The Management of Academic Workloads:
Social and Technical Dynamics

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Declaration

This thesis is submitted under the University of Salford regulations for the award of a PhD degree by research. Some findings during the research together with details associated with the research process itself have been published in refereed academic journals and in refereed conference proceedings prior to this submission and are detailed in Appendix Four.

The candidate was the sole researcher on a Leadership Foundation project on the Management of Academic Workloads and this work provides the basis for Chapters 2-9, which have been adapted and extended by the later research in Chapters 10-14 in order to capture relevant information for this doctoral study.

The researcher declares that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree of qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.
List of Abbreviations

AHRC = Arts and Humanities Research Council
AUT = Association of University Teachers
CMU = Coalition of Modern Universities
EB = Enterprise bargaining
FTE = Full time equivalent
GHQ = General health questionnaire
HEFCE = Higher Education Funding Council for England
HERA = Higher Education Role Analysis
HoD/S = Head(s) of Department/School
NATFHE = National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
PVC = Pro Vice Chancellor
RAE = Research Assessment Exercise
UCU = University and College Union
UUK = Universities UK
VC = Vice Chancellor
WLA = Workload allocation
Abstract

The focus for this thesis has been on the management of academic workloads, stimulated by surveys highlighting high levels of stress in the sector. To get some appreciation of the subject and its context a literature synthesis was conducted revealing that the subject has received little critical attention. As a consequence the research methodology involved theory building, rather than hypothesis testing, and Grounded Theory has been used for this. Case studies were conducted in eight diverse universities involving interviews of a range of staff in each. Two non-educational case studies were also carried to get wider insights into potential approaches. In all fifty-nine interviews were conducted.

Case and cross case analyses were carried out on particular aspects, these were then mapped, using cognitive mapping, to give a visual representation of the relationships at work. A second more focused literature synthesis was carried out to widen understanding of the findings and from there an initial model was developed for workload allocation processes. This model was re-examined using the case study material and through a further longitudinal case study. Conclusions were then drawn, highlighting contributions to theory, practice, and methodology, together with recommendations for future work.

The main elements of the findings are that practice in the sector varies considerably between and within UK universities, but that drawing on the elements of good practice seen it has been possible to propose the features of a broad, generic approach. This approach stresses the importance of both the social and technical aspects of the issue and the necessity of actively addressing the reciprocal relationships between individual, department and university levels.
1 Introduction

The context of the HE sector is volatile and complex with many pressures within it, not only from resource issues, but from factors such as the move to a mass market, tuition fee increases, and pressures from quality review systems, such as the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). There is at least an apparent tension between these pressures and the notion of academic autonomy and negative feelings about increasing bureaucracy and managerialism. The challenge for workload allocation systems then is to support individual needs and organisational goals without adding to the administrative burden. The allocation of staff time operates within a complex set of relationships. In terms of its administration it has a bearing on management issues and leadership styles. It also relates to issues of trust and institutional justice. Stress is another important aspect that effective and equitable work allocation may help to mitigate.

Recent large studies in the sector (Kinman G and Jones F 2004) have shown that almost half of respondents found their workloads unmanageable, similar results can also be seen in an Australian survey (Winefield et al. 2002) and other Australian studies also show increases in working hours over the years and a general decline in job satisfaction (McInnis C 1999). The literature reveals the complex relationships with many other factors at play such as role conflict and the degree of autonomy the individual experiences in their work life. Much research has also been carried out into the nature of the response to the various stressors, including the effect on wellbeing, mental and physical health, and reactions such as withdrawal and cynicism about the institution (Taris T et al. 2001).

The aim of the research then was to focus on processes and practices surrounding academic workload allocation. Through identifying typical practices as well as identifying interesting alternatives it was hoped to collate views on the various

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1 The term "workload allocation" has been used for the policy and modelling aspects of the process, but not directly at strategic decisions such as differential allocations between disciplines. Further, the term "workload balancing / tuning" relates to the more individualised / negotiated dimensions of the process the importance of which clearly emerges in this study.
strengths and weaknesses of these approaches, as well as clarifying the contextual and related factors that might need attention. Through this process it is hoped to identify potential approaches that would promote more equitable loads for individuals as well as providing synergies for institutions.

1.1 Summary of work

A summary will now be given to help provide an overall framework of the work and how the parts interact together. An initial synthesis (chapter 2) revealed that specific material on the subject was sparse, this had implications for the methodology (chapter 3) that discusses the various ontological and epistemological approaches and argues that Grounded Theory (Glaser B and Strauss A 1967) is the optimal way to build theory in this instance. From there the fieldwork (chapter 4) discusses the choices behind the selection of the sample and the development of the semi-structured questionnaire. Following fieldwork interviews and their recording, ‘open coding’, which is the naming/classifying of main phenomena (nodes) that emerged, was carried out using the principles of Grounded Theory (chapter 5). From this coding case studies were written (chapter 6) for each university based on an analytical framework that reviewed and simplified some of the coding based on areas that were heavily populated or felt by interviewees to be important. In practice this entailed little change from the initial coding structure, mainly involving the inclusion of a few of the ‘properties’ (a type of sub node) of the allocation process node.

Cross case analyses were then written from the case studies (chapter 7), combining the findings in all the universities in relation to individual phenomenon, such as equity. Thus the case studies created a narrative about individual institutions, whilst the cross case focused on the issues across all the institutions. The next step was to look at the relationships between them and a more pictorial representation seemed appropriate for this. To this end then cognitive maps were constructed (chapter 8) that showed how the various phenomena were related to each other. This process of working on the relationships, the contexts, actions and consequences (C/A/C) that work between phenomena, is called, in Grounded Theory, axial coding. A method was developed to facilitate this that involved constructing a framework from the interview data of the C/A/C for each phenomenon that could then be entered in to cognitive maps (chapter
9). This led to a discussion of the relationships culminating in an overall discussion of the context and allocation processes (chapter 10).

From the above discussion of the research fieldwork there were three main interrelated areas that could benefit from reconsideration from a theoretical viewpoint, these were: policy, evolving the allocation process, and lastly the practical implications of implementation. These three areas reflected the emergent focus operating between the university, heads of academic units and individual members of staff. So another focused literature synthesis that related the theory back to the findings was done that linked these areas to the three perspectives (chapter 11).

A model was developed (chapter 12) that incorporated the findings, fieldwork and theoretical material, encompassing both the social and the technical dimensions at work between these three levels of university level, Head of Department/School level\(^2\) and individual. The development and testing of this model involved a further case study chosen specifically because its allocation processes involved many of the recommended technical approaches and because these had occurred some while previously thus allowing a longitudinal study of the process. Further, again to assess the model, the case studies were used to plot their attributes against the model, using a framework recording positive and negative contribution, using comparables not absolute values. This looked across all the data at the implications for the three levels considered.

The study was then summarised (chapter 13) with the concluding chapter considering the contribution to knowledge in theory, practice and methodology; plus recommendations for further work (chapter 14).

\(^2\) These heads of academic units, departments and schools, have been labelled as HoD/S. The use of the word department has been used generically on occasions to cover these academic units.
2 Literature Synthesis

As Hart (1998) suggests a literature synthesis helps with an understanding of the research area, through an understanding of what has been done before, the areas neglected and the variables concerned. Other aspects might include identifying the relationships between the variables, the context of the topic, and identifying the various methodologies used to address these issues. Overall general aims of the process would be to increase understanding of the issue concerned and through evaluation and an analytical synthesis of the work of others to come to a better understanding of the work required and the contribution possible in terms of original work.

This synthesis started through a general search on the area of the higher education sector. Through this other areas were uncovered as the search broadened and other topics came into focus. This process also helped to inform the methodology which is dealt with separately in chapter 3.

So the synthesis follows the search path, starting with contextual issues, local and more general. The local context was informed by two large surveys on academics, their work, and stress related outcomes. The general area included literature that contributed to an understanding of the overall context of higher education. This work led into leadership issues, looking at trust and communication aspects before turning to more detailed work on the specifics of resource allocation.

