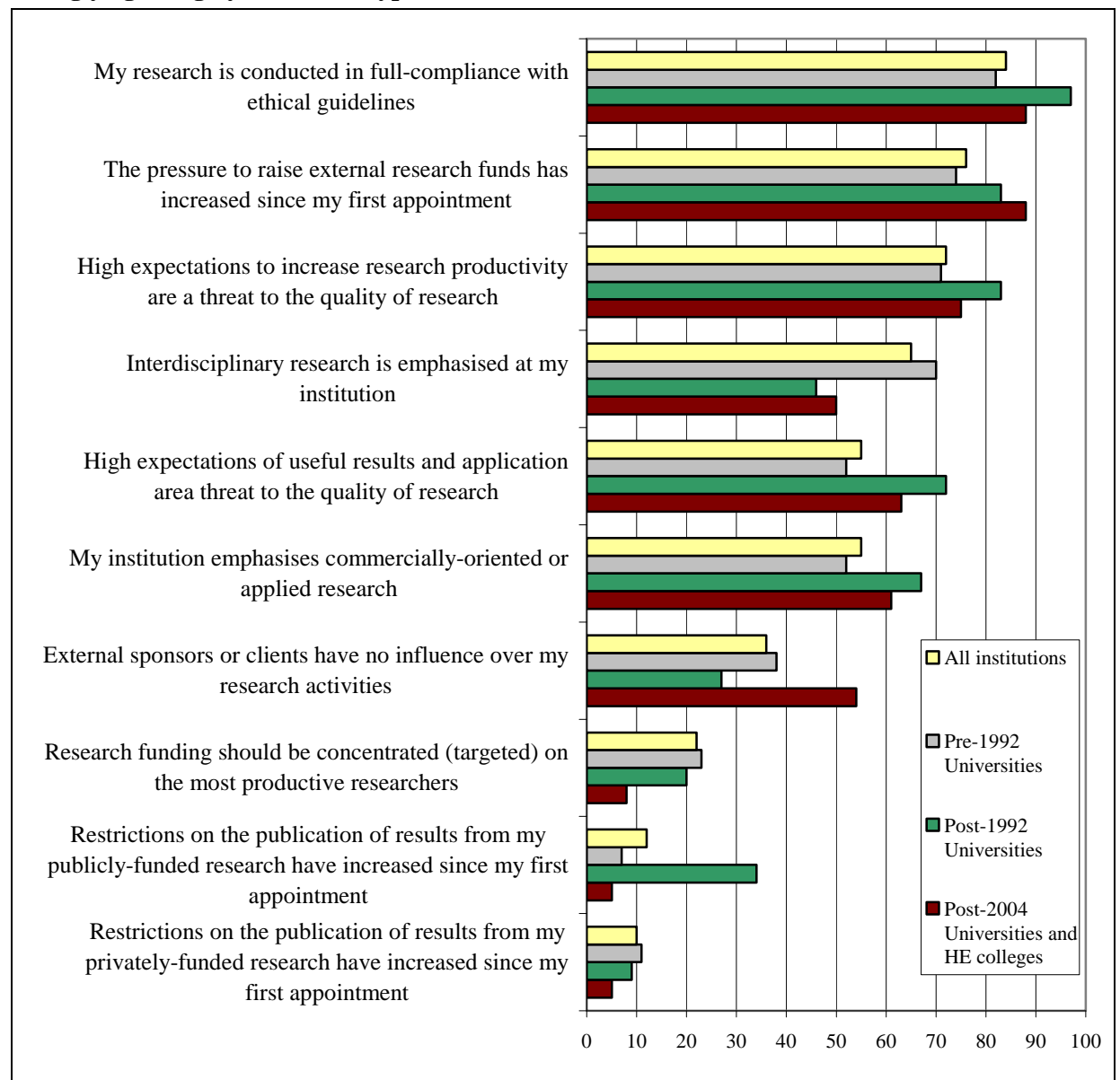


Chart 4 illustrates the pattern of all responses in 2007, showing the order of statements according to the proportion of respondents agreeing and strongly agreeing with each of them. It shows that over half disagree or strongly disagree with the statements ‘Teaching and research are hardly compatible with each other’ and ‘If I had it to do over again, I would not become an academic’.

#### *Views on research*

In the 2007 survey, respondents were asked their views on aspects of research, and the results are shown in Chart 5.

