

Developing a Conceptual Model for Career Support for New Academics

Andy Adcroft
University of Surrey

David Taylor
University of Leeds

The aim of this paper is to develop a conceptual model which allows for an understanding of the general and discipline specific support needed by academics new to the profession. The approach taken is qualitative in nature and centers around a series of semi-structured interviews carried out with new academics and senior managers in two research-intensive business schools in the UK. The research suggests that there are four crucial dimensions to successful career support for new academics: managing expectations, career management, mentoring, and professional development. While it is important to offer good practice in each of these dimensions, this paper argues that it is the relationship between them, which determines the quality of career support offered. This paper offers a number of original insights into this issue and contributes to both the scant literature on career support for new academics and to practice with a model that may have applicability across a number of different settings.

Gappa, et al. (2005) suggest that “the continued vitality of the academic profession is ... of concern to a very large number of people and institutions” (p.32) and central to that vitality is the recruitment and development of new academic staff. Given the importance of new academic staff to the profession as a whole, the aim of this paper is to develop a conceptual model which integrates a number of different elements related to career support for newcomers to academia. While there is a significant body of literature, from both a general and discipline specific perspective, on various elements of academic career support, there is much more limited literature that (a) focuses on the specific needs of early career academics and (b) offers an approach which integrates the different elements together in a coherent manner. The origins of this paper lie in a project funded by the Business, Management, Accounting and Finance subject centre (BMAF) of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in the UK and the evidence presented in this paper draws on data generated from two research intensive institutions in the BMAF project.

The paper is organized in a fairly straightforward way. The first section reviews the literature on how new academics are introduced to academic work and the main challenges and management interventions faced. The section suggests that there are four key elements which must be addressed: the expectations of newcomers to academia; short- and long-term career management, especially in the relationship between teaching and research; the role of mentoring in the development of new academics; and professional development mechanisms, especially institutional requirements as far as postgraduate qualifications are concerned. The paper then briefly explains the methodological approach taken to gather the primary data. The evidence is qualitative in nature and comes

from over 20 interviews carried out with staff members at different levels across two university business schools. The next section presents the results of the data collection and, on the basis of the primary and secondary data presented, creates a simple conceptual model that integrates the different elements together. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the data and model and makes some suggestions for future research in this area.

Literature Review

In discussing the nature of academic work, Bath and Smith (2004) offer a perspective based on activities and classify academic work as a combination of “research, teaching or service” (p.10). In reviewing the literature, they offer a number of examples of activities undertaken by academics such as “learning about new developments in one’s discipline ... advising/mentoring/assisting colleagues ... teaching ... conducting research ... committee work” (p.11). While this activity-based approach is useful in introducing the variety of work involved in being an academic, it is less useful in explaining the culture and patterns of convention in which that academic work takes place. Green (2009) offers a different perspective and suggests that academic work should be thought of as being located in a discipline rather than as a set of activities and suggests that, while academics may be comfortable within their own discipline, they are “novices” in terms of contextualizing that into higher education generally (p.35). Bath and Smith (2004) argue that this means academics will have a sense of belonging to a discipline as a first point of professional reference and the outcome of this, according to Kember (1997), is that “many university academics hardly consider themselves ‘teachers’ at all, instead visualising themselves more as

members of a discipline” (p.255). The important issue for this paper is the extent to which this view of what an academic is and does chimes with the nature of an ever changing higher education sector.

For Trowler and Bamber (2005) the relationship between institutions and academics is one of “multiple games with competing goals and different rules” (p.79). Austin (2002), for example, argues that a combination of things such as student diversity, changing technologies, expanding expectations, and growing workloads are fundamentally changing the nature of academic institutions and that conceptualizations of academic work have yet to catch up. Marginson (2000) examines this issue from an international perspective and identifies four key drivers of change in higher education across much of North America, Europe, and Australasia: “globalisation ... the decline of funding ... slippage of collegial ideals ... deconstruction of academic professionalism” (pp. 23-24). One possible outcome of this is a “mismatch” between the traditional values of higher education and its “massification” (Trowler & Bamber, 2005, p.82). Asmar (2002), for example, suggests that the main challenge in all this is finding some kind of congruence between “academic cultures that have traditionally lauded and rewarded disciplinary research” and the realities of a much more dynamic sector. Honan and Teferra (2001) consider this in the context of the challenges facing the academic profession in the United States and raise two fundamental issues about, first, how new people can be attracted into faculty jobs and, second, how academic careers will progress in the future. Unless these tensions between traditional conceptions of academic work and the reality of a more competitive and dynamic sector are resolved, they argue, the outcome will always be unfulfilled expectations especially amongst those new to the profession.