2.1 Studies Relating to Workload in HE and Stress.

One of the biggest studies on stress and work life balance for UK academic staff is Kinman and Jones’ survey *Working to the Limit* (2004) commissioned by the Association of University Teachers. In this they look at job stressors, (work demands or variables) in relation to stress, that is the individual experience of these challenges. They also measure supportive features of the work environment and the area of work life balance. Questions are also set to calibrate the main indicators of stress, job satisfaction (and turnover intentions) and physical and mental health. These findings are then related to strains, which may be defined as the maladaptive response to stress (Dua J 1994) and this might be emotional, physical or psychological. They use
Kinman’s earlier (1998) study, *Pressure Points*, to benchmark results. Other studies have also been commissioned by the AUT, such as that of Court (1996) on *The Use of Time by Academic and Related Staff*. In this diaries are used as the means to study both work loads and distribution of activities. The findings are similar to the Kinman (1998) survey, with growth in workloads and with many hours worked outside of ‘office hours’. However the actual notion of the latter is hard to define as academic staff in the ‘old’ universities do not have a nationally agreed working time arrangement, the standard contract for the post 1992 universities usually run with a limit of eighteen hours scheduled teaching contact time a week, with 550 hours per thirty-six week teaching year.

The Kinman and Jones’ research (2004) involves a questionnaire sent to a random selection of 5,000 academic and allied staff within higher education institutions in the UK. The response rate is 22%, which means over a thousand returned questionnaires, but raises issues of the representativeness of the sample. Their selection of stressor variables reflects the quite wide agreement in the studies reviewed. These stressors include: workload, work control, role conflict, job security, relationships at work, and organisational culture. The questions consist of a range of self-report measures covering these aspects. To measure psychological wellbeing a general health questionnaire (GHQ variable) (Goldberg D 1981) is used to assess general levels of distress. This is measured in relation to various theoretical frameworks such Siegrist’s Effort-Reward Imbalance Model (2000), that predicts that a combination of high effort and low reward at work results in adverse health effects. It also has a scale that assesses the personal characteristics of excessive commitment to the job that are likely to influence feelings about effort and reward (p193).

Some of the most pertinent findings of Kinman and Jones’ work (2004) in relation to this study include a 69% response agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement ‘I find my work stressful’. This finding is very similar to the 1998 survey. Both volume and diversity of tasks are problematic for staff, so that almost 42% of academic staff are found to regularly undertake over a fifth of their work during the evenings and weekends in order to cope with high workload (Kinman G and Jones F 2004) (p19). Concerns expressed to the researchers about the problems of satisfying conflicting roles are apparent in the survey responses, where 65% indicated that they had too
much in the way of administrative paperwork, with quality assurance procedures one of the most commonly cited causes of stress by respondents. Further, 32% of respondents claim that they have insufficient time to prepare for classes (p20) and only 37% feel positively happy with the quality of their research (p21).

Most employees feel that they have some control over what they do at work and how they did it. However there is a feeling that these levels of control have been slowly eroded to meet the demands of quality systems. Both those who reported greater job control and those reporting clearer boundaries between home and work have higher levels of job satisfaction and physical and psychological health. One of the most interesting aspects of the report is the interconnection between the issues. For example staff cite the many interruptions at work as stressful (Kinman G and Jones F 2004) (p46), in the 1998 study (Kinman G 1998) this is one of the most frequently mentioned sources of pressure. It is one of the reasons staff choose to do certain tasks requiring concentration at home. The study then reveals the implications this has on the blurring of boundaries between home and life, and the effects on the psychological wellbeing of employees, with 65% reporting that work is still on their mind when they go to bed. Yet large general studies done in Ireland on employees and employers find that the benefits of managing work/life balance to both, in terms of job satisfaction, morale, productivity and loyalty, outweigh the constraints and costs (National Framework Committee for Work/Life Balance Policies 2005).

The report by Kinman and Jones however (2004) finds that only 58% of respondents are moderately satisfied with their jobs in general. However, in terms of intrinsic satisfaction, such as intellectual stimulation and teaching and supervision of students, 72% experience satisfaction from their work. In contrast, for extrinsic satisfaction, such as hours of work and promotion prospects, 54% express dissatisfaction. Despite academics being satisfied with some aspects of their work, almost one half indicate that they have contemplated leaving the profession. The main reasons cited are insecurity of employment, work overload, stress, bureaucracy, poor work-life balance, and few prospects for promotion. Strain indicators measured in the study reveal that fifty per cent of the sample have borderline levels of psychological distress. This finding, that shows no significant difference with the 1998 study (Kinman G), corresponds with results of a similar survey in Australia discussed below. Further the
figure is ‘considerably higher than that reported by most other occupational groups’ (Kinman G and Jones F 2004) (p44). The results, fall well short of the standards planned by the Health and Safety Executive benchmark (HSE). For example, the figure of 38% of staff indicating that they find their work manageable is less than half the minimum of 85% set by the HSE draft standards for stress (Cousins R et al. 2004). Findings from the National Statistics Labour Force Survey (Jones R et al. 2006) show that the highest prevalence of stress related illness are in teaching and research professionals (p.xxv). However the Kinman and Jones’ report also finds that in terms of the actual number of hours worked per week there has been a reduction in those reporting working typically over 45 hours. In 1998 the figure was 66%, but in 2004 it had reduced to 59%. Further the various psychological wellbeing measures (GHQ) have surprisingly low correlations (0.12) with the average number of hours worked in term time. Their study suggests that over the past six years staff may have become ‘acclimatised’ (Kinman G and Jones F 2004)(p5) to increasing demands and also suggests that support from various sources is at a slightly higher level. However correlations of GHQ to over-commitment (0.54), perceived stress (0.51), work family conflict (0.50), and job satisfaction (-0.55) are more expected findings.

Most pertinent to this study is that in answer to an open question on improvements to minimise work related stress one of the most commonly mentioned items is ‘the need for a managed allocation of workloads and transparency in workload planning’ (Kinman G and Jones F 2004)(p47). The survey does have interesting findings and gives a longitudinal view of the profession in relation to work and stress. However the low correlation between wellbeing measures and hours worked would benefit from greater explication.

Another ongoing study has been carried out in Australia for the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (McInnis C 1999). This survey, with 2,609 responses from fifteen universities, has a relatively high response rate of 58.4%. The findings are that over the last five years more than half respondents felt that their hours had substantially increased, with 40% of staff working over fifty hours a week. Satisfaction levels had dropped, both from factors such as pay and job security, but also in relation to the opportunity for staff to pursue their own academic interests. Findings on stress also prove interesting with higher proportions of females.
experiencing this. This topic is central to another survey of Australian universities (Winefield A et al. 2002) commissioned by a union, the National Tertiary Education Union, (NTEU). This looks at very similar issues to Kinman and Jones’ study (2004). This Australian survey is of seventeen universities and a representative sample of 8,732 staff, both academic and general, but with only a 25% response rate. The two main indicators of stress and wellbeing used are psychological strain, again using the General Health Questionnaire indicator (Goldberg D 1981), and job satisfaction. The aim of this study is to identify staff groups with the highest levels of strain and /or lowest levels of job satisfaction and to identify predictors of stress and wellbeing.

The study uses three predictors of individual stress centred around: demographic factors, personal factors and workplace factors. The analysis indicates that the strongest predictors of psychological strain are personal factors, such as hardiness and negative affectivity, followed by workplace factors, such as job insecurity, work pressure, autonomy and procedural fairness. Using the indicators there are high levels of psychological strain, with 54% of academic staff being at risk. The level of job satisfaction for academics is 53%. Most dissatisfaction occurs with the way the university is managed, and 35% are dissatisfied with their working hours, which are on average fifty hours a week for the academic staff. Further, eighty-one per cent of academic staff report having to work after hours either most days or at least one or two days a week. The best predictor of job satisfaction is found to be procedural fairness. That is, the fairer the procedures the more satisfied academics are with their jobs, further it is an important predictor of commitment to the university. Significantly only 19% see senior management as trustworthy, although 53% have trust in their Head of Department. These figures are similar to the results in Kinman and Jones’ (2004) study where the question was phrased in terms of “happiness” with the level of support from more senior and line managers respectively (p52).

The Australian study (Winefield A et al. 2002) findings utilise three theoretical frameworks. In sum they use firstly Karasek’s (1979) Demand – Control theory that suggests that high stress jobs combine high demands and low control. Karasek uses data from two large surveys, one in Sweden, the other in the US, to test the hypothesis that strain results not from a single aspect of the work environment, but from the joint effects of demands and decision latitude. He describes this as an interactive
relationship and one that allows the true source of strain to be overlooked. Another feature that he sees is that of ‘disappearance’ where the effects of demands might be cancelled out by decision latitude. Although he admits that his findings take no account of personality issues or stress outside of work, he suggests that in both countries it is workers with high demands and low decision latitudes that experience exhaustion, nervousness or depression. In contrast jobs with high demands and high control over judgements at work get high satisfaction ratings. However jobs that are both low on decision making control and demands are found to be unsatisfactory, with problems such as apathy experienced. The implications of this study are to suggest the importance of decision making in relation to strain. These findings may be pertinent to the study of academics that have traditionally enjoyed high levels of autonomy. However as the recent AUT survey (Kinman G and Jones F 2004) suggests, changes such as “complying with internal and external quality procedures are extremely onerous and have effectively ‘de-professionalized’ academics”(p22).

