



HRM Strategies and Academic Engagement

Final Report for the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education

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Project 'Home' University

City University London

1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to summarise the background, methods, key findings and benefits of the project, and evaluate the extent to which it has met its initial aims and outcomes.

Background and aims

- The Small Development Project funding was used to undertake a small-scale mixed-methods research study in six universities in England.
- The aims were to explore the degree of engagement of academic staff with universities' Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies and associated HR-driven initiatives, and to ascertain reasons for the levels of engagement reported.
- The original thinking behind the project arose from Guest and Clinton's (2007) research into HRM and university performance, which had shown that there was no direct association between HR activities and key performance indicators (KPIs) in universities in the UK.

Definitions

- For the purposes of our research, we defined engagement as the alignment and 'connectivity' of the HR function and academic functions relating to leadership, staff development, recognition and reward.
- The project is also located within a broader theoretical and conceptual context of employee engagement, which is defined as 'being positively present during the performance of work by willingly contributing intellectual effort, experiencing positive emotions and meaningful connections to others' (Alfes et al, 2010: 5).

Research design

- A collaborative academic-practitioner model of research was adopted with the explicit intention of generating research findings of interest and value to HR practitioners, managers of academics, and researchers.
- Data collection methods were: (i) individual interviews with Human Resources Directors and Pro Vice Chancellors; (ii) an online survey of Heads of Department; and (iii) focus groups with academic and research staff.
- Template analysis guided the integration of qualitative and quantitative data.
- Data collection took place between March and July 2010 from a sample of six HEIs in England, including pre and post 1992 universities, a Russell Group university and a relatively newly constituted university.

Summary of main findings

- Academic staff perceive HR as part of management armoury - the means by which some unpopular initiatives are implemented, rather than as the driving force.
- Recognition that academics want to be left to get on with their jobs and that to be valued, HR needs to be enabling/facilitative/invisible.
- HR was generally most valued for its advisory/support role, but valuing HR doesn't necessarily translate into strong engagement with the HR *strategy*.
- Where engagement with HR strategy did occur this was characterised by evidence of:
 - unequivocal support for HR at most senior levels of the institution, manifested as familiarity with and 'buy-in' to the content of the HR strategy at PVC level.
 - clear organisation-wide articulation of the role of the HEI's HR strategy in supporting the institution's wider objectives engenders academic engagement.
- HR's ability to influence KPIs is indirect – for example having right people, in right place/jobs at right time.
- Academic staff who feel valued and supported are engaged and are more likely to create a more positive student experience.
- Some recognition by HR Directors that the profession has been slow to provide metrics to evaluate/demonstrate HR added value.
- Academics gain advancement by 'movement' within a field/discipline and development of external profile so are less likely to defer to their employing institution for career management and development.
- The Ulrich 'Business Partner' model was evident as a current 'model in use', but was also questioned as the most appropriate model for HEIs, and a suggestion that an over-focus on 'strategic partner' dimension may occur at the expense of other dimensions.

Benefits and recommendations

This project has given a worthwhile insight into the perception of HR departments within universities; in particular, there is potentially useful information within this report that might enable HR Directors:

- to raise the credibility of their departments where they feel that this is necessary;
- help universities in terms of the 'realistic job previews' that they give to HR job applicants,.
- ensure that universities' HR functions have the support of as many key employees as possible;
- highlight strategic objectives which are also within the traditional remit of HRM;
- develop innovative interdisciplinary 'academic-HR practitioner partnerships';
- generate opportunities for research and evaluation;
- enable HR practitioners to contribute to developing the theory and scholarship of HRM.

2. Background and Aims of the Project

The original thinking behind the project was to explore further the findings of the LFHE funded project *Human Resource Management and University Performance*, which concluded that:

There was no direct association between any measures of HR activities in universities and a range of standard indicators of university performance including financial indicators (Guest and Clinton, 2007:3).