In a five year study of junior faculty expectations, Olsen and Crawford (1998) suggested two reasons why expectations are important. First, they matter because they play a central role in the motivations of new academics and the degree to which there is a “person-organisation fit” (p.40) and, second, because “fulfilment of work expectations affects employee job satisfaction, work commitment and other job related attitudes which in turn affect job performance and, ultimately, turnover” (p. 39). In this context, there is a significant body of evidence that suggests that, across most academic disciplines, the primary motivation for joining the profession is intrinsic in nature and focuses on the “intellectual challenges and stimulation” which is traded off against negatives such as “income differentials compared to private practice” (Schenkein, 2001, p. 836). This point is reinforced by Gappa, et al. (2005), who suggest that an academic career is attractive because it allows people to “engage in

meaningful work” (p. 36). The broadly common set of motivations translates into a common set of expectations about academic careers, which are, again, similar across most elements of the sector. Austin (2002) sees this primarily in terms of scholarship and research and the expectation that there will be opportunities to pursue disciplinary interests within the context of “core values long associated with faculty work” (p.106). Honan and Teferra (2001) extend this to include other elements of academic work, especially teaching, and suggest that those new to the profession have expectations around “the number of courses taught and course preparation required” (p.193).

Adams (2002), in reviewing a number of previous studies, argues that there is frequently a mismatch between the expectations of new staff and the expectations of their host institutions. For example, while staff may view research as the core of their work, institutions have a much more rounded view of academic work, which also involves teaching and academic life in general (p. 5). This gives rise to two specific problems: the workload demands placed on new academics, and the need to identify, understand, and follow a set of unwritten as well as written rules. In terms of the workload issue, Broaddus and Feigal (1994) argue that new academics are much more vulnerable to “changing and conflicting demands” (p.1858), an assertion supported by Gappa, et al. (2005), who discuss this in terms of “ratcheting expectations for productivity” (p. 36). Dee Fink (1984) identified this as an issue some time ago by pointing out that those new to the profession will, inevitably, take longer to carry out tasks such as teaching preparation than more experienced colleagues and, more recently, Adams (2002) points out the surprise with which new staff are “overwhelmed” with the variety of demands placed on them which leaves “little time to establish their research programmes” (p. 7). This issue is further compounded by what Austin (2002) describes as institutional “mixed messages” (p. 108), whereby there is a contradiction between workload demands and career progression; teaching may take up an unexpected amount of time, but it is research that matters most to career progression. Trowler and Knight (2000) suggest that this is a cultural and behavioural problem within higher education institutions whereby the invisible is more important than the visible. Austin (2002) neatly sums up the expectations issue in concluding that many new academics “did not have a rich, full understanding of academic life and faculty careers” (p.109).

Perhaps the most significant example of such gaps in expectations lies in the relationship between teaching and research and the corresponding pressures that are placed on academics new to the profession who must find a way of managing the relationship. Brew (2003) argues that the root cause of the difficulties in these

areas lies in the tension between a “disciplinary research culture” and a “departmental learning milieu” (p. 11) in which the new academic finds him or herself and the artificial separation of the two academic activities. Lindsay, et al. (2002), for example, suggest that where they are separated out they will exist in “not so splendid isolation” (p. 325), and this is because of the close relationship between them. Elen, et al. (2007) argue that a combination of pressure on new academics to publish in high quality journals and increasing demands for accountability placed on universities will inevitably lead teaching and research to “become separate systems within the context of one organisation, the university” (p. 125); they will be treated as fundamentally separate activities rather than as activities which are “related through the common activity of scholarship” (Brew, 1999, p. 297). For institutions of higher education this becomes problematic as it may create inconsistencies in what the institution can say and what the institution can do. Austin (2002) identifies “messages, albeit ambiguous” (p.107) about what importance is attached to different activities as the university is pulled in different directions by the varying power and influence of its stakeholders. This is likely to be exacerbated in sectors, like those in the UK and Australia, with dual funding models which provide separate resources for teaching and research (Brew, 2003, p. 4).