**Chart 5: CAP 2007 survey – Statements about research, percentage agreeing and strongly agreeing by institution type**





**Table 4: CAP 2007 survey – Statements about research, percentage agreeing and strongly agreeing by institution type**

	<b>All Institutions</b>	<b>Pre-1992 Universities</b>	<b>Post-1992 Universities</b>	<b>Post-2004 Universities and HE Colleges</b>
Restrictions on the publication of results from my publicly-funded research have increased since my first appointment	12	7	34	5
Restrictions on the publication of results from my privately-funded research have increased since my first appointment	10	11	9	5
External sponsors or clients have no influence over my research activities	36	38	27	54
The pressure to raise external research funds has increased since my first appointment	76	74	83	88
Interdisciplinary research is emphasised at my institution	65	70	46	50
My institution emphasises commercially-oriented or applied research	55	52	67	61
My research is conducted in full-compliance with ethical guidelines	84	82	97	88
Research funding should be concentrated (targeted) on the most productive researchers	22	23	19	9
High expectations to increase research productivity are a threat to the quality of research	72	71	83	75
High expectations of useful results and application area threat to the quality of research	55	52	72	63

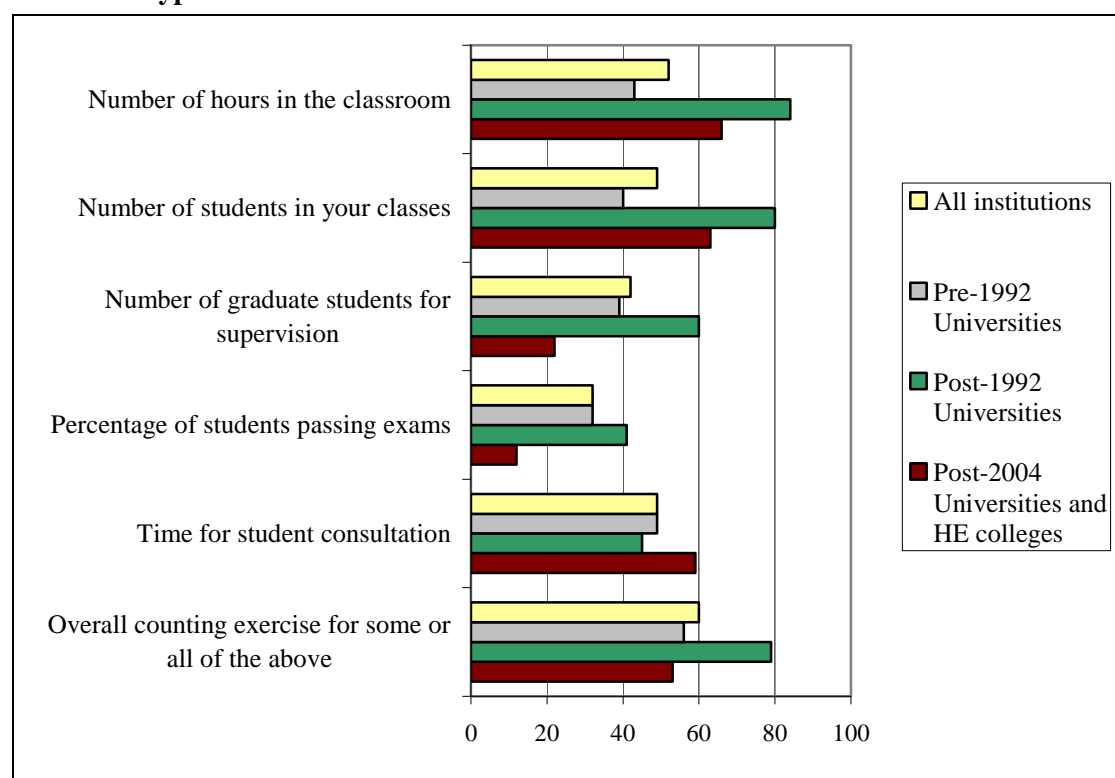
The statements which attracted most agreement are ‘My research is conducted in full-compliance with ethical guidelines’ (84%) and ‘The pressure to raise external funds has increased since my first appointment’ (76%). 72% agree or strongly agree that ‘High expectations to increase research productivity are a threat to the quality of research’ and over half agree or strongly agree that ‘High expectations of useful results and application are a threat to the quality of research’. For both of these statements, more respondents from Post-1992 universities than other types of HEI agree or strongly agree about these threats to the quality of research. Two thirds of all respondents agree or strongly agree with the assertion that ‘Interdisciplinary research is emphasised at my institution’, although fewer than 50% of those from Post-1992 universities did. Those statements receiving the least agreement included ‘Restrictions on the publications of results from my publicly- and privately-funded

research have increased since my first appointment’, and ‘Research funding should be concentrated (targeted) on the most productive researchers’.

### *Regulatory expectations*

2007 respondents were asked whether their institution has regulatory expectations for individual faculty (e.g. quantitative targets) for different aspects of teaching. The numbers confirming this are shown in Chart 6.

**Chart 6: CAP 2007 survey – Regulatory expectations for individual faculty, by institution type**



More respondents from Post-1992 universities report regulatory expectations than from other types of HEI, with the highest for ‘Number of hours in the classroom’, ‘Number of students in your classes’ and ‘Overall counting exercise’. Across all types of HEI, ‘Percentage of students passing exams’ attracted the fewest respondents reporting regulatory expectations.