Guest and Clinton cautioned that theirs was a preliminary small-scale study, with data collected mainly from HR Directors; this project explores their findings further with a sample of senior university leaders, heads of department (HoDs), academics and researchers.

The research aims were to:

- explore the degree of engagement of academic staff with universities' HRM strategies and associated HR-driven initiatives; and
- ascertain reasons for the levels of engagement reported.

For the purposes of this project, we defined engagement as the alignment and 'connectivity' of the HR function and academic functions relating to leadership, staff development, recognition and reward. A collaborative academic-practitioner approach was adopted, with an underlying rationale to do research which will have practical relevance to managers of academics and HR practitioners in the higher education sector. However a collaborative academic-practitioner model is also applicable and relevant across a range of organisational settings and sectors (Bartunek, 2007). As researchers, we acknowledged that individually we each possessed different blends of academic-practitioner skills and experience. Kathryn Waddington (KW) is a chartered psychologist working in the field of applied work and organisational psychology, with a practitioner background in nursing and healthcare. Julie Lister (JL) initiated the original thinking behind the project when she was working as an HR practitioner in strategy and planning in a university, and who is now a lecturer in Management.

Through their HR strategies, developed under the rewarding and developing staff initiative, many institutions have located the leadership of development, engagement and commitment initiatives in their HR Departments. In organisational performance terms, it is crucial that HR Departments 'deliver' in terms of reaching those staff who are key drivers of organisational performance. This was our thinking at the time of bidding for this small development project, and we feel that it has become even more relevant in view of both the challenges that the sector is likely to face, both financially, and also with regard to the wider employee engagement agenda. The previous Labour government's commissioning of the McLeod Review on employee engagement made the case for establishing causal links between high levels of employee engagement, individual well-being, and organisational performance (MacLeod and Clarke 2009). Employee engagement is defined as: 'being positively present during the performance of work by willingly contributing intellectual effort, experiencing positive emotions and meaningful connections to others' (Alfes et al, 2010: 5). Whilst it has always

been notoriously difficult to demonstrate a causal link between HRM and the bottom line, this should be much easier to establish between HRM and employee engagement because approaches to building motivation and commitment traditionally fall within the remit of HR Departments.

3. Methodology

The research question was: *To what extent do academic staff engage with their university's HRM strategies and initiatives relating to leadership, staff development, recognition and reward?*

The objectives were to:

- examine academic leaders' and HR Directors' perceptions of academic and research staff engagement with HRM initiatives.
- explore the values and motives of academic and research staff in the development and/or implementation of HRM strategies.
- survey HoDs' general impressions and perceptions of HR function in the higher education sector and its influences upon academic staff and university performance.

A mixed-methods approach was adopted which involved collecting, analysing and integrating qualitative and quantitative data. Ethical approval was granted by the School of Community and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee at City University London. A convenience sample of six HEIs was identified from across the sector, comprising: three post-1992 universities; one relatively newly constituted university; one pre-1992 university; one Russell Group university.

Data collection took place between March and July 2010 using: individual interviews with Human Resources Directors and Pro Vice Chancellors; focus groups with academic and research staff; University of Bristol Online Survey (BOS) of HoDs. The project steering group advised on the construction and content of the interview schedules and online survey. Qualitative interview and focus group data were collected during visits to each HEI; KW interviewed six HR Directors, JL interviewed six PVCs, interviews lasted 45 – 90 minutes and were recorded using a digital voice recorder for later transcription. KW and JL co-facilitated focus group interviews in five of the six participating HEIs, each lasting 60-90 minutes and typically involving six to ten academic and research staff. These were also recorded, but not transcribed. The online survey was administered in July 2010 - after qualitative data collection - at the request of the participating HEIs, as most were conducting or planning their own staff surveys.

Template analysis was used as a framework to facilitate the integration of qualitative and quantitative data (King, 2004). The initial coding template began with categories drawn from Guest and Clinton's (2007) findings:

- Perceptions of HR strategy;
- Awareness of HR policies and practices;

- Perceptions of effectiveness of HR practices;
- Perceptions of HR function;
- Perceptions of HR influence upon university performance.