When starting to build, develop, and manage a career, the new academic faces two specific challenges. The first challenge is the intellectual challenge of building a relationship between one’s teaching and one’s research in a sector that increasingly treats them as separate elements. The second more practical challenge is that of how to prioritize in both the short- and long-term in order to manage the competing requirements of individual career progression and institutional objectives and ambitions. The intellectual challenge is probably greatest in research intensive universities which, on the one hand, offer the opportunity for research driven teaching but, on the other, operate with mechanisms and structures that keep teaching and research apart. Elen, et al. (2007) suggest that the practical challenge of prioritization is difficult because while there is pressure on academics to deliver excellent teaching, research “still has a higher status” (p. 134). Jusoff, et al. (2009) reinforce this point and identify the phenomenon of “publish or perish” (p. 31), which is the real driver of academic promotions in research intensive universities. Brew (2003) suggests that this means that “we need to change reward systems for academics” (p. 16) in order to better reflect the real nature of academic careers and to provide transparency in what activities should and should not be prioritized. Austin (2002) raises a number of issues surrounding how new academics get the necessary support and

guidance which would allow them to negotiate these tensions and effectively manage their careers and, in this area, Reid and Petocz (2003) argue for a “flexible approach” which is best suited to the individual situation of the academic.

Boyle and Boice (1998) argue that central to any approach designed to help new academics manage their careers are the relationships, formal and informal, between experienced and inexperienced staff in an academic department; this raises the issue of mentoring. In general terms, there are two reasons why mentoring is seen as being an advantageous intervention. First, it is a mechanism that can deal with many of the expectation issues discussed earlier; Austin (2002) suggests that many newcomers to academia feel a sense of isolation and have a perception of a “lack of collegiality” (p. 99), which stands in contrast to the experience they expected and—across a number of studies—“the helpfulness of departmental faculty” (p. 104) was central in overcoming those perceptions. The second reason why mentoring has been so favored in the literature is that it is often a local and discipline-based activity. In this context, studies have “identified academic departments as the prime sites for educational improvements” (Mathias, 2005, p. 97) as this is where the best discipline based advice is available. Boyle and Boice (1998) argue that the benefits of mentoring include “improvements in risk taking, political savvy and specialised professional skills ... greater research productivity and career advancement” (p. 158).

Knight and Trowler (1999) suggested that the practice of mentoring in the UK was lacking behind that of other well-developed and established higher education sectors such as that of the USA and that, given the expansion of UK higher education, this is likely to become an ever more important issue. Smith and Bath (2004) provided further international evidence of the use of mentoring and suggest that the success or otherwise of mentoring schemes will differ on an individual mentor by individual mentee basis because there are frequently gaps between how schemes are conceived and how they are actually implemented. Despite this inconsistent data on the effectiveness of mentoring, Little (2005) explains the attractiveness of mentoring as a development intervention by suggesting that the “best possible environment” is created when teachers “combine their strengths” through a “natural support system” (p. 83). Barkham (2005) broadly supports this view and sees mentoring as an “investment in staff” (p. 331), which is, by its nature, a necessary and “long term” (p.343) activity which cannot be abstracted from the wider professional life of the mentee. This reinforces the points made by Knight and Trowler (1999), suggesting that mentoring on its own is not sufficient to develop new academics but rather has to be placed into the wider context of available professional

development opportunities. Thus, while mentoring has many advantages, there is also a body of evidence that suggests these benefits only occur when the mentoring program is “well managed and organised” (Mathias, 2005, p. 102) and when it is part of a wider and coherent set of mechanisms for professional development available to new academic staff.

Hubball and Poole (2003) suggest that the central point for the professional development of new academics will frequently be “structured programmes of study” (p.11) which, in the UK at least, often take the form of postgraduate qualifications in academic practice of one kind or another. The dominance of this approach to professional development is further explored by Kandlbinder and Peseta (2009) who have identified almost 170 such courses across the sector in the UK that are accredited by the HEA. The two most frequently examined issues in relation to such programs are 1.) the content and the extent to which it provides useful help for new academics, and 2.) the context and the extent to which the programs are part of a wider and more coherent package of professional development opportunities. In discussing content, Rowland (2001), for example, asks the provocative question “is the development of teaching and learning generic?” (p. 163) and thus contributes to the debate about the degree to which these programs must be discipline-specific rather than just set in a broad higher education context. More recently, Bamber (2008) has suggested that it is in the development of “practical skills” (p. 112) that the greatest value of these programs can be found, which at least implies that discipline specific elements are important. Warhurst (2006) develops this point further by suggesting that successful programs must involve elements of “belonging, experience, doing and becoming” (p. 114), suggesting that the content must be academically holistic and raising issues about the context in which such programs take place.