The second measure the Australian survey (Winefield A et al. 2002) used is Siegrist’s model of Effort-Reward Imbalance Model described above. Lastly they use the Person-Environment Fit Model (French J et al. 1982), that suggests that job stress can be a consequence of a mismatch between the worker’s ability or expectations of a job and its requirements and incentives. The research of French and his colleagues looks across a variety of job types (blue and white collar workers, including professors) and distinguishes between objective and subjective variables that are measured using both objective observations (such as intelligence tests and physiological tests) and subjective perceptions. A high degree of correspondence between objective and subjective stress is revealed. One of the many hypotheses used

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3 Blix A, Cruise R, Mitchell B and Blix G (1994). "Occupational Stress Among University Teachers." Educational Research 36(2): 157-169. used the Person Environment Fit Model and looked just at academic staff in California State University. However in relation to the misfit element she looked only at the motivation aspect and the corresponding job rewards in relation to stress and did not include the other aspects such as ability. The findings showed a good fit between rewards and motivation but were high in stress (66% experience it at least 50% of the time). Blix reported that it was impossible to test the hypothesis as there was insufficient numbers experiencing misfit. However findings of low misfit/ high stress would not appear to fit with the PE fit model but could be explained by the use of fewer variables than the model demands.
in their study is that the ‘greater the subjective misfit between the person’s subjective abilities and goals and the corresponding job demands (e.g. workload and complexity) the greater the psychological and physiological strain’ (French J et al. 1982)(p6).

Misfit includes too much or too little ability or supplies (motives to meet needs) and the subjective response to this situation will be defence mechanisms that cause strain. The implication from the findings of their research is that ‘intervention designed to improve person-environment fit must be individualised’ (French J et al. 1982)(p114).

The Australian (Winefield A et al. 2002) study supports this hypothesis in that the degree of misfit when calibrated with strain outcomes is found to provide a powerful explanation. More generally when the researchers compare their results with all of these three theories they conclude that findings on strain are consistent with the predictions of each in relation to stress and work demands, autonomy and rewards.

An earlier study by many members of this research team (Gillespie N et al. 2001) looks at factors that help staff to moderate the effects of stress and help them to cope. It finds that two thirds of academic staff cope by lowering their standards and self-expectations, similar responses in a general staff groups were found in only a quarter of the sample. One can speculate on the reason for this, perhaps the culture of autonomy allows or accommodates such responses more easily than say, a more regulated professional organisation. They also use the work of Lazarus (1990) to gain an understanding of the complex and dynamic play of variables involved in the conceptualisation of stress. Conditions in the environment alone (stressors) provide an inadequate explanation of the stress process. Rather stress refers to a kind of relationship between person and environment, where demands exceed resources. He describes this as a process of transaction that is appraised by the individual as either involving harm, the threat of it, or, more positively, a challenge (p3). The emotional reaction, both positive and negative, is a measure of how the world is interpreted through which inference can be made of cognitive, motivational and coping processes.

Stress then is a subjective phenomenon and ‘is always a product of appraisal’ (Lazarus R 1990)(p9). This appraisal is the process of evaluation that occurs between the encounter and the reaction that involves both a judgement on it and the decision on what to do. The appraisal process can be affected by both commitments and beliefs.
that determine the extent that harm, threat or challenge are felt. Commitments will determine what is felt to be important and will guide the reaction to the situation. Beliefs may relate to views in areas such as control or hope. Once this appraisal has occurred then coping approaches are brought into play. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defines coping as ‘constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person’ (p141). Lazarus later suggests (1990) that a person’s resources, such as health or beliefs, may determine coping, but these may also be constrained by things such as competing demands. Coping responses include problem-focused coping, and emotion-focused coping, such as in distancing. In relation to this O’Driscoll and Cooper (2002) describe organisational interventions that can be of use when individual coping responses are insufficient.

This cognitive-relational view sees the process as dynamic with feedback constantly occurring, for instance, lowering of standards at work may in time become a factor that actually becomes an additional source of stress. Lazarus (1990) describes the difficulty in measuring stress and the limitation of using statements describing stress and its occurrence, because of the inability to show the source of the stress or distinguish responses qualitatively. He suggests instead an approach of repeatedly assessing the degree and content of appraised stress over time. The critical point in these transactions is the moment of transition or change in the relationship. As a compromise this may be done through a process of aggregation into discreet stages. In relation to every day stresses, or hassles, Lazarus (1990) (p7) declares that three kinds of data markers are useful: content of stressor encounters, the intensity of the stressful reaction, and fluctuations of content and intensity over time. Fisher (1994) has done some work that may be related to this on worry levels. Here measurement is made of the number of times a day that a subject recalls being worried by a particular problem. These results are then set against other findings on perceived problem areas. Findings show that for example research, at 70%, was the most frequently cited worry, however it has only a 12% intensity rating as a problem area.

Earlier studies by Dua in a single Australian university (1994) look at similar issues to the NTEU study, but aim also to see if stressors acted differentially in different subgroups of staff. He uses Cooper et al (1978) model of the major stressors for
workers generally: intrinsic job factors (hours and overload), role in organisation (role conflict or ambiguity), work relationships, organisational culture (including degrees of decision making), and career development. Dua also looks beyond this to issues such as non-work stressors. The results again show correlations between stressors and health variables. They also show that overall there is little difference between the various categories (e.g. gender, seniority) in term of overall job stress, however there are some differences in emphasis in the job stress factors (p8). For example older staff report more workload stress than younger and also males report more workload stress then females, but females report more stress due to work politics than males. The correlations between job stress factors and health/job dissatisfaction measures however are quite low, the highest at 0.41 relates to the combination of ‘work politics’ and job satisfaction. Once again the actual impact of workload per se on a range of physical and mental outcomes appears on the face of it to be negligible, which is similar to the AUT findings (p9).

The degree of agreement on the variables to be studied is exemplified again in Gmelch and Burn's (1994) work. This looks at the multidimensional aspect of stress in relation to department chairs in one hundred and one randomly selected establishments in the US. This study explores the factors contributing to stress for these academics, and looks further to assess the degree to which this is influenced by the dual nature of their roles, both as administrators and as faculty member. Items are listed under five factor headings, namely stress in relation to: task, role, conflict mediating, reward and recognition, and professional identity. They also look at stress factors in relation to personal attributes and to academic discipline. In respect of the dual role aspect this involves the development and validation of two stress indices, administrative and faculty, which are then combined to give an index representing both factors. Results of the study show that overall stress among department chairs appear to be ‘monolithic in its effects’ (Gmelch W and Burns J 1994)(p8), age, gender and discipline showing no significant differences. In terms of the age variable they hypothesise that this may be because variations in experience in the role are more important than actual age. However in relation to what they term the ‘Janus position’ (p3), chairs of department suffer high stress loading, in both administrative and faculty roles. The conflict-mediating factor is the highest scorer, where activities such as negotiating rules, regulations, programmes and disputes create a stressful situation.
of mediation between faculty and administrative pressures. This study provides useful insights into the relationship operating in relation to stress and issues such as management and leadership that will be discussed in greater depth later in this thesis.

At a more extreme level Siegall and McDonald (2004) look at responses of professors in the USA with work related stress using Maslach’s Burnout inventory (2000). This theory describes mismatch between worker and workplace in terms of imbalance between demands and resources and their relationship to various responses in terms of exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced accomplishment and ultimately to outcome costs. Using this Siegall and McDonald set out four hypotheses in relation to stress and burnout. They use professors as they were felt to have a good degree of flexibility in their choice of task and allocation of time. The hypotheses are firstly, that a response to work stress might be to spend less time on work activities, or secondly that it would involve a shifting of time between different work activities or that it involved a shifting of time onto non-work activities. The fourth hypothesis uses the Person – Fit Model (French J et al. 1982) as a basis to suggest that the degree to which a person suffered ‘burnout’ would be negatively related to the congruence of their values with those of the organisation. The results of this study support the first hypothesis; less time was spent on work when under stress. However there is only limited evidence to suggest that time was shifted onto other activities, either at work or non-work. They suggest that they need a clearer picture of the contributors to burnout in order to understand the mechanisms operating here. As might be expected where there is a mismatch of values between the individual and the organisation there are higher levels of burnout and this causes them to spend less time on professional development and teaching. They conclude that it might benefit organisations if they look into ways in which staff can develop a sense of ownership of their organisation’s values.