4. Summary of Key Research Findings

All sample HEIs were either engaged in some level of culture/organisational change/restructure, had (relatively) recently emerged from one, or were planning one. All had clearly articulated HR strategies which variously used terms such as personnel, performance, people, partner, engagement and business, and all were clearly aligned in various ways to their university's strategy or strategic plan:

But as I'm sure you know, most University strategic plans if you boil them down all say the same thing - we will be brilliant at teaching and brilliant at research and brilliant at contribution to the community - so we reflected that into what we saw as the big HR issues. (HR Director)

We encountered a range of documents and ways of communicating the HR strategy, and there was general agreement that the HR strategy needed to be 'live' and meaningful:

My concern was that if it is just a flashy leaflet, a poster on the wall that's not going to do it for us, we have to embed it in those processes that people use all the time, like job descriptions. (PVC).

The focus groups took place on the same day as one or both of the interviews with HR Directors and PVCs, and were a good opportunity to get immediate feedback regarding the visibility and meaning of the HR strategy and HR practices. We found that some academic and research staff who engaged in the focus group interviews, appeared to have been invited or 'hand picked' by their institutions, while others had 'self selected' using the focus group as an opportunity to share their experiences, and for some, as a means of demonstrating congruence in their academic values:

When I took on a new role our glorious HR Department messed up my pension arrangements, we got it sorted out but I have been asking for some sort of confirmation that my pension is as it should be for over a year. Then there was a flurry of e-mails about this focus group and I am of the firm view that if you are given the opportunity to do something then you can't moan if you haven't done anything about it. Which is exactly what we say to students - 'you've got to be in it to win it'. (FG1)

The focus groups yielded a rich mix of experience, perceptions and values. In some institutions there was very close alignment between espoused HR strategy, values and practice, in others academic staff felt vulnerable and estranged:

I have heard people say that academic staff are an endangered species here, they are seen as a problem... there is a view that academics have become some kind of beast that has to be controlled by HR... and I think the reason for this is there was also a view that the HR function needed to be professionalised... and it now feels like HR is the tail wagging the dog... there's a bit of treading on toes, it feels like they are muscling in on areas traditionally held by academics. (FG3)

The HoD's survey demonstrated that most have read their institution's HR strategy, and consider that it both supports and is supported by the wider university strategy and senior management, and are

also aware of the majority of HR policies and practices, but there was less consensus that the strategy was clearly articulated and formally communicated (full details of survey findings are in Appendix 1). The HR practices perceived to be most effective were appraisal (88%) and recruitment and selection (81%), least effective were managing poor performance (72%) and managing/minimising bureaucracy. Perceptions of HR influence upon university performance mirrored Guest and Clinton's findings, with little influence upon quality of teaching, research or student outcomes demonstrated. The survey response rate was low (27%) which was disappointing, but given the point in the academic year in which it was administered, perhaps not entirely unexpected.

5. Discussion of Key Research Findings and Themes

Academic perceptions of HR

Generally there was a strong and positive perception of HR function in interviews and focus groups, but responses from anonymous HoDs survey less so, where positive and negative perceptions occurred fairly equally, for example:

HR is an absolute disaster. It is a neat example ineffective and out-of-touch organisation. Most of the staff - from the very top down - appear to have little understanding of how the university functions or, indeed, what a university is about. Rule-bound, but not rule-understanding. (HoD)

HR is generally most valued for its advisory/support role, particularly regarding disciplinary and performance issues:

HR has been my 'saviour' - I found myself managing a team that had been cobbled together by somebody else and there were a lot of issues and resistance in the team, I felt like I had been thrown in at the deep end but every time I needed help and they were there for me and enabled me to stay well and truly within the law. (FG2)

This reflects a perception of HR as one of the tools in the armoury of management, and thus a means by which some unpopular initiatives and difficult decisions are implemented, rather than the driving force behind those initiatives. There was recognition that academics want to be left to get on with their jobs and that to be valued HR needs to be enabling/facilitative, and in some circumstances invisible:

I would suspect that the average academic would be quite happy if there is the minimum of intervention, so for them the success of the HR department is just don't do anything in a sense, just recruit me, pay me, just make sure I've got promotion opportunities and I can go to my conferences, let me pursue my interests and I will do the best I can as academic for my students, so in a sense I think the less engaged and the more hands off the better possibly. (HR Director)

Status, visibility and influence of HR strategy

'Valuing' HR quite highly does not appear to necessarily translate into strong engagement with the HR strategy per se; similarly support for the HR team/function does not necessarily appear to translate into recognition of the requirement for a discrete strategy. We found some evidence that lack of engagement with HR strategy in particular, may not be a function of the perception of HR so much as

wider negative or cynical perceptions of strategy and managerialism. We asked all participants to respond to Guest and Clinton's assertion that for (some) academic staff, HRM in universities represents a form of 'creeping managerialism which has progressed much further in a number of the post-1992 universities' (2007: 6). There was a sharp and noticeable difference between the way that senior university leaders and HR Directors responded to this assertion, and the way that academic staff responded:

What do you mean creeping? It's RAMPANT here [whole group laughs] (FG3); vs:

I would challenge the notion that creeping managerialism is wrong, we have to manage we haven't got the resources to have the unfettered environment - I mean everyone remembers the halcyon days of the 60s and 70s and amazing amounts of money - we haven't got that freedom and we have to have a more managerial approach. (HR Director)

Some participants reported less familiarity and engagement with the HR strategy as such, but strong levels of engagement at the more tactical/operational level of policy and practice. Academic engagement with policy and practice appears to be more apparent where that policy and practice is related to the leadership and managerial challenges faced by those with management or leadership roles and responsibilities.

For academic staff then there appears to be a sense that having an HR strategy is not a necessary, or even desirable, precondition for a strong, effective and well regarded HR function. This may indicate disenchantment with the notion of strategy and its "managerial" connotations rather than a lack of support for the HR function. We therefore conclude that the level of support for the HR strategy is as much a function of the organisation's culture, tradition and structure as an indicator of support for the HR function.

Academic difference, values and motivations

We contend that academics are different from other staff in terms of their values and motivations, a view shared by HR Directors, who variously spoke in terms such as:

'getting inside the mind of an academic'; and,

You put an academic into the laboratory and you ask them to think outside the box to solve the next cure for cancer or something and they think outside the box, and then you are surprised when they find a way around the travel policy! Why are you surprised?... There are academic colleagues here who would rather have an article in Nature than the IP rights to penicillin I tried to explain to the Finance Director the other day that there is not a professor at this university who would go to X University for a 50% increase in salary yet they would go to Y for a 10% decrease in salary and if you can't understand that you've got a real problem.

This was challenged by some PVCs and senior academics who considered that the external orientation and deference to their discipline/peers of academics was not qualitatively different to that of their heads of service and senior administrators. Other senior academics expressed a degree of concern about HR Departments becoming populated by people who do not understand universities:

I have to say I have some concerns about this [the Ulrich business partner model] because I don't think HR issues in academic departments are functionally equivalent to HR issues in the service areas. And, I have to say, that I'm not sure that enough people in HR have much experience of academic departments and how they operate... leading academics is difficult for us as PVCs, and we are academics. (PVC)

HR influence on university KPIs

There was a general perception that HR ability to influence these can only be indirect (e.g. having right people, in right place (jobs) at right time; that academic staff who feel valued, supported and engaged are likely to create a more positive student experience. The underlying assumption was that HR can have a positive influence on processes that support recruitment, selection, and promotion and performance management but cannot actively influence content. There was also some recognition and frustration among HR Directors that their profession has been slow to provide metrics to evaluate and demonstrate HR added value:

I have been trying to provide a vehicle by which people become better leaders and managers but my knowledge of the deliverables around what makes a better teacher is non-existent... One of the failures that I have got is the inability to demonstrate what works there is no good evidence that I have managed to have a 10% improvement in X or Y, I can't show that and that's is a failure and a disappointment to me.(HR Director)

A more 'strategic' role for HR?