Ferman (2002) criticizes many approaches to program-driven professional development by arguing that many are simply bolted onto the duties of a new academic as part of a contractual or probationary agreement. Professional development in academia, Ferman argues, works better when academics are “supported rather than directed” (p. 155), as they are in the best position to identify the kind of development support they need. These needs will, according to Stes, et al. (2007), be primarily determined by the context in which the new academic works because it is the context that affects how much impact a program will have. Kahn, et al. (2008) identified four key contextual issues that influence a need for professional development and the subsequent impact of it: the program itself, the workplace setting, the institution in which it takes place, and the discipline of the new academic undertaking the program. This reinforces Ferman’s

(2002) work which concluded that “professional development is best approached not as something extra but rather in a directly work practice embedded way” (pp. 146-147). Postgraduate courses in academic practice that are compulsory for many new academics should, therefore, not be treated in isolation but should be considered as part of a wider suite of opportunities; Ginns, et al. (2008) identify the importance of linking these programs with other mechanisms such as mentoring and “collegial networks” (p. 184), and Hendry and Dean (2002) argue for a “variety of improvement procedures” (p. 180) to be in place for new academics.

In summary, this review of the relevant literature suggests that while there is a general consensus about the work and activities involved in being an academic, there is much debate and discussion about what it means to be an academic in the 21st century. For example, it has long been the case that academic work will inevitably involve some combination of teaching, research, and service, but this work now takes place in a period of uncertainty brought about by changes in how higher education is organized, managed, structured, and funded both nationally and internationally. One of the outcomes of these changes to the context of academic work is that new academics frequently enter into the profession with an inappropriate set of expectations about the nature of academia and the work that will be involved; much of the literature reviewed suggests new academics perceive the role of academics in a way that does not reflect the real nature of 21st century academia. The discrepancy between what is real and what is perceived results in tense relationships between the new career academic and his or her roles of researcher and teacher. These tensions can be managed and lessened through a number of different mechanisms and processes which may be available to new academics such as mentoring, formal programs of study, and ongoing and continuous professional development opportunities. The evidence also suggests that it is reasonable to conclude that effective career support for new academics is not only about individual measures and actions but is also about how they are linked together in a coherent manner.

The paper now moves from theory to practice and considers the support given to new academics across two business schools in the UK higher education sector. In making this shift, we aim to answer one fundamental question: What are the personal and discipline-specific development needs of new academic staff in research-intensive universities? In developing a robust answer to this question, the paper focuses on three issues. First, from an institutional perspective, what are the demands placed on new academics in the first four or so years of their academic careers? Second, what are the learning needs and preferences of new academics in research

intensive universities and how well are these needs and preferences aligned with the demands placed on them? Finally, what is being done to support new academics, and how are individual mechanisms and interventions linked together in a coherent manner? We will first discuss data collection.

Methodology and Data Collection

The primary data in this paper were generated as part of a HEA funded project into the personal and discipline-specific development needs of new academic staff in the subject areas covered by the BMAF subject center. This project involved a broad cross section of business schools from across the sector although the data in this paper is drawn from just two of those institutions. The two schools were chosen to form the basis of this paper as they are reasonably similar in terms of their teaching-research orientation which will make the drawing of robust, if tentative, conclusions possible. Both schools are full service schools and offer a range of academic programs from generalist and specialist undergraduate and masters level programs through to doctoral programs. In this paper, the schools will be referred to as BS and SM. In terms of size, BS is larger with almost 120 full time academic staff compared to less than 90 in SM but both schools have similar proportions of staff at professor, reader, senior lecturer, lecturer, and tutor/teaching fellow grades. The schools are also similar in terms of structure with subject-based divisions for the management of staff and a separate program management structure.

The data were collected through the use of semi-structured interviews carried out with 12 members of staff from each institution. Interviewees were broken down into three groups. The first group was senior staff with responsibility for the staffing strategies of the school and the line management of new academic staff. The second group were staff from the university with responsibility for the postgraduate qualification in academic practice or equivalent and the final group were new academic staff. For the purposes of this project, new academic staff are defined as staff within 4 years of their first full time academic appointment. Five senior staff from both schools were interviewed, the program directors of the postgraduate qualification in academic practice in both universities were interviewed, and six new academic staff in each school were interviewed. The new academic staff interviewed came from a variety of backgrounds. For examples, of the six new academics interviewed in SM, four had entered the profession either just before or just after they had completed a Ph.D. program, and the other two entered the profession following a number of years of industry experience. In BS, the profile of new academics was similar. Five of the new academics had

entered the profession just before or just after completing a Ph.D. program, although one of these also had significant experience of working in industry. The other new academic interviewee had joined from another academic discipline. All of the academics who entered the profession via a Ph.D. program had some experience teaching in higher education prior to their appointment as part of their Ph.D. program, but none of those who entered from industry had teaching experience. There was an equal split between males and females in both BS and SM among the new career academics interviewed.