**Table 5: CAP 2007 Survey – Primary influence on decisions made, percentage**

	<b>Government or external stakeholders</b>	<b>Institutional managers</b>	<b>Academic Unit manager</b>	<b>Faculty committees/ boards</b>	<b>Individual faculty</b>	<b>Students</b>
<b>Selecting key administrators</b>	4	52	13	22	9	0
<b>Recruiting new academic and research staff</b>	0	16	28	35	21	0
<b>Making promotion decisions</b>	3	29	13	49	6	0
<b>Determining budget priorities</b>	3	56	15	22	5	0
<b>Determining the overall teaching load of faculty</b>	5	22	34	22	17	0
<b>Setting admission standards for undergraduate students</b>	5	28	15	38	15	0
<b>Approving new academic programs</b>	3	32	8	52	6	0
<b>Evaluating teaching</b>	6	14	15	29	21	16
<b>Setting internal research priorities</b>	0	24	20	23	32	0
<b>Evaluating research</b>	16	20	19	23	22	0
<b>Establishing international linkages</b>	0	26	17	9	48	0

Respondents were asked which party has the primary influence on a given series of decisions among: government or external stakeholders, institutional managers, academic unit managers, faculty committees/boards, individual faculty, and students. This question did not entirely match the 1992 survey, which asked how centralised (‘controlled by top administrators’) or decentralised (‘controlled by faculty’) decision-making was, although the seven original examples of decisions were all included in the 2007 survey along with four new examples.

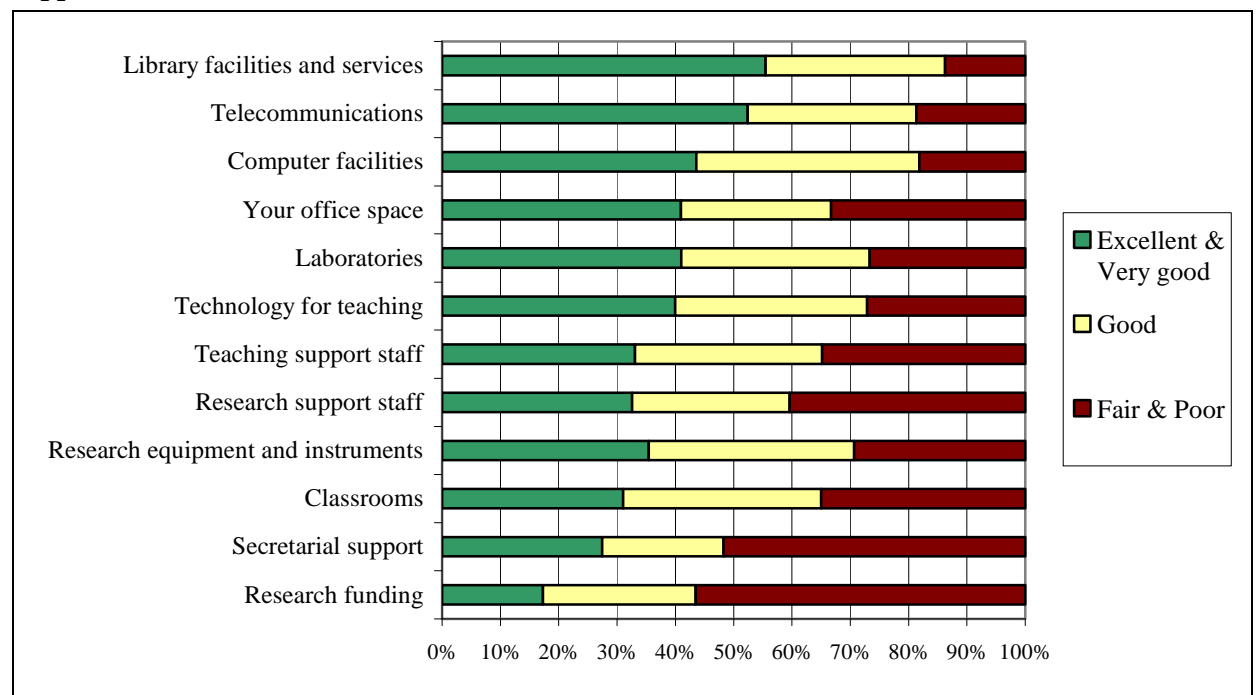
On several of the decisions, such as ‘Selecting key administrators’ and ‘Determining budget priorities’, institutional managers are thought to be the primary influence by more respondents from all institution types. In Pre-1992 universities, more respondents feel that faculty committees/boards have the primary influence on ‘Making promotion decisions’, ‘Setting admissions standards for undergraduate students’ and ‘Approving new academic programs’, whilst an academic unit manager has most say in ‘Determining the overall teaching load of faculty’. Across the board, students were never regarded as the prime influence, even on ‘Evaluating teaching’.

In the 1992 survey, only two of the seven decisions had been described by the universities and polytechnics as decentralised - ‘Determining the overall teaching load of faculty’ and ‘Setting admissions standards for undergraduate students’. The respondents from the colleges had reported a very much more centralised decision-making process.