We asked if it was possible to envisage a more strategic role for HR that would enable it to have greater influence on key performance indicators. Where a wider, more strategic, role was envisaged, there was a tendency to focus on 'performance' issues, however potential was considered to be quite limited. Barriers identified included: the nature of the sector, and the nature of the academic, external constraints such as the legislative compliance workload, which takes up increasing amounts of HR time, and the current economic climate. All or any of these may result in the refocusing of HR resources on operational issues if institutions are forced to downsize, merge or restructure. Some PVCs expressly differentiated the role of staff development in terms of its potential for strategic contribution, but also observed that this was restricted by the fact that academics gain advancement by 'movement' and development of their external profile so may be less likely to defer to the internal institutional employer for career management.

The Ulrich Business Partner model was widely known and discussed by both groups of interviewees (HR Directors and PVCs). In some cases this was either the current model in use, or one that the institution was working towards. However, some HR Directors and PVCs questioned the appropriateness of the model to the HE environment and expressed some more general concerns about it, in particular whether the model encouraged over-focus on most high-profile of Ulrich's dimensions - strategic partner - at the expense of the others. There was also some concern about

how HR teams were being equipped to deliver the more challenging dimensions - strategic partner and change agent - which represent a significant departure from the traditional personnel focus.

Both of these latter points find resonance with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development view which stresses that Business Partnering requires a step change in HR's values, noting that:

'Many of today's interpretations of partnering could mean a diminution of Ulrich's 'Employee Champion' role. Some writers have commented how HR, with its increasing allegiance to strategic business partnering, is taking its eye off employee needs'.

(CIPD, 2010: <http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/corpstrtg/general/hrbusprtnr.htm>)

Finally, the importance of language was noted and some institutions are treading carefully:

We are not using the term business because in general people don't like it in the university sector.

(HR Director)

Academic/practitioner crossover

We questioned both HR Directors and PVCs about the extent of collaboration between the HR Department and academic HR specialists within their university. It appeared the collaboration was very rare, and a variety of reasons were given which included: academics not being invited to contribute, academics being invited to contribute, but not wishing to participate, academics interested in theory and not practice, HR not wishing to invite scrutiny which would delay implementation of pragmatic and timely solutions, academics consider it 'unseemly' to offer the advice within the institution that they may offer outside (to industry and commerce, for example):

Indeed, when you have the leading X professor in the UK working for you and you're talking about the X position of British institutions, you know, he can tell you whether you're right or wrong in three minutes. Interestingly enough, they are not very often consulted by universities, their own experts, in that sense. (PVC)

There is no evidence to me that 'Management' or 'Law' are managed any better because of their specialisation in management and law because of course they are specialisations are in the theory of it rather than in the practice of it. (HR Director)

There were some notable exceptions where HR Directors worked with and/or consulted with colleagues in HR related faculties/schools or vice versa but these collaborations were based upon existing relationships and informal networks. We also asked HR Directors for their views upon the potential value and application of a collaborative academic-practitioner model, citing this project as one such example. Their views were unanimously positive and favourable, for example:

I think it is a must I think if you don't do it from that joint perspective, people with different perspectives between them and seeing what's between them joins up the whole I think is the way to go. I think part of my struggle is that I am doing it [change management] from HR perspective not from that joint perspective and I think I would have a lot more credibility if I had a joint perspective.

6. Evaluation of the Project against the Project Aims and Objectives

Evaluation of the project has been an ongoing process, and the thinking behind the project evolved through conversations with the steering group, engagement with research participants and with the data. We recognised early on that some of the questions we would need to ask in order to ‘get underneath’ Guest and Clinton's findings might cause respondents to feel that they were exposing fissures between different groups in their institution. Alternatively it could be interpreted by some as an invitation to criticise the HR function, either of which would be potentially divisive and may have made institution leaders and HR Directors reluctant to participate. For the purposes of this project a working definition of ‘engagement’ was conceptualised in terms of the alignment and connectivity between HR and academic functions relating to leadership, staff development, recognition and reward. Early feedback from participants during interviews was that this definition is relevant to the HE sector and that the project was timely.