The interviews in both SM and BS followed the same line of questioning; the main questions asked in interviews for the three groups of participants are identified in Table 1. An audio recording of each interview was made and detailed notes were taken during the interview. The purpose of the recording was reference only to clarify any issues that may not have been clear from the note-taking and, therefore, the interviews were not transcribed. All interviewees were invited to comment on how the interview data have been used in writing this paper in terms of both accuracy and interpretation. Each of the interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and was carried out by the authors of this paper. In analyzing the data gathered in the interviews, the issues identified in the review of literature were used to explicitly guide the analysis.

Results

The results from the interviews will be presented in line with the four dimensions of career support discussed earlier. Where quotes from the interviewees are presented, they will be done on the basis of whether the interviewee was a Senior Manager (SrM) or New Academic Staff (NAS) and in which school they work.

Expectations

Across BS and SM, there were a number of similarities in terms of where gaps in expectations appeared and how these gaps were dealt with and managed at both the School and University levels. Broadly speaking, the new academics interviewed came into their posts via either an academic route (involving a Ph.D. program) or a practitioner route where the new member of staff joined academia from industry. Where there were issues of expectations, they tended to center on the multi-dimensional nature of academic work and the academic culture in which staff were expected to build and manage their careers. In terms of the nature of academic work, senior managers in both schools stressed the importance of building a balanced portfolio of research and teaching excellence, for example “we can’t be a top business school just by research” (SrM5-

Table 1
 Questions in Interview Protocol

Senior Staff	Institutional Lead for PG Qualification	New Academic Staff
Tell me about the sort of work that new lecturers undertake in your department?	Please describe the learning and development support that is available for new lecturers in terms of initial professional development (IPD)	Tell me about the sort of work that you undertake in your department?
What sort of information is routinely available to new lecturers and who would make sure that they received the information?	Are new staff encouraged to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP) or equivalent?	Do you have the same access to facilities as other academic staff?
What contact have you had with your new lecturing staff?	The PgCAP in particular, who owns it? Who funds it? Who staffs it? Is it HEA recognised? How much does it reflect core university interests? Is discipline-specific development for new staff provided?	What sort of information is routinely available to new lecturers and who would make sure that they received the information?
What benefits/particular contributions do you notice arise from the employment of new lecturers?	What are the drivers and the constraints for new staff engaging in a PgCAP or other continuing professional development (CPD)?	What contact have you had with your line manager and your mentor?
What challenges and difficulties have you experienced relating to the employment of new lecturers?	Does your role involve you in the learning and development support available to new staff after IPD? If so please describe	What are the three things that you feel were most useful to you on first joining this Institution?
Please describe the formal/mandatory support offered to new lecturers	How do you promote opportunities and evaluate engagement in IPD or CPD?	What three things did you find most frustrating?
What about informal/voluntary/self-selected support – what might this include and what role does this play in supporting new lecturers?		What induction did you undertake when you joined this University?
To what extent are new lecturing staff involved in regular review and feedback processes		Do you feel that you need on-going support as a new lecturer?
Are there any other points relating to new lecturers that you would like to make that we have not covered in this interview?		What ongoing support were you offered?
		Were you allocated (or did you choose) a mentor (or equivalent support person)?
		What do you believe your mentor's role is?
		What CPD opportunities are available for new staff?
		Are you advised on what CPD to undertake and/or are any of the programmes/courses mandatory?

BS) and all senior staff in SM pointed out that staff were expected to be research active and make a significant contribution to the teaching of the School's programs. The focus of the teaching issue tended to be on the large cohorts of students in the undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Teaching responsibilities included lecturing to classes of over 200 students,

marking and giving feedback to large numbers of students, and fitting into a teaching team on an already established module. The problem of working within an academic culture for the first time was particularly acute for staff from a practitioner background, summed up neatly as "not knowing the landscape, both political and managerial" (NAS3-SM). Here the issue was

primarily the contrast between institutional demands to meet targets for research and teaching and the need for staff to take responsibility for their own career management and development.

While the two schools addressed these issues in different ways, what was common across both was the variety of mechanisms used; setting and managing expectations was not seen as something which could be done with a single intervention, for example, an induction program. As an illustration of this, senior managers in both schools were clear in terms of the qualities expected from new staff: “we are honest about what we want, identifying the capacity of an individual” (SrM2-SM) and “potential to be good at both teaching and research ... can’t sustain someone being weak in one of those two areas” (SrM2-BS). This clear view was then reinforced with mechanisms such as induction programs, the setting of objectives and targets, working with mentors and senior colleagues, informal support from within the faculty, the provision of a postgraduate qualification in academic practice or equivalent, and so on. The management perspective is summed up by one senior manager who suggested that “you do not know what you are going to get, but good induction and support ameliorates this” (SrM5-SM). The main issue is not so much what mechanisms are in place as how well those mechanisms work in managing the expectations of new academic staff. The multi-dimensional approaches taken seem to be, in the main, successful with new staff commenting “I know what I need to do” (NAS1-BS) and “expectations are set at the start, negotiated ... relatively fair and reasonable” (NAS3-BS). This is not to suggest that systems work perfectly all of the time. Some new staff, for example, commented that they still had some “feelings of isolation” (NAS6-SM), that colleagues did not “understand who or what I am” (NAS1-SM) and that they had been put “in at the deep end” (NAS1-BS).