This focus on individual response mechanisms continues in *Psychology at Work* (Warr P 2002). The discussion here helps inform some of the theoretical underpinnings to the issues raised in the surveys reviewed earlier, but from a generic perspective rather than specific to HE workers. Warr’s theoretical framework on psychological wellbeing is especially useful. He examines people’s feelings about themselves in relation to their job, their degree of overall satisfaction with it, and
various other facets of it. He uses a framework with three principal axes of measurement: firstly the horizontal axis of pleasure running from low to high, and then the diagonals, anxiety to comfort and depression to enthusiasm. These axes have been measured through questionnaire and interview analysis of feelings about the given variables. Warr’s earlier research into the psychologically important attributes of work revealed the key features of it to be: opportunity for control, opportunity for skill use, externally generated goals (demands and workload, role conflict etc), variety, environmental clarity, availability of money, physical security, supportive supervision, interpersonal contact, social position. However some of these job characteristics have been shown to be more predictive than others in relation to wellbeing. For example he notes that high job demands are more strongly associated with the anxiety / comfort axis than the depression / enthusiasm one. In relation to the area of job strain, the research combines elements from more than one axis, usually the negative elements of both anxiety and depression. He hypothesises that correlations need not just be linear, for example there are situations where too much of a factor, such as control or variety, might become undesirable. Warr notes, as do the other studies (Siegrist J 2000; Winefield A et al. 2002), that individual dispositions would also affect wellbeing in this matter.

Another study looking at differential outcomes was done by Taris and colleagues (2001). Their research is on academic staff in a Dutch university and look at job resources (including decision latitude) and demands in relation to potential outcomes of strain or withdrawal (cynicism, lack of commitment, turnover intent). The purpose of the study is not only to increase understanding of the nature of stress affecting academic staff, but also to present a dual process model for the effects of occupational stress that takes into account not only stressors but also resources. To do this they draw together two theoretical frameworks. Firstly the ideas of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and their Stress-Appraisal-Strain-Coping Theory that distinguishes between health outcomes and psychological withdrawal in response to perceived stressors. Secondly, Hobfoll and Freedy’s Conservation of Resources Theory (1993) that assumes that people have to strive to maintain resources, such as control, but that negative outcomes occur when these are insufficient to meet demands. The survey variables that accommodate these two models then are strains, withdrawal, resources and stressors. The results indicate that job resources and demands are differentially
related to outcomes of strain or withdrawal. Those staff with higher levels of control experience lower levels of strain or withdrawal. Time demands themselves affected the strain, but disagreements or problems with other staff are more likely to cause withdrawal, a finding that seems to broadly accord with Warr’s theories (2002). Another interesting issue is that the combination of research and other tasks is a potent predictor of strain. The researchers suggest that academic staff in The Netherlands are employed primarily on the basis of their research and so needed more input to help them teach effectively.

An interesting angle on this issue of response to stress and workload is taken by Hockey (1997). He combines an energy-based approach with an information model to which he brings physiological evidence. His work comes from longitudinal and cross-sectional studies of the behaviour of young doctors. He develops a model to account for the different patterns of behaviour shown when under stress and high workload. Stress is looked at as a result of mismatch between prevailing and required task states. He suggests that ‘energetical resources’ may be allocated and controlled, but not without attracting costs either to emotional or physiological subsystems and further that this control is motivational in force. The model that he sets out defines a two level system, where at one level relatively small variations in demand are met automatically and not felt to be effortful (effort without distress or active coping (pp81-2).

When these variations become greater and broach the threshold of what can readily be accommodated there would be a subjective awareness of effort deployment. This response would be more varied and motivational in origin. Two avenues are possible. First, where the task in hand elicited effort beyond individual’s comfortable capacity or the resources available then ‘effort with distress’ or ‘strain coping’ occurs (p81-2). Hockey (1997) points out these responses carry consequences for efficiency as any subsidiary goals are discarded. Further, negative impacts could result through reduced effort being available for other tasks. Both reactions could have cumulative negative effects over the longer term (“latent decrement”).

The second avenue is to factor down the targets so that they can be achieved with the effort available (‘distress without effort’ or passive coping). This response of course
could also have negative efficiency effects because of the acceptance of the reduced performance targets. These choices around targets, tasks and effort are influenced by such factors as individual's response to tasks, their capacity for sustained work and tolerance to strain, further short term aspects such as fatigue might also have an influence (Hockey G 1997)(p88). Hockey goes on to suggest that there is one more way of responding to increased load and this is to step back from the task in question and make a "strategic adjustment"(p84), and to change the way the task is done. His later study on two doctors, who were in high demand situations and low control opportunities, show different responses, either strain or passive coping mode. However when they were placed in an enabling situation (opportunity for control and involvement were high) both exhibit high-energy effort and increased adrenaline.

From both the union surveys and the theoretical models some degree of consensus can be seen in relation to the stressor variables and the indicators of stress, in terms of job satisfaction and strain. Those studies that look at overall stress levels in different subgroups (gender, age etc) at work show inconclusive findings, although there are differences in response to different stressors (Dua J 1994; Gmelch W and Burns J 1994). Further there seems to be some consensus on the importance of the individual response or interpretation of environmental stressors (Lazarus R 1990; Hockey G 1997; Cooper C 2000; Siegrist J 2000; Warr P 2002; Winefield A et al. 2002). This might explain the complex and often unexpected relations between stressors and outcomes, and the problem of identifying the actual source of a strain. For example long hours alone are not shown to have strong correlations with wellbeing (Kinman G and Jones F 2004). Theoretical models (Karasek R 1979; Siegrist J 2000) explore the additional factors that might be at work here in relation to mismatches, or gaps, between the worker and their work environment such as control and rewards. Others go further still, looking at the whole relationship between the individual and their environment in relation to stress (French J et al. 1982; Lazarus R 1990). This might be in terms of congruence of values, abilities of the individual, and the control and rewards, in relation to the demands of the job. Further there are theories of differential responses to demand and resource variables, such as increased strain or withdrawal/passive coping (Lazarus R and Folkman S 1984; Hockey G 1997; Taris T et al. 2001; Warr P 2002).
The link between a person and their environment in relation to work and stress has been repeatedly demonstrated, yet in this so many variables are relatively fixed. The implication that runs from this chapter in relation to the overall research is the importance of focusing on those areas that can be altered. Whilst the work to be done and the people available to do it are relatively fixed factors, others may be improved, such as how procedures operate to ensure fairness, maximising control within the work situation, and striving to ensure that where possible the process works to match the individual to the task. These aspects highlight the social dimension of the allocation process. The synthesis will, after looking at the general context of HE, focus on those factors concerning work allocation that may be more easily changed.

2.2 The Higher Education Context.

Overall from these surveys and models it can be seen that there is a complex interplay of factors operating beyond the relatively straightforward one of just high workloads. Vital aspects include personal response and motivational issues as well as control over work, support, perceptions of procedural fairness, and work politics. These latter areas can be seen to relate to issues of governance and leadership that affect the whole context within which people work and represent a connection to broader external factors. For example, the funding council’s strategy (HEFCE 2003 (revised 2004)) calls for: increased participation to 50%, through widening participation initiatives; enhancing excellence in teaching and learning, and in research; whilst also calling for an enhanced contribution of HE to the economy and society (p9). The last of these has gained momentum after the Lambert Review (2003) and the Sainsbury report on government science and innovation policies (Lord Sainsbury of Turville 2007) has also added to the impetus stressing the part that universities play through Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) in supporting new markets opened up through globalisation. Recommendations in the report include increasing the support from the Higher Education Innovation Fund for business facing universities, doubling the number of KTPs and extending this area to FE colleges.

The Universities UK report (UUK 2003), ‘Patterns of Higher Education Institutions in the UK’, gives a general statistical picture of this context. It compares the different subgroups, such as the Russell Group and the 1994 Group and questions strategies
that typecast institutions dependent on their status. It notes also general changes in emphasis in demand for subjects, for example, a decline in demand for physical science and in modes of study such as increased demand for part-time provision. There are wide differentials between the sub-groups in terms of public funding of research, administration and accommodation costs. However it notes a general decline in the financial security across the whole sector. No group is immune to the challenges that face the sector. In particular there have been concerns that universities are over-trading in research, with highly motivated permanent staff working on research well beyond the resources primarily provided by the “quality related” (QR) research income stream to universities (DfES 2003) (p14). This is thought to have consequences for teaching and capital investment. In order to address this issue, actions such as the Transparency Review over the last five years have increased the visibility of the disposition of costs associated with research and teaching, the latter increasingly explicitly through TRAC(T) starting in 2006 (HEFCE 2006b). Inevitably this highlights any disparities between sources of income and patterns of expenditure and thus can be a new source of tension in the allocation of resources, such as staff time. Moves towards Full Economic Costing, primarily for Research Council funded projects so far, are designed to redress the imbalance, but at the same time demand new processes and extra rigour from staff in their bidding activities.