Since formulating the initial proposal our thinking has also developed in terms of the range of applications of the project. In particular, we recognise the value that the collaborative academic-practitioner partnership approach has for the emerging HRD agenda regarding role of ‘scholar-practitioner’ (Ruona & Gilley, 2009). This approach is also highly relevant in addressing the ‘practitioner-researcher divide’ in work and organisational psychology and the incongruence between strategic management research undertaken by academics and that used by practitioners (Anderson, 2007; Bartunek, 2007).

Research Aims and Objectives	Outcome
To explore the degree of engagement of academic staff with universities' HRM strategies and associated HR-driven initiatives.	Achieved
To ascertain reasons for the levels of engagement reported.	Achieved
To examine academic leaders' and HR Directors' perceptions of academic and research staff engagement with HRM initiatives.	Achieved
To explore the values and motives of academic and research staff in the development and/or implementation of HRM strategies	Achieved
To survey HoDs' general impressions and perceptions of HR function in the higher education sector and its influences upon academic staff and university performance	Achieved

The project was planned for completion in 2008/09 but was delayed by one year. Interestingly, the findings now have potentially greater salience in the rapidly changing political and economic landscape than they might have had a year ago. A breakdown of project expenditure has been submitted separately from this report and the project was delivered within budget.

7. Analysis of the Benefits of the Project

This project has given a worthwhile insight into the perception of HR departments within universities; participants raised some valid and interesting questions on the appropriateness of the business partner model to HEIs, relating primarily to the nature of universities and the variable nature of the academic. In particular, there is potentially useful information within this report that might enable HR Directors:

- to raise the credibility of their departments where they feel that this is necessary;
- help universities in terms of the 'realistic job previews' that they give to HR job applicants,.
- ensure that universities' HR functions have the support of as many key employees as possible;
- highlight on strategic objectives which are also within the traditional remit of HRM;
- develop innovative interdisciplinary 'academic-HR practitioner partnerships';
- generate opportunities for research and evaluation;
- enable HR practitioners to contribute to developing the theory and scholarship of HRM.

8. Reflecting upon the Research

We have reflected upon this small development project at many points; about our engagement with each other as collaborative researchers, academics and practitioners, and about what impact the findings will have for the sector. Our initial reflections were:

KW: The bridge between research and practice should be strong enough to support two-way traffic and wide enough to give academics and practitioners space to stop, look, listen, think and talk together, and create shared understandings and measures of effective collaboration.

JL: My primary interest is what research on bridging the academic practitioner divide can teach practitioners about the values and motivation of academic staff and the implications of this for leadership and management in higher education.

We remain curious about the lack of 'academic-practitioner crossover' that we found between university HR Departments and HR academics, and the barriers to collaboration that exist within institutions. There is a paradox in that knowledge transfer in HRM has an external engagement, to industry and commerce for example, but the same knowledge is not transferred and often fails to engage internally.

9. Actual and Projected Dissemination Activities

Actual project dissemination activities took place between 2009/10 as follows:

- January 2009: conference paper at British Psychological Society Occupational Psychology Conference
- June 2009: presentation at LFHE Holborn series

- July 2010: conference presentation at Institute of Work Psychology Conference

Academic/conference papers in preparation in 2010/11:

- 'An academic-practitioner research study of HRM strategies and academic engagement', *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*
- 'The leadership and management implications of using a HRM scholar practitioner model in higher education', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*
- 'Really working together in a changing world': proposal for workshop at Universities Human Resources Conference in May 2011
- 'The challenges and opportunities for integrating the work of HRM academics and practitioners: findings from a UK research study': proposal to European Group for Organizational Studies 2011 Colloquium, sub theme 45: *Reconstructing Universities as Organizations: Increasing Authority with Limited Strategic Capabilities*.