Career Management

One of the most significant differences between BS and SM is in the probationary period; new academics in SM have to complete 3 years probation whereas the corresponding period in BS is 2 years. One of the main outcomes of this is that senior management in BS feel they are making decisions about career progression for new staff on the basis of potential rather than output and “two years is probably not long enough to judge someone’s research, but that is the university scheme” (SrM3-BS). Another difference between the two schools in this area is the basis for recruitment. In SM, “appointment is a research driven process” (SrM2-SM) whereas in BS recruitment of new staff is driven by “teaching requirements” (SrM2-BS). While there does seem to be a different imperative in the two schools in

terms of what drives the recruitment of new staff, the common element between them is that new staff often struggle with managing the relationship between teaching and research. This would seem to stem from two causes. First, research is often seen as being the real driver behind career progression and, second, new academics face considerable demands on their time with large workloads caused by preparing classes for the first time. All of the new academics interviewed in SM either explicitly or implicitly suggested that the encouragement to develop a research profile was a key factor in joining the school, which reflects the School objective of “looking to replace non-doctoral staff with new staff who have Ph.D.s” (SrM2-SM). At BS, the importance of research was often seen as an “unwritten rule” (NAS1-BS, NAS3-BS) and that what was needed was “more emphasis on research to fast track your career” (NAS1-BS).

In supporting new staff to deal with the relationship between teaching and research, both schools emphasized the importance of staff taking responsibility to develop their own strategies to manage their careers in these areas. There are three broad areas of agreement across the two schools. First, while it is recognized as an issue in terms of heavy workloads, senior managers were also clear in pointing out the resource constraints that the schools operate under within their respective universities. “Creating more discretionary time for people is very difficult” (SrM6-BS) was a common view and this originates primarily in the demands placed on business schools to recruit large numbers of students. Second, research was viewed very much as an “individual enterprise” (SrM2-SM) in which the new academic is the primary actor and, thus, needed to work out strategies to manage him or herself. “Creativity and imagination” (SM4-SM) are required from new academics who, if successful, will be able to say “I learnt how to do it myself” (NAS2-BS). Finally, the role of the schools is to provide support that can be accessed by new staff as and when they feel it necessary. Outcomes for all staff will be the same, “the objective criteria are your publications” (NAS3-BS), but how staff reach these outcomes will depend on the formal and informal support they access. In this, the main difficulty stems from the view of research as an individual activity; “different people give different advice” (NAS1-BS) and “different academics have different strategies” (NAS4-BS).

Mentoring

While BS and SM took different approaches to the mentoring arrangements for new academic staff, there were two issues that were common to both schools. First, both senior managers and new academic staff placed great importance on the mentoring schemes in

place and, second, in both schools informal elements of collegiality were seen as being very important in career support, especially among new academic staff. The difference in approach between the two schools centers on the degree of specialization of the mentor assigned to a new academic. In BS, new academics are assigned two mentors, one for teaching and one for research, whereas in SM new academics are assigned a senior colleague who has responsibilities to offer guidance and support in both teaching and research. In both schools the mentoring systems are clearly linked to the probation scheme. In terms of setting objectives, mentors have a significant role; “probation is a strong process with targets carefully selected by negotiation to reflect the skills and career position of the individual” (SrM2-SM) and the mentor has a key role in the new academic meeting those targets through “encouragement and advice” (SrM6-BS). Outside of the formal arrangements, new staff in both schools identified collegiality as a crucial element in the support gained early on in their careers: “good to have people you can go to” (NAS3-BS), “the open doors of colleagues” (NAS3-SM), “getting advice from senior people is invaluable” (NAS4-BS), “the openness and communication from colleagues” (NAS2-SM).