The later HEFCE report on staff at HEIs gives another statistical account of trends in the sector. It shows for example the steady rise in numbers of academics over the last ten years, with significant growth in the proportion on permanent contracts, with science as a notable exception to this (HEFCE 2006a). Despite these increases, the unit of resource per student fell very significantly during the 1990’s (from £8,000 per student to £5,000) and broadly stayed at this level since (UUK 2004) (p9).

Given the present challenging context it is interesting to note how acute many writers were in their predictions. Jackson (1997) foresaw the problem as one of creating an environment for dynamic development whilst set in a system of increasing regulation. He noted that the move from an elitist to a mass market in education had brought with it a customer-based emphasis and the drive for accountability. Such a regulatory process could provide the university with the opportunity to improve and develop. However this would require a degree of self-criticism and openness that could be seen
as detrimental to the university. Ultimately he felt that the answer might come through a partnership of trust where the emphasis moved from accountability to development and improvement. In a similar line Holmes and McElwee (1995) suggested that there was a danger in institutions becoming too managerialist and preoccupied with TQM measures that focused narrowly on markets. They felt that it might lead to a neglect of the area where true quality in education resides, that is the, ‘personal fulfilment of the individual (staff member and student) as the true meaning and kite mark of institutional quality’ (p6).

More recently Graham (2002) looks deeper into this issue and recognises that expansion of higher education has caused huge changes, with responsibilities for large budgets, greater accountability, and competition for resources and students. He goes on to distinguish between organisations that ‘supply an end’ and institutions that ‘fulfil a distinctive purpose’ (p91). He then turns to use this distinction to question the premise that universities are ‘big businesses’ and ideas for university management based on business practices as suggested in the Jarrett report (1985). Graham (2002) maintains that there is a problem in trying to measure what they offer in any quantifiable way as ‘the value of different educational accomplishments is incommensurable’ (p97), production of these educational goods is also not controlled because of the ideology surrounding academic freedom and autonomy. However as Coaldrake and Stedman (1999) note in their study of Australian Universities, autonomy has always been circumscribed by factors such as professional accreditation, the law, and the responsibility to students (p10).

Further as Becher (1989) notes this autonomy has come under increasing pressure because of these managerialist values (p166), a comment that still rings true. He looks at the culture of academic disciplines, and argues that its diversity is a consequence of the internal dynamic of knowledge that brings increasing specialisation (p170), and constructs a framework of dynamic properties to describe them: hard /soft and pure/applied in the cognitive realm and convergent/divergent and urban/rural in the social realm. However he sees economic forces at work to the challenge in the intellectual arena, from agencies and research councils, industrial sponsors who may try to manipulate science to ‘suit their sectional interests’ (p167). He argues that centralised bureaucratic control has been accompanied by a greater emphasis on
socially determined research objectives and that this has dangers for science in limiting their lines of enquiry and also in the fields of the humanities and social sciences to challenging orthodoxies. However whilst advancing the benefits of this diversity, he also acknowledges not only competitive drives between groups, but the shared basis within the academic community in an anthropological sense. This recognition of mutuality he hopes might serve to counter managerialist intrusions (p171).

Looking also at these questions from a different angle Shattock (2003) reviews what actually makes a university successful. He concludes that there can be no absolute predictors, but that managing a university is a holistic process and that those institutions that are most successful are those that combine high performance in research, teaching and student measures. In relation to governance he also sees a situation of mutual dependence, one in which the executive and academic elements work closely in partnership with neither dominating. This view is echoed by Whitchurch (2007), in her review of the changing roles of professional managers in higher education. However a danger that Shattock (2003) does see is that financial pressures are making the universities become less collegial and more technocratic, for example in handling issues such as staff redundancy (p87). This chimes with Pellert’s (2007) view that there is need for universities to recognise their responsibilities in managing rather than simply administering staff. In general Shattock (2003) views collegiality as an important mechanism to achieve the core business. More specifically he views this as vital because the academic community is responsible for 70% of direct budget expenditure and to be committed to the budgetary strategy it needs a large stake in how that budget is allocated (p88). Bargh et al (2000) see collegiality itself as being based on a culture of collectivises, especially in relation to decision making processes, however despite notions of academic autonomy they note how some vice chancellors are redefining the notion of collegiality to include a collective responsibility for decisions once discussion has occurred (p126).

From another perspective in relation to the changes in the HE sector Middlehurst (2004) reviews responses to government demands for increases in efficiency and productivity. Change was stimulated by a series of reviews that challenged the system and questioned whether it was fit to cope with new demands. The new ideas about
management in the public sector show numerous shifts in emphasis towards outcomes, quantification, and measurement and consumer orientation. She suggests that the demanding operating environment in the UK would remain complex and volatile. Examples are then given of the responses that have been used to address this, for example in relation to strengthening the role of vice chancellor. Other changes involve bringing together of academic leadership and management with stronger executive management (Middlehurst R 2004)(p264). Such alterations bring with them new cultural patterns that coexist with different degrees of emphasis within each university. She cites McNay (1992) who describes these as cultures of collegium, bureaucracy, corporation and enterprise. Changes that affect internal governance are external drivers, such as student number targets, and the issue of fees (Middlehurst R 2004) p267). Further these changes are influenced by the need to compete with other institutions, using branding to distinguish themselves (Stensaker B and D'Andrea V 2007), but at other times to collaborate in the process of knowledge creation and dissemination. Kelso and Leggett (1999) see similar issues in their review of Australian universities. Further they see a redefining of roles in institutions, a shift of the decision-making locus from professors to faculty groupings and a blurring of distinctions between academic and non-academic staff.

Barnett (2000) also looks at this issue of change. He views the HE environment as one of super complexity where ideas (such as excellence or authenticity) have no solid or lasting base to them. This is not to suggest an absence of such values, but rather that no absolute quality could be attached to them. In order to cope with such a world universities need to be organised in such a way that they could respond to and deal with this level of turbulence. This requires an understanding and knowledge by universities of their situation in order to anticipate changing circumstances and challenges. It also needs interaction between the many parts and this would, in turn, aid better understanding both horizontally and vertically within the organisation. Communication, would multiple the frames of understanding through multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary learning communities and help to maximise its intellectual capacity and opportunities.

From the above it can be seen that the HE context is highly turbulent. Financial uncertainty and instability, is compounded by increases in both regulation and free
market practices. So, within a tradition of collegiality and individual / organisational autonomy, serious questions are being asked of those who are leading universities, issues that are covered in the next section.

2.3 Values and Leadership Issues in Higher Education

Barnett (2000) focuses on academic and organisational values by looking at the intersection between universities and their external context, the preoccupation with managerialism and the dissatisfaction with it seen through the surveys. His work provokes some questions, such as, what are these values? What does managerialism mean in terms of values? Can values be managed? Further, is there a big divide between academic and managerial values? These are questions that Stiles (2004) goes some way to address in his longitudinal study of business schools in Britain and Canada, with an aim to better understand the world of academic management. He states that little work has been done on the identity and the embedded values of management academics. He synthesises ideas on fundamental beliefs and values and their long-term influence on behaviour and preferences, and cites Rokeach’s work (1968) on how individual values might be aggregated into collective organisational values that have two distinct categories, terminal values, that is end goals such as happiness or freedom, and instrumental values, that is the means to achieve them, for example honesty and logic.

From this study on higher education and from the literature on identity, values and strategy Stiles goes on to develop three theoretical bases, Separatist, Integrationist and Hegemonist, that he sees as representing different, coherent sets of academic organisation, academic identity and institutional strategies (see Table 1). Looking at this table an interesting issue emerges when the academics’ values are found not to correspond with the values of the academic organisation. For example he reviews how problems could occur within schools because of tension between different values operating, such as in the balance between theory and practice in teaching and research (p172). The study asks interviewees to rearrange two separate terminal and instrumental value lists in order of the centrality to their own working lives (p163). The results of individual ranking various values, separatist, hegemonist and integrationist (p166) shows that over time there has been a move from a Separatist
base nearer to a hybrid with the Integrationist model. Stiles argues that although there is much common ground institutional strategy needs to be informed by an understanding of the complex base of academic values (p172).