10. References

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Appendix 1: Findings from HoDs Survey

N = 32 Response Rate = 27%

Table A1 Perceptions of HR strategy

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements Options were: strongly disagree/somewhat disagree/somewhat agree/strongly agree/don't know			
	% overall agreement	% overall disagreement	% don't know
The university has a HR strategy which I have read	22	72	6
The HR strategy is clearly articulated	38	53	9
The HR strategy is formally communicated and discussed with all HoDs who have to implement related policy and practice on a day-to-day basis	47	53	0
The HR strategy is actively supported by the university's senior management team	19	66	15
HR policies and practices appear to support the wider strategy of the university	19	69	12

Table A2 Awareness of HR policies and practices

Which of the following HR policies and practices are you aware of being in place for ACADEMIC STAFF in your university? Options were: yes/no/don't know			
	% yes are aware	% no not aware	% don't know
Regular appraisal	94	6	0
A formal teaching qualification (e.g. PG Cert) is offered to academic staff appointed to their first teaching post	97	3	0
Management and/or leadership development for newly appointed HoDs	78	22	0
Leadership development for those in/aspiring to senior university positions	66	19	15
Regular staff attitude surveys	72	22	6
Systematic monitoring of equal opportunities practices	66	15	19
Support with non-work responsibilities e.g. child care facilities, flexible hours, financial planning, legal services etc.	44	31	25
Appropriate and transparent criteria for academic promotion	69	25	6
Succession plans e.g. to replace staff retiring or being promoted	31	47	22
Formal system of communicating the strategic priorities of the university to new staff	72	19	9
All staff systematically informed about the performance of the university	78	22	0

Table A3 Perceptions of effectiveness of HR practices

Please give your opinion, as far as you are able to, of the effectiveness of the following broad range of HR practices with regard to the way they are currently implemented in your university			
Options were: not at all effective/not very effective/fairly effective/very effective/don't know			
	% overall not effective	% overall effective	% don't know
Recruitment and selection of academic staff	16	81	3
Ability to attract top quality staff	47	50	3
Staff development for academic staff	19	78	3
Academic leadership development	28	66	6
University leadership development	31	53	16
Appraisal	12	88	0
Processes of employee involvement e.g. consultation, staff surveys	31	69	0
Succession planning	56	31	13
Reward systems	47	44	9
Managing poor performance	72	22	6
Discipline	53	38	9
Attendance/absence management	37	50	13
Ability to retain top quality staff	34	63	3

Table A4 Perceptions of HR function

Please give your opinion of the effectiveness of the HR function in your university with regard to the following.			
Options were: not at all effective/not very effective/fairly effective/very effective/don't know			
	% overall not effective	% overall effective	% don't know
Managing/minimising bureaucracy	66	34	0
Speed of response to requests from HoDs	28	66	6
Maintaining up-to-date HR-related information	22	62	16
Explaining application of HR policies and procedures	34	59	7
Providing useful advice to HoDs	28	69	3
Providing advice and help to academic staff	22	56	22
Contributing to the performance of the university	25	53	22
Initiating new ideas	38	44	18
Managing organisational change	47	37	16
Overcoming resistance to change	47	34	19
Developing creative solutions to people management issues	50	31	19
Ensuring quality of application of HR practices at local level	38	50	12

Table A5 Perceptions of HR influence upon university performance

Please indicate the extent to which you consider the HR function in your university is able to influence the following			
Options were: no influence/small influence/sizeable influence/large influence/don't know			
	% overall little influence	% overall larger influence	% don't know
The quality of teaching	84	13	3
The quality of research	88	9	3
The quality of senior university management and leadership	63	34	3
The ability to retain staff	59	38	3
The university's financial position	59	34	7
The quality of the HR function	32	66	12
The quality of student outcomes e.g. grades, completion rates, employment rates etc.	94	3	3