#### *Institutional resources to support individual academic work*

Respondents’ evaluations of institutional resources to support individual academic work suggest an overall decline in Pre-1992 universities, a general improvement in Post-1992 universities and a mixed picture in Post-2004 universities and HE colleges.

**Chart 7: CAP 2007 survey – Evaluation of facilities, resources or personnel needed to support individual work**



**Table 6: CAP 2007 Survey – Evaluation of facilities, resources or personnel needed to support individual work. Percentages regarding them as excellent or very good, by institutional type**

	All Institutions	Pre-1992 Universities	Post-1992 Universities	Post-2004 Universities & HE Colleges
<b>Classrooms</b>	31	33	29	43
<b>Technology for teaching</b>	40	40	45	21
<b>Laboratories</b>	41	43	37	8
<b>Research equipment and instruments</b>	35	42	10	17
<b>Computer facilities</b>	44	48	34	23
<b>Library facilities and services</b>	55	58	55	35
<b>Your office space</b>	41	43	43	9
<b>Secretarial support</b>	28	31	20	7
<b>Telecommunications</b>	52	41	54	12
<b>Teaching support staff</b>	33	32	39	30
<b>Research support staff</b>	33	31	46	4
<b>Research funding</b>	17	17	23	5

Fewer Pre-1992 university respondents in 2007 than in 1992 now regard classrooms, computer facilities) and secretarial support as excellent or very good. The only improvements in these institutions seem to have been in technology for teaching and library facilities. Conversely, computing facilities and secretarial support are the only resources regarded as excellent or very good by fewer 2007 respondents from Post-1992 universities than in the 1992 survey. All the other sources of support are regarded more highly. In the Post-2004 universities and HE colleges, generally fewer responded in 2007 that their facilities are at least very good, although the notable exceptions are research equipment, classrooms and library facilities and services, which are rated more highly in these types of institution. Overall in 2007, as shown in Chart 7 and Table 6, a majority think their library facilities and services and telecommunications are at least very good, but this hides a generally lower rating for all institutional resources by respondents from Post-2004 universities and HE colleges.

### *Affiliation*

Table 7 shows the percentages of respondents to the 2007 survey who regard their affiliation to their academic discipline, department and institution as essential or very important.

**Table 7: CAP 2007 survey – Affiliation to academic discipline, department and institution. Percentage regarding them as essential or very important, by institutional type**

	All institutions	Pre-1992 universities	Post-1992 universities	Post-2004 universities & HE colleges
My academic discipline	81	82	85	57
My department	57	56	60	60
My institution	36	39	27	34

81% believe this of their *discipline* and the proportion is slightly higher in the Pre- and Post-1992 universities, but much lower in the Post-2004 universities and HE colleges. However, only 36% believe this of their *institution*, including a substantially lower proportion of respondents (27%) from Post-1992 universities. This confirms previous findings on primary commitments (Bryson and Barnes, 2000).