Professional Development

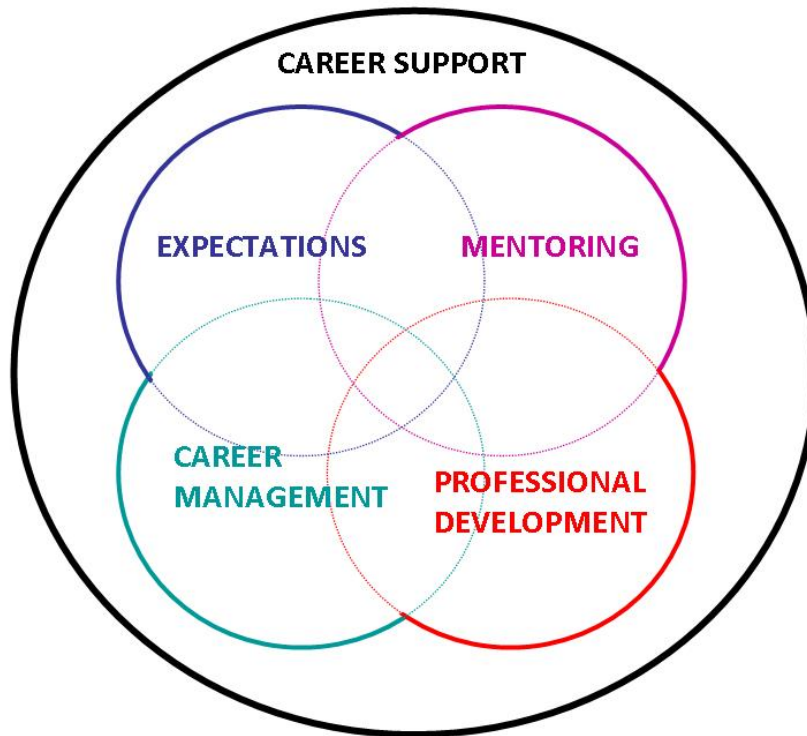
The formal starting point for professional development for new academics in BS and SM is the centrally provided postgraduate qualification in academic practice. While there are some similarities in provision between the two universities, there are also a number of key differences. In both BS and SM completion of the program is compulsory; in SM it is an integral part of the three-year probation system, whereas in BS it is a contractual requirement for all new academic staff with limited or no teaching experience. What are more significant are differences in scope and focus. In SM, new academics are required to undertake a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP). This is a two-year 60-credit program in which the first year consists of a number of taught elements and the second year is built around the completion of a reflective portfolio of work. In terms of scope, the PGCAP aims to introduce new academics to all elements of academic work and so goes beyond teaching and covers areas such as research supervision and pastoral support. In contrast, BS offers a shorter and more focused program, the University Teaching Award (UTA) which concentrates on teaching issues for new academic staff. The UTA is a 40 credit program consisting of two modules, “Teaching” and “Enhancing Your Teaching.”

Although the approaches taken are different across the two schools, there are similarities among the

attitudes of staff to this mechanism for staff development. There was a general consensus about the benefits that accrue to staff who take the PGCAP / UTA and who have no real teaching experiences prior to taking up their appointment. On the PGCAP, a typical comment was “it is a programme to teach learners, i.e. previous Ph.D. students or practitioners, how to teach” (NAS2-SM) and on the UTA a typical comment was “the UTA is the only way for people to dedicate time to teaching” (NAS5-BS). The relationship between the PGCAP, the probation system, and SM was seen by most new academics as a strength of the program but this was much less evident at BS, which, perhaps, reflects the contractual rather than probationary requirement of the UTA. There were also similar criticisms of the two programs across the two schools. The first of these criticisms focused on the requirement for all new staff to undertake these programs, even those who had teaching experience already: “it is like taking driving lessons after having been driving for nine months” (NAS3-SM). Where this was the case, the value of the program was questioned: “It took time away from doing important things” (NAS3-BS). The final common issue across the two schools regarding these programs was the balance between general and discipline-specific content. Essentially, both programs are general programs and it is up to the individual participant to tailor his or her experience to his or her own disciplinary needs, which was not always seen as being successful: “there is some thought that the programme would benefit from being more discipline oriented” (SrM3-SM).

The PGCAP and UTA are clearly important mechanisms for staff development, but staff in both schools also stressed the importance of them as a starting point for continuous professional development (CPD) rather than an end point or self-contained dimension. The way in which this has been developed across the two schools is a reflection of the view that staff must take responsibility for their own development and the school or university’s role is simply to provide opportunities for this. In general terms, BS seems to be more successful in this, as one new academic pointed out: “if academics need support, in the university they can find it” (NAS4-BS). In SM, on the other hand, ongoing CPD post-PGCAP is somewhat patchy. This is partially explained by the stand-alone nature of the PGCAP as a self-contained program with a resulting need for follow up activity: “the development of a programme of CPD has been identified as a priority for the future” (SrM3-SM). It may also be influenced by the informal and collegial dimensions to staff development which predominate post-PGCAP and, for the new academic, this can simply be about being in the right place at the right time: “the support for new staff post-probation depends very much on the subject group you work with” (SrM1-SM).