**Table 1: Theoretical Bases of Academic Organization and Identity (Stiles, 2004)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Base</th>
<th>Ontology (Nature of social world)</th>
<th>Epistemology (Nature of knowledge)</th>
<th>Academic organization</th>
<th>Academic identity</th>
<th>Institutional strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Separatist</strong></td>
<td>Autonomous actors Defined boundaries</td>
<td>Distinct domains Mode 1: Specialist, monodisciplinary, basic</td>
<td>Segregated Traditional</td>
<td>Independent Unitary/Rational Collegial values</td>
<td>Collegial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrationist</strong></td>
<td>Semi-autonomous actors Semi-permeable boundaries</td>
<td>Interacting domains Mode 2: Broad, transdisciplinary, basic and applied</td>
<td>Contextualized Traditional and entrepreneurial</td>
<td>Conflicting Disintegrated Fragmented values</td>
<td>Cultural Political Stakeholder Garbage can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hegemonist</strong></td>
<td>Dominant actors Permeable boundaries</td>
<td>Hegemonic domains Conflictual, socially biased</td>
<td>Socially subsumed Co-opted</td>
<td>Dependent Hegemonic Subsumed values</td>
<td>Managerial Radical Postmodern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From these studies one can get a general picture of the external and internal forces that are shaping the environment within universities. Such features influence the relationships that academics have, and in regard to this study it can be seen that theories on leadership are important. Middlehurst (1993) sees leadership as partly associated with change and also with interpretation of values that have a role in assisting the process of change. Her investigations show that the most desirable leadership characteristics are: decisiveness, sensitivity, willingness to listen, the ability to command respect and honesty (p149). In relation to academic values she gives a full account, first in absolute terms of, how academic leaders are likely to reflect the values of their followers, and then the influences they have on the actions of those leaders (p10 and pp149-50), but argues that the boundaries and values here are ‘no longer clear or certain’ (Middlehurst R 1993)(p85).

Various theories about leadership are also reviewed in her work (Middlehurst R 1993). These range from objectivist accounts that see it linked to personal traits, or behaviour, through to subjectivist theories that look at leadership as a process rather than as a position. Such a view takes into account the leader-follower relationship, such as in power theories, where followers give legitimacy to a leader, possibly exchanging some of their autonomy for rewards, such as in transactional approaches.
that are based on self-interest. Transformational styles of leadership however aim beyond meeting basic needs or emotions and rather look towards higher values, such as justice or equality (Middlehurst R 1993)(p34). She goes on to discuss the interplay between the leadership styles using the work of Bensimon et al (1989), who points out that the conditions of dual authority (administrative and professional) existing in universities work against a transformational approach alone. Middlehurst (1993) argues that this is partly because loyalty often lies with the department and motivation is intrinsic to the work itself (p36).

The work of Lewicki and colleagues (1998) may be useful here in its suggestion that a factor that determines the trust levels operating between parties can be related to the extent that the parties identify with each others values. However Bryman (2007) in his review of the literature on leadership states that little research has been done directly examining what approaches to leadership in higher education are effective. From interviews that he carried out though he found resonance with much of the literature on the need for leaders to create and maintain trust and to convey a clear sense of their values. An issue that did arise, that did not appear in the literature reviewed, was that the ignoring of problems was seen as a trait of ineffective leaders.

An Australian study (Gillespie N and Mann L 2004) looks at different styles of leadership (transformational, transactional, consultative, and corrective) in relation to the trust that professionals in a research and development organisation felt for their leader. This trust is assessed in relation to: cognitive measures (competence, integrity, fairness etc), affective measures (relationship bonds), behavioural measures (reliance on leader’s skill) and lastly in terms of overall trust. The questionnaires sets these against nine different leadership dimensions and measurement is made of satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis is carried out on the strongest inter-correlations. The three variables that together explain 68% of the variance within the results on trust in leaders are: common values, consultative leadership and communicating a collective vision. They suggest that together these might work to reduce uncertainty about the leader’s behaviour long term and thus make followers more willing to make themselves vulnerable by relying on their judgements and confiding in them. Another aspect involved is seen to be the reciprocal trust, with open communication of ideas and delegation of power (Gillespie N and Mann L 2004)(p10). The conclusions of
this study are that trust in leadership is positively associated with transformational and consultative styles. Further transactional styles are seen as vital too, especially in relation to contingent rewards and the consistent honouring of promises when expectations are met in relation to set goals.

Schein also looks at this issue of leadership style (1988). He sees the style required being dependent on the nature of the task, the context and the subordinates involved. More generally he sees both leadership orientation (for example task or relationship) and style to be contingent on context. This aspect has been studied in relation to vice chancellors (Bargh C et al. 2000) where it is found that the different styles of leadership do not correlate with particular university types, for example the new universities are not more managerial than the old ones (p129). Rather their study suggests that the different domains of leadership, academic and managerial, required different styles at different times. Like Schein there is a belief that this involves a translation of vision into goals and the means to accomplish them. Another aspect that this might be seen to impinge on is that of academic identity. Barnett (2003) looks at the antagonism between the competing ideologies of research and teaching. He views management as the ‘hard wiring’ of the organisation, responsible for aspects such as information systems and decision making structures. Leadership, however he sees as the ‘soft tissue complexity’ (p166) that could open debate between opposing parties as a means to promote ideological inclusivity.

Kennie (2007) also highlights the complexity of higher education institutions with their wide-ranging professional and academic subcultures, with complex control mechanisms through which leadership and management must operate. He goes on to argue that management and leadership is changing within these establishments, responding to both internal complexity and the external context. There is a need to move from senior academics determining policy to an increased sharing of this function with ‘strategic level professional managers’ (p65) in order to close the gap between university policy and its local implementation. He argues that such work might assist perceptions about managerialism through appeal to more positive values, such as for fairness.
The importance of leadership and strategies has been demonstrated through these works, but in relation to the allocation of staff time the actual implementation of policy often falls to the heads of schools/departments. This makes it necessary to look more specifically at the devolved leadership at this level, looking at areas such as communication and trust that have implications for resource allocation. As many commentators have noted (Middlehurst R 1993; Gmelch W and Burns J 1994; Jackson M 1999; Kennie T 2007) this role may suffer from problems of dual identity as both manager and academic colleague. Further their degree of influence might be determined by the level of credibility or trust that they inspire. It relies, in Argyris’ (1960) terms on the idea of a ‘psychological contract’, that Cullinane and Dundon (2006) see as a reciprocal relationship of exchange, relying on ‘unspecified obligations’ between the parties that operate outside the legalistic frames of reference. As Cullinane and Dundon go on to discuss this encompasses the economic as well as the social relationship and may involve problems of inequality of power and the engendering of ‘unitarist work values’. The importance of this relationship is exemplified in some of the survey findings where the need for trust between the parties is shown to be an important predictor of job satisfaction (Winefield A et al. 2002) (p93).

However one aspect that many studies note is that the role of Head of Department is often seen as temporary and there was a feeling that management training to support these leaders was narrow in outlook (Davies J 1995). Further Bryman (2007) notes in his review of studies on leadership in higher education that heads of department are often reluctant to take on the post and rarely see it in terms of career advancement. A Higher Education Policy Report (Archer W 2005) into modernising Human Resource management interviewed Human Resource and institution heads at forty four universities. The biggest challenge seen to face these leaders is the need to persuade managers at all levels of their role and responsibilities in this area of managing staff. Debate within interviews often focuses on issues such as training and philosophical discussion on whether it is right to direct colleagues activities in this way. However there is a recurring theme from these HoD/S that middle managers are often surprisingly anti-management and that their loyalties lie primarily with their teams. The report cites evidence of frustration by HR heads at this, one member describing it as ‘a thick layer of cloud below’ (Archer W 2005)(p22). The report acknowledges
that the perception of this barrier by the majority of staff would relate to ‘what sits above’ (p24), that is the institution’s management level. Looked at from another angle this view can be put against findings of the two large union surveys where in the Australian one (Winefield A et al. 2002) only 19% saw senior management as trustworthy, and in the Kinman and Jones survey (2004) only 21% felt that they were supported by this team.

Another issue raised by Archer (2005) is the problem of aligning individual performance with institutional goals, although the HEFCE ‘Rewarding and Developing Staff’ initiative has brought with it some rapid change. Another interesting aspect is the concern about the sub-optimal performance of some staff that has a negative impact on performance or team morale. The work of Taris et al (2001), discussed above, on the interpersonal reasons for cynicism and withdrawal of staff might be illuminating here.