**Chart 8: CAP 2007 survey – Affiliation to academic discipline, department and institution**

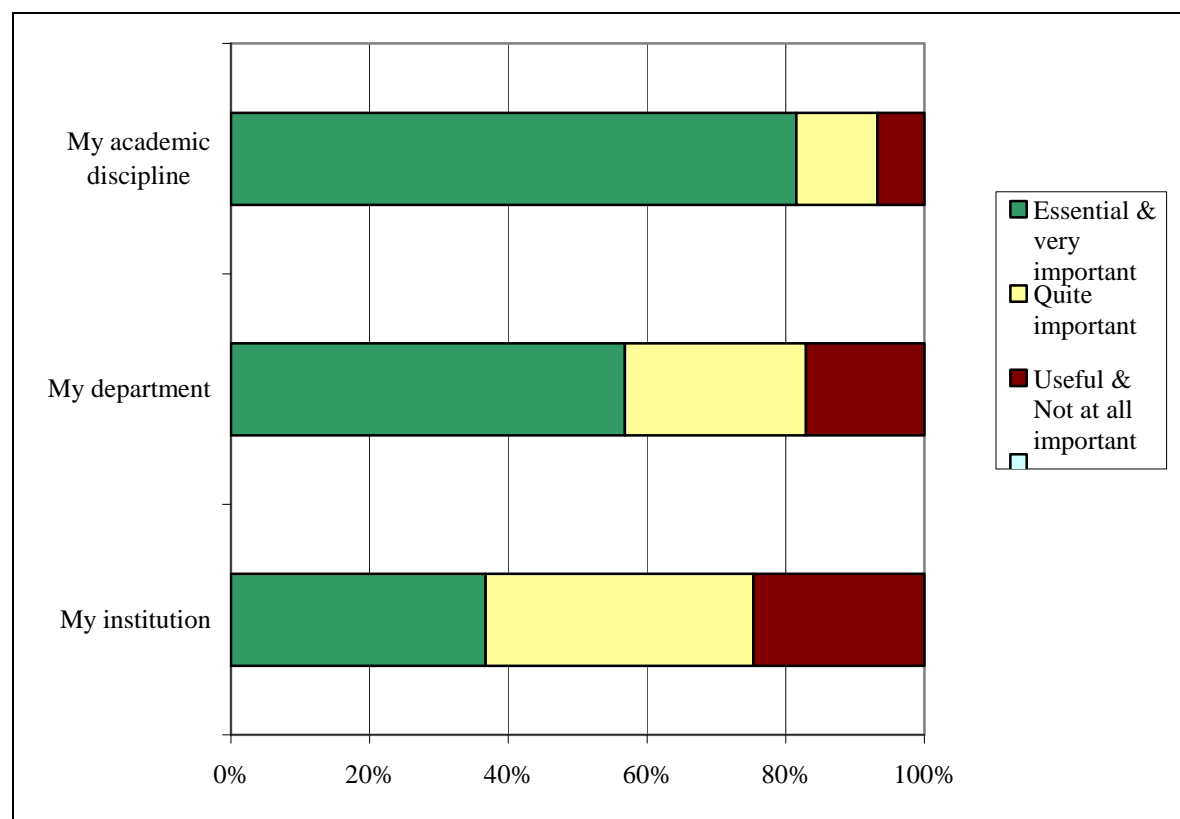


Chart 8 shows all the responses to this question, including a substantial minority amounting to 25% who rate their institution as merely useful (19%) or not at all important (6%), but only 7% who think of their discipline in the same light.

#### *Views on own institution*

Respondents were asked about their views on the management of their own HEI.

**Chart 9: CAP 2007 survey – Views on the management of own institution, percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing**

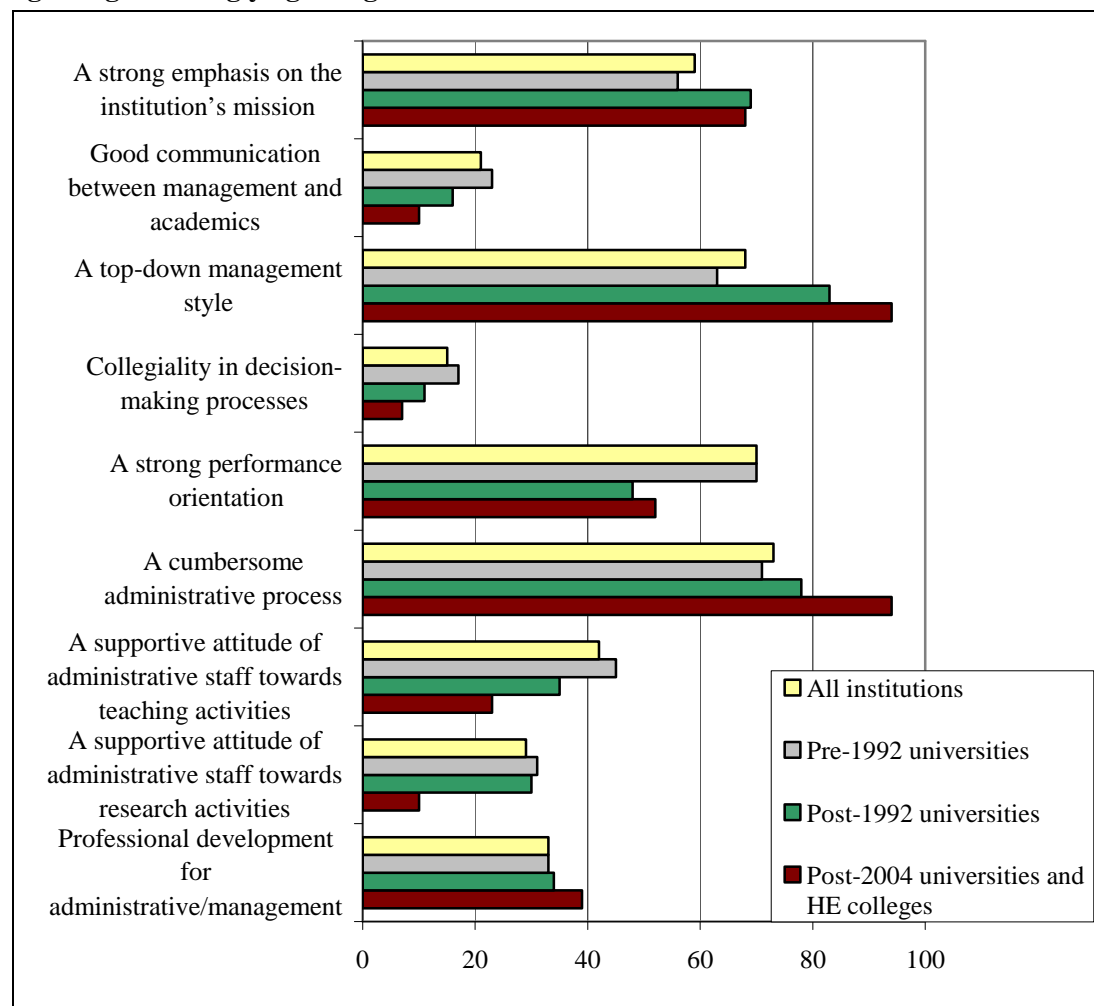


Chart 9 shows that by far the highest proportion of respondents from all types of HEI agree or strongly agree with the statements that there is:

‘A cumbersome administration process’ (73%)

‘A top-down management style’ (68%) and

‘A strong performance orientation’ (70%)

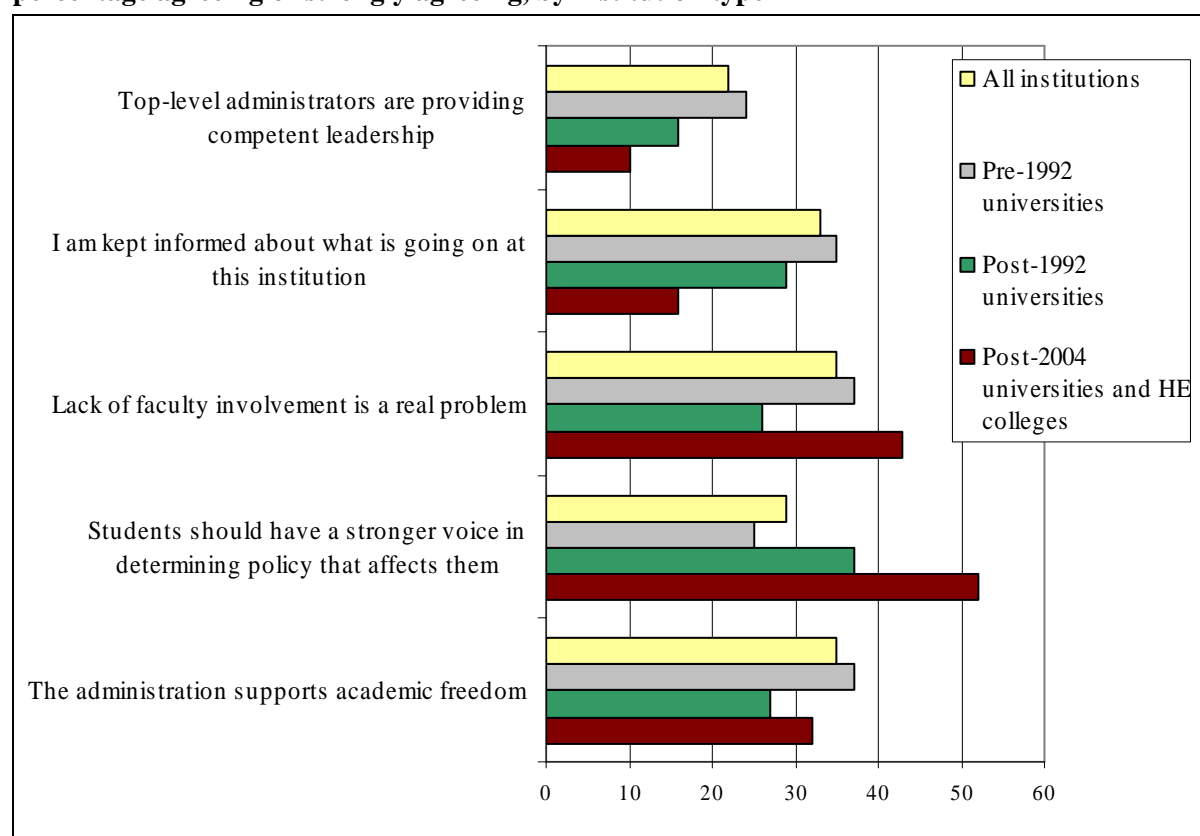
‘A strong emphasis on the institution’s mission’ (59%).

#### *Views on administration and faculty involvement*

Respondents were asked their views on the administration and faculty involvement in their own institution.



**Chart 10: CAP 2007 survey – Views on administration and faculty involvement, percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing, by institution type**



**Table 8: CAP 2007 survey – Views on administration and faculty involvement, percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing, by institution type**

	All Institutions	Pre-1992 Universities	Post-1992 Universities	Post-2004 Universities and HE Colleges
Top-level administrators are providing competent leadership	22	24	16	12
I am kept informed about what is going on at this institution	33	35	29	16
Lack of faculty involvement is a real problem	35	37	26	42
Students should have a stronger voice in determining policy that affects them	28	25	36	50
The administration supports academic freedom	34	36	27	56