Figure 1
Elements of Career Support for New Academics



Discussion and Conclusions

The relationship between the data presented and the underlying theory discussed earlier suggests that there is robustness to the findings despite the qualitative nature of the study and small sample size. In general terms, the data are consistent with the existing literature in a number of key areas. One of the key conclusions about expectations from the established literature is that many new academics are not fully aware of the demands of academic work (e.g., Austin, 2002; Dee Fink, 1984), especially with regard to the demands of teaching for the first time. Where there were issues in expectations in BS and SM, this was the area they tended to focus on with large class sizes frequently being cited as the main cause of the problems. Following from this, Elen, et al. (2007) and Brew (2003) suggested that the main tension for new academics was in the relationship between teaching (which takes up a great deal of time) and research (which is essential to career progression in research-intensive universities) and, again, both new academics and senior managers in the two schools identified this element of career management as being important. In managing this tension, staff in BS and SM commented

that formal mentoring and informal relationships with senior members of faculty were crucial in finding strategies to reconcile teaching and research commitments, which fits in neatly with much of the literature in this area, especially Boyle and Boice (1998) and Mathias (2005). Finally the need for postgraduate programs in academic practice to be embedded in the work of academics and to be part of a coherent package of CPD opportunities was clear in the literature (e.g., Ferman, 2002; Hendry & Den, 2002; Hubball & Poole, 2003) and the success of this at BS and priority attached to it at SM are consistent with this view.

In developing this literature further, the contribution this paper makes is to suggest that career support for new academics is not just about the four dimensions discussed but rather to suggest that its effectiveness is likely to be significantly determined by how these four elements are linked together. Figure 1 presents this argument in diagrammatic form and argues that the distinction between expectations, career management, mentoring, and professional development must necessarily blur as they merge into each other. For example, in BS, new academic staff are recruited into a research led school on the basis of teaching

requirements, which sometimes created problems in workload management and career progression. These problems are managed through a variety of different mechanisms such as the teaching-specific UTA and the provision of a teaching mentor; formal and informal relationships that helped staff develop strategies to manage workloads and the teaching-research relationship; and a suite of CPD opportunities post-UTA which staff could access as and when they needed. While SM may be more research informed than research led, recruitment of new staff was primarily carried out on the basis of research and this was reflected in the senior colleague mentor scheme and the more broadly based PGCAP. In both of these cases, it is possible to isolate individual elements of excellent practice, but the point should not be lost that it is how these elements of practice of linked together and integrated which delivers favorable outcomes.

If new academics are crucial to the continued health and vitality of the profession as a whole, the major implication of this paper is that both academic departments and academic development units must find ways to create integrated career support whereby all elements provided at the local and institutional levels are closely linked together. In making this suggestion, we recognize that there are two limitations to this particular paper. First, the data set is limited in terms of breadth, as it has been gathered from just two universities and, second, it does not reflect the diversity of institutions across the sector. While we would make the obvious point that the aim of the paper was to examine career support for new academics in research-intensive business schools, we do recognize that new academics are important to the profession across all parts of the sector, so we would make two suggestions for future research in this area. First, the evidence base can be extended nationally and internationally through both quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to judge whether the experiences and practices in BS and SM are typical or otherwise. Second, further studies involving a more diverse range of university business schools can be carried out to test whether there is wider applicability of this model to the rest of the sector.

In terms of practice, we would suggest there are two significant implications of the research carried out in this paper. First, both institutions in the study demonstrate that expectations can be managed with effective career support, and they also show that expectations should be set at the earliest opportunity, which means during the recruitment process. In research-intensive universities, the recruitment process naturally focuses on the aspirations of new academics as far as research is concerned and the extent to which those aspirations match those of the institution, but given the changes currently underway in the sector (Marginson, 2000) recruitment processes need to better

reflect the non-research demands for teaching and service placed on new academics. The second implication is that much work can be done in terms of embedding formal career support in the professional life of new academics, especially in terms of postgraduate qualifications in academic practice. Both the theory and evidence presented in this paper suggests that different disciplines have their own specific needs in terms of developing teaching skills and this needs to be reflected in the provision on offer. One of the key questions here, which can probably only be answered on an institution-by-institution basis, is whether academic schools or central academic development departments are best placed to achieve this. There are, therefore, a host of both practical and theoretical possibilities not only in terms of what support can be given to new academics but also to how that support can be identified, examined, and disseminated.

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ANDY ADCROFT is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Management at the University of Surrey. He is also a Faculty Scholar in the University's Centre for Educational and Academic Development.

DAVID TAYLOR is the Director of Teaching Quality in the Business School at Leeds University.