In an earlier period looking at the Head of Department level Jackson (2001) distinguishes the roots of some of the problems. He sees it as potentially problematic that increased pressure within universities, such as from the vast amount of new employment legislation, is being devolved to these heads of departments. He sees their role as changing, as a response to these pressures rather than through strategy, and he states that there is a need at university level to consider strategy in relation to training. Another aspect that he considers is the issue of workload allocation. He describes some of the measures used in the newer universities with a formula based on annual hours, or other systems based on needs and abilities, and describes how in certain cases poor performance in research is used as a basis to increase teaching hours. However Jackson’s (1999) view is also that the Head of Department has limited scope to affect performance (pp3-4). He concludes that ‘persuasion and encouragement are likely to be the mainstay of the Head of Department’s armoury’ (p7).

The literature in this section shows that there are strong, albeit evolving, academic values within HE and this has to be taken into account by leaders, who should choose their approaches appropriately to meet the needs of their staff. Specifically the Head of Department role appears to be pivotal, but has distinctive characteristics driven by
its (typically) temporary nature and wide ranging demands. In all of this activity soft factors, such as trust, may be built or can easily be lost.

2.4 Communication and Trust

Such a conclusion calls for a greater awareness of issues concerning trust and communication. Kets de Vries (2000) sees the importance of this issue and suggests that the world's most admired companies have common features in their leadership styles and practices. This includes treating people fairly with trust at the centre of corporate values. He describes how the best managers pay attention to the motivational needs of their workers and work to ensure that these personal needs were congruent with organisational ones. In relation to the HE sector Thornhill and his colleagues (1996) look at how employee commitment can be affected by communication strategies. They see resource constraints and demands for higher quality as necessitating high levels of commitment from all staff. The study describes how different factors influenced commitment, but specifically for academics these include: firstly, personal characteristics - tenure, need for achievement, sense of competence and professionalism. Secondly in relation to role and job characteristics this might include: role conflict, role strain, job scope, autonomy and feedback. Next they review structural characteristics that might affect commitment levels in terms of the degrees of formalisation and centralisation and the last category relates to expectations in terms of fairness over decisions and leadership styles (p3). As can be seen there is a large overlap in this list with the stressor factors reviewed in other studies. Their study (Thornhill A et al. 1996) describes how individuals may be committed to different focuses, for example, on their career, on the intrinsic value of the work, to the organisation itself or to a union. They argue that to achieve organisational goals the nature of this commitment must be recognised and addressed. Their study uses both interviews and questionnaires across all varieties of work to evaluate the role effective communication would contribute in this initiative.

The categories of communication that they use are: information flows down the organisation, and flows up it and also management or leadership styles. Questions then centre on issues such as how well informed staff felt management kept them and on aspects such as giving explanations for decisions. Questions were also placed about perceptions of 'us and them' barriers (Thornhill A et al. 1996)(p5). Results
show that a high degree of commitment (84%) was felt by those staff who felt that their institution cared for them, however it was perhaps surprising that of staff who did not feel cared for, 36% still felt part of the organisation. Although the results do not claim a causal relationship, there is a significant relationship between the ways an organisation communicates with its staff and their levels of commitment. Further the nature of that communication is reviewed, distinguishing between directive approaches and open types, where there are uninhibited flows of communication and with decision-making power being widely dispersed with more positive effects. The other factor that they found needs to be addressed is the issue of the different commitment focuses, as described above (career, profession, work etc) and the issue of dual commitment focus. They conclude on the importance of employee perceptions in this area and how communication needs to address their different requirements. Further the importance of the nature and style of that communication is stressed in regard to its design and delivery.

Much of this work on communication relies again on an understanding of the issue of trust that lies at its roots. A synthesis of cross disciplinary views of trust suggests to Rousseau et al (1998) a definition of it as ‘a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another’(p395). The conditions they see as necessary for it to exist are the perception of a risk (psychological, sociological and economic conceptions) and also that of interdependence between the parties that might vary along the course of the relationship (p395). Gillespie and Mann (2004) describe the importance of trust to organisations both in terms of competitiveness and effectiveness. They see it at as essential part of a reciprocal relationship within teams and with leaders. Trust is seen as multi-dimensional with bases in cognitive, affective, and behavioural elements. The first two bases relate to beliefs and emotions respectively, whilst in terms of behaviour important aspects could be seen in relation to both relying on others and disclosing information to them (p2).

Mayer and Davis (1995) develop an integrative model of trust within organisations. They clarify confusion that exists between terms associated with trust, such as cooperation and confidence. For example in a trust situation, as opposed to one of confidence, there is an explicit recognition of risk. This paper also looks at the
characteristics of both the trustor and the trustee. For example the innate propensity of
the trustor to trust might vary in level depending on the trustee. They make a
proposition based on other work on some of the many factors that have been shown to
influence perceptions of trustworthiness of the trustee, namely: ability, benevolence
and integrity. These might vary independently of each other and they also propose
that the effect of these factors would vary throughout a relationship. For example,
integrity might be most salient early on, whilst benevolence would increase in
importance through time. Context is also seen as a contributory factor in the
development or inhibition of trust. They suggest that the model would benefit from
being operationalised, however a factor that they see as problematic lies at the very
heart of the issue. Trust, as has been defined, relies on a willingness to be vulnerable,
and it was seen as difficult to distinguish this willingness, from being vulnerable per
se.

Dirks and Ferrin (2001) however explore the issue of the context for trust. They look
at two different models on how trust might affect attitudes, perceptions and behaviour.
The first is the ‘main effect model’ that has been extensively researched. Trust
according to this model operates in a straightforward way with high levels of it
resulting in better performance, co-operation and behaviour. It affects how we assess
future behaviour of another and how we interpret their past actions (p456). Dirks and
Ferrin look critically at the empirical evidence for these predicted outcomes and also
compare it with a second model, the ‘moderation model’. This theory suggests that
trust may facilitate (moderate) other determinants of work attitudes, performance, and
behaviours (p455) and they set out various propositions about how this might work.
Their hypothesis is that although both models are valid in any given context one
model would better describe the effects of trust than the other (p461). Research led
them to situational ‘strength’ as the concept used to decide which model would be
appropriate. ‘Strong’ situations are those in which there is much guidance or incentive
given to behave in a certain way. ‘Weak’ situations are seen as those where such
guidance on outcomes is not provided. They argue that in ‘weak’ situations the main
effect model would be most applicable, as this relies on the idea that trust is a positive
psychological state, so that when no other factors are at play it may have a direct
effect. However in ‘stronger’ situations the mediating aspect of trust might work to
facilitate or hinder the effects of the other constructs. They recognise that the
situations of strong/weak are ranged along a continuum, so that in certain situations both models would operate.

Implications for management are seen in relation to low trust levels. They argue (Dirks K and Ferrin D 2001) that interventions to increase trust levels may have varying results or outcomes. This is explained through looking at the impact of the strength of the situation. For example in strong situations increases in trust might have no impact on outcomes (Dirks K and Ferrin D 2001) (p463). A manager in this instance could, if they had the capacity, change the strength of the situation when levels of trust are high. Conversely when levels of trust are low they could create a highly structured environment, so that this low level of trust would not cause negative effects (p464). They also recount the potential problems of high levels of trust in situations that do not warrant it. This might increase the potential for opportunistic behaviour from the unscrupulous, and this is a situation for which the moderation model can provide account.

Saunders and Thornhill (2004) capture ideas about mistrust as well as trust. Their case study analyses local authority worker’s emotional responses’ to organisational change. The main task of the study is to discover whether, for employees, trust and mistrust are two ends of a continuum, as Lewicki et al suggests (1998), or whether they are instead separate entities that might both be experienced in a given organisation. They devise a framework to explore the findings about trust from the interviews looking at: ‘distributive justice’, that concerns perceptions about outcomes of decisions and ‘interactional justice’, which is more concerned with the implementation (p497). The findings of this study show that both mistrust and trust can co-exist, and another state of ‘absence’ of either of these emotions is also found. Further, the majority of respondents explain their trust in relation to informational and interpersonal types of justice, (p512), that is to do with the treatment they receive and the explanations they are given. However those experiencing mistrust explain it in terms of distributive and procedural justice, that is based on the their perceptions of fairness through the procedures used to make decisions. Although this study is relatively small and not focused on higher education, it may be seen to have implications that are generally applicable. For example, it shows the importance of
managers giving information about decisions beyond just an initial justification and being considerate and sensitive in relation to the needs of staff.