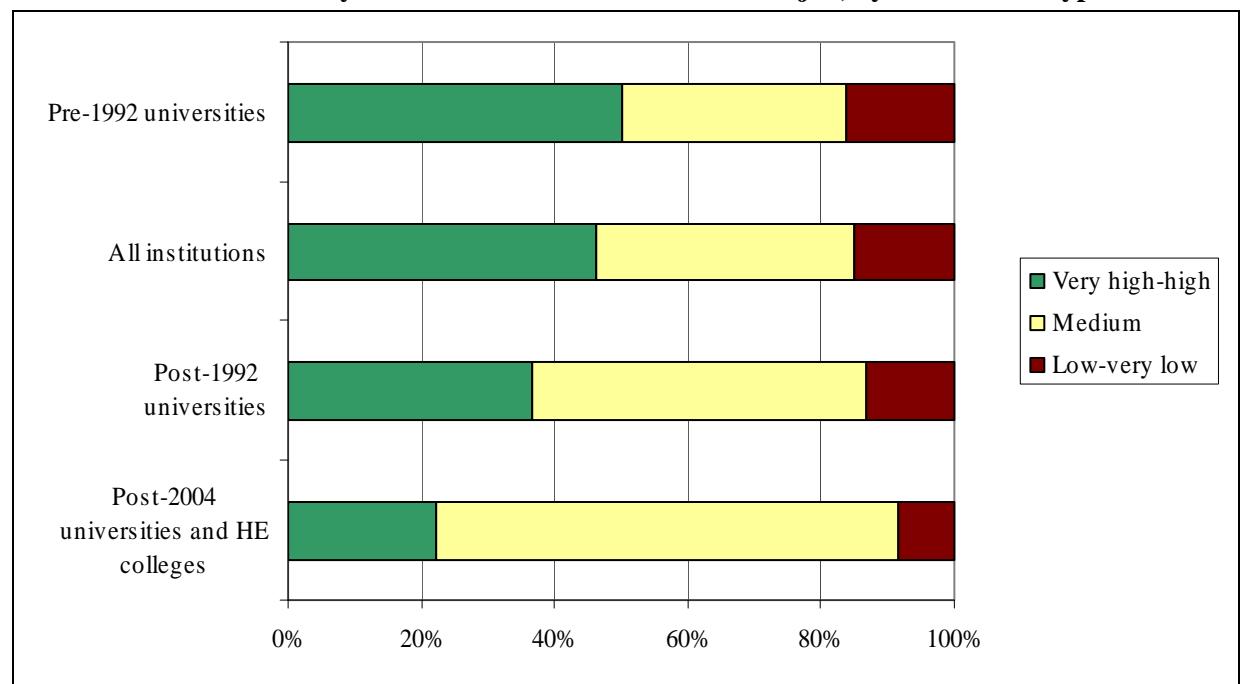
Chart 10 and Table 8 show that those agreeing with these statements were in the minority, although it is worth pointing out that two of the five statements were negative. Less than a

quarter of respondents agree or strongly agree that ‘Top-level administrators are providing competent leadership’ (only 12% in Post 2004 universities and HE colleges) and only a third feel informed about what is going on in their institution (again only 16% in Post 2004 universities and HE colleges). Over a third see lack of faculty involvement as a real problem, although the proportion is smaller in Post-1992 universities (26%). 28% (but more in Post-2004 universities and HE colleges (50%)) think that ‘Students should have a stronger voice in determining policy that affects them’. Only a third (but only a quarter in Post-1992 universities) believe that ‘The administration supports academic freedom’.

### *Overall satisfaction*

Academics’ overall satisfaction with their current job appears to have declined in the period since the 1992 survey. The 2007 results are shown in Chart 11.

**Chart 11: CAP 2007 survey – Overall satisfaction with current job, by institutional type**



The proportions from all types of institution who are highly or very highly satisfied have fallen by between 2% and 5% to an average of 47% for all respondents. In 2007, satisfaction is still highest among Pre-1992 university respondents (50% compared with 53% in the 1992 survey) and lowest among those from Post-2004 universities and HE colleges (23% compared with 40% in 1992). However, those who rate their satisfaction as low or very low are also more numerous in Pre-1992 universities (16%) than Post-1992 universities (14%) and Post-2004 universities and HE colleges (7%). Views seem to be most polarised in Pre-1992 universities.

### *Considered major change and taken concrete actions*

In 2007, respondents were asked: ‘Within the last five years, have you considered a major change in your job? If so, did you take concrete actions to make such a change?’

**Chart 12: CAP 2007 survey – Considered major change and taken concrete actions**

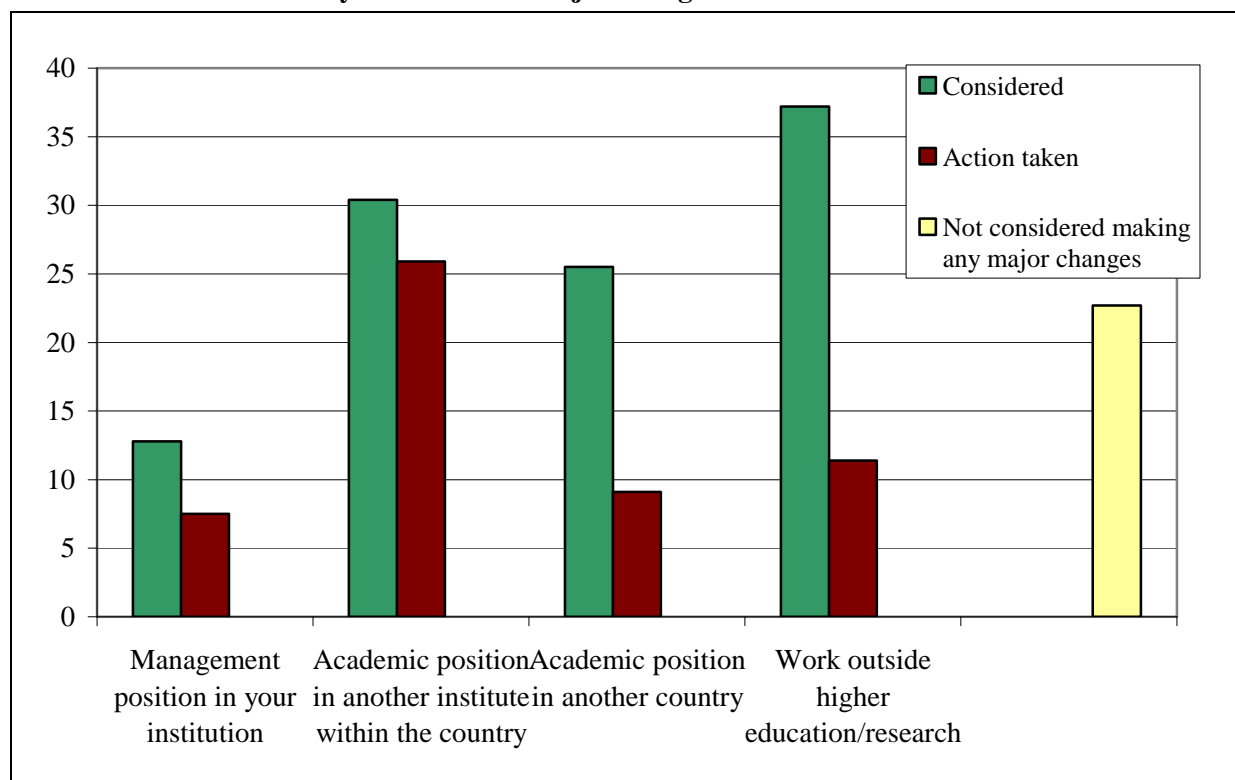


Chart 12 shows that just under a quarter have not considered making any major changes. Of the remainder, the fewest (13%) have considered changing to a management position in their HEI, and even fewer (8%) have taken concrete action to achieve this. 30% have considered an academic position in another UK institution and most of these (a quarter of all respondents) have taken action. Almost as many have considered an academic position in another country, but far fewer have actually done anything about this. A greater proportion (37%) have considered working outside HE but, again, fewer (11%) have taken action.

## **5. Summary and initial conclusions**

In the 15 years since the end of the binary divide in the UK, this initial analysis of the UK CAP survey suggests that in some areas (interest in, and hours spent on, research; and institutional resources, at least between Pre- and Post-1992 universities) academics' views and conditions of work appear to have harmonised across the different institutional types identified. However, there remain distinctive differences (in the number of hours spent on teaching; respondents' views on institutional resources, governance and management,

especially in Post-2004 university and HE colleges; in academics' experience of regulatory expectations, especially in Post-1992 universities; in respondents' views on the academic profession; and in overall satisfaction). These differences may largely reflect the origins, history and circumstances of the types of higher education institution in which particular academics work but, fifteen years after the dissolution of the binary divide, it may be surprising to some that such disparities persist. There are also signs of polarisation *within* both Pre-1992 universities and Post-2004 universities and HE colleges in both roles and views. These should be explored further using more finely-tuned methods than the broad brush CAP survey. Finally, academics' overall satisfaction appears to have declined since 1992, and a substantial minority have considered leaving the profession. Further analyses will allow us to assess whether there are differences in satisfaction according to age/career stage, gender, grade and subject. Although increased levels of dissatisfaction may be no surprise (Kinman and Jones, 2003; Bone and McNay, 2006), this finding should be a salutary warning to those responsible for the current conditions and future prospects of the academic profession in the UK.

## **6. Follow-up Study**

CHERI is aiming to undertake a qualitative study to follow up the key findings of the survey and explore the underlying reasons for the changes identified. It is likely that this will be based on institutional case studies, involving in-depth semi-structured interviews with selected academic staff and key institutional managers, as well as focus groups. A limited number of interviews with key government officials and policy makers are also proposed. It may be possible to incorporate an international comparative element to the qualitative study, and indications of interest have already been received from the CAP national research teams in Australia and Canada.

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