This section shows the importance of communication systems that can offer the chance to create high commitment to the organisation, but this has to be two-way and genuine or the opposite effect can be the result. This highlights that it is not only what a manager does, but how they do it that is important, in that this drives staff perceptions.

2.5 Resource Allocation

From these studies on leadership qualities and trust issues there have been some recurring themes. Qualities looked for in a leader include, decisiveness, sensitivity, the ability to command respect and honesty. There is some overlap to be seen here with the qualities of those to be trusted that depend on their ability, benevolence and integrity. The organisational context has also been shown to have an important bearing on these factors. These qualities become of tremendous importance when the issue of resource allocation is raised. The research in this section roughly divides between those looking at the, admittedly interrelated, areas of university level strategic decisions on resources and those that focus on unit level strategy and implementation aspects. The main focus in this section is on the latter area.

Research on university strategy provides a contextual setting for the present study that focuses primarily at the local level of implementation, and the policy related to it. Becher and Kogan (1992) provide a useful model for looking at this context. They describe the interrelationships, and shifting balance of control, across the various levels in higher education, encompassing the normative values and operational modes in relation to resource allocation (this is discussed more generally again in section 11.2). They discuss how at all levels, individual, unit, institution, central and central authority, different models are in contention over resource allocation. Each of these levels attempt to evaluate and make judgements within the dialectic in operation between, for example, at the operational level, success in the external market or in the normative mode looking to assert academic distinction (p175). They argue that a state of balanced tension between the two modes works to retain normal functioning (p16).
Looking at these sort of organisational functions Hendriks et al (1999) look at a multi-project organisation and review how two factors namely, project scatter factor (PSF) and resource dedication profile (RDP) could optimise allocation methods, by ensuring the right people were allocated to the project. Project scatter factor relates to the number of people needed to do one task, whereas the RDP relates to the type of resources: service employees, all round project members or experts. They describe the problems of planning in these sorts of organisations, where there is often uncertainty on time scales and where any accurate picture in the planning models can only be gained if they are comprehensive and updated frequently. As a response to these problems the researchers tested a different method called ‘rough cut project and portfolio planning’. This entails a quarterly process of ‘resource claim’ and ‘resource offer’ spreadsheets in the matrix organisation. The planning encompasses five elements long, medium and short-term resource allocation, links and feedback. This provides a mechanism where the right people are allocated to the task. It also helps to establish the needs for changes in the profiles of resources to maximise efficiencies. For example, increasing flexibility by differentiating the levels of expertise required for the project profiles. In this way specialists become either experts in a particular field, all round project members or service employees (p9). They admit that changing the resources is not easy, but conclude that it gives better control and makes resource allocation much easier to execute. Whilst the exercise of resource claim and offer might not be easily incorporated within academic units, at a more informal level the assessment of demands and resources are made by heads of units, further the introduction of more formal models makes the process more manifest.

In relation to higher education specifically there have been some interesting studies also. Cyert (1975) writing about the management of not-for-profit organisations sees the danger for universities of resource allocation based on historical precedents. To address this he sees the need for effective planning at department level, so that clear agreed goals are analysed in relation to organisational goals. He sees conflict on resource allocation as harder to resolve in universities than in business where objective profit criteria could be called upon. However approaches such as the study in Spain by Caballero et al (2002) have made progress in this area. They review many of the quantitative approaches on human resource allocation and go on to
develop a model for new resource allocation decision-making that links part of funding with explicit university objectives. They use efficiency and quality criteria in their model that links two quantitative techniques: data envelopment analysis and multiple criteria decision-making analysis. They measure teaching demand in terms of the sum of the credits, multiplied by the number of students in each subject, to give the weight of a subject, the real teaching load (p4).

The mathematical modelling that they develop allows for detection of efficiency levels and determining the link between the allocation of new resources and their average improvement. The most efficient department pertained to branches of the humanities and social science whereas experimental science were the most inefficient. They believe that this can be a useful tool for the governing body of a university when drawing up a strategic plan. The advantages that they see in such system are that it can give greater transparency in the allocation of resources and guarantees equal treatment between teaching and research units. The approach they use is interesting, but raises questions about choices over efficiency between disciplines and how at a strategic level universities would defend such an approach.

This issue of transparency is something Winton discusses (2002). He describes how costing and pricing models can be used to allow informed decisions on how academic staff spend their time and also help with decisions on course viability where there are charges fixed externally. This system can take into account teaching, research, administrative commitments as well as post-graduate supervision and industry/enterprise activities. Tann (1995) discusses the need for a model of this sort and draws from various studies across departments. She notes how some universities have clear resource allocation models that allow for strategic planning and a clearer knowledge of outcomes. Strategic change is often seen to be the driver for these models and Tann notes that often when looking to improve some measure, such as RAE scores, there is a temptation to ask a busy, but effective, person to take on extra duties. However there is a point when perceptions of equity cause problems and this is where a clear model can be put into the public domain on the different loading levels. Although there might be initial problems with negotiation and implementation of such a model it has been shown to reap rewards in the slightly longer term. Further peer pressure was
found to be more effective means to gain equity than from pressure from a Head of Department.

Burgess (1996) looks at workload planning in three case studies, two from business schools (Leeds and Loughborough) and the other in an ‘old’ university (Leeds). The paper covers areas such as different planning methods, institutional context and computerised decision support. A later paper (Burgess TF et al. 2003) provides a useful extension to this work by identifying the role of individual academics as ‘co-developers’ of the system (p219). The paper describes the context of higher education, its ‘massification’ (p216), and the decline in the unit of resource, pressure to adopt a business ethos, accountability and public scrutiny. It notes the potential conflict between managerialism and professional values as well as other factors such as the growing casualisation of the workforce. Work planning systems (WPS) are noted as another feature that might be viewed as a ‘tool of management oppression’ (p218).

However more positively WPS are also felt to play a part in identifying high workloads and thus helping with work related stress. It goes onto define WPS as: ‘A human activity system at the level of the HE department that carries out aggregate planning to reconcile requirements and capacity in line with the strategic goals and in particular promotes equitable workload allocation to individuals’ (p219). So equity and strategy, which might at times be in conflict, are encapsulated by this definition.

Another interesting aspect of this paper (Burgess TF et al. 2003) is the description of variables involved within the process, this includes how comprehensive the system is, the extent to which its components are integrated, the degree of formality and whether the planning involved is based on forward projection or retrospective calculation. Other issues include the actual units used, the level of transparency, the degree of assistance from computers, the level of detail involved, the linkage to other departmental planning systems and how autocratic or democratic the system seems.

The results from the case studies from Leeds University (Burgess TF et al. 2003) show that a wide variety of systems were being used, but also that in 38% of resource centres had no formal system at all. In those that had systems, teaching was a basic component, but some include other work elements with levels of their integration also varying. The culture and the history of the department has an effect on how the
system is managed, and some evidence is found to support the view that the natural sciences and engineering are more autocratic in their management style. Generally the level of detail and accuracy seem to work to accommodate the balance between accuracy and the effort this requires. Questions are raised about whether the variety of systems involved are dysfunctional at the organisational level. The managers and the professionals are identified as having different stances on this variety. However these roles are also felt to have overlap, preventing a simplification of the dynamics, but organisational politics are felt to be influential in ‘determining the nature and effectiveness of WPSs’ (Burgess TF et al. 2003)(p227).

Looking positively such diversity of WPSs can be seen to indicate innovative approaches and a democratic environment that can accommodate them, although it is recognised that from an organisational perspective there might be ‘utility’ in commonality of WPS (Burgess TF et al. 2003)(p230). However from another viewpoint where systems are rudimentary there is a danger that lack of planning would result in ineffectiveness, although this would again depend upon perspective. The paper does find some agreement though on three key criteria for effective systems, these are stated as being, equity in workloads, transparency of WPS and the alignment of staff to strategic goals. This latter aspect was something that Ringwood and his colleagues (2005) address in their discussion of their workload balancing system. However the difficulties in achieving certain ideal states are noted, for example agreeing on what constitutes equity, and in relation to transparency the potential for friction between staff when workloads are made transparent. Yet despite these problems the paper concludes on the need to change from the ‘over reliance’ on informal systems, so that resources can be reviewed and planned to meet challenges that departments have to face.

Clarke (1997) looks at the resource planning aspect of this issue. She argues for a model that stresses key competencies and their fit with strategy and the environment. From this perspective she explores the usefulness of two measures of resource evaluation. Firstly ‘appropriability indices’ are used to get a better picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation’s core competencies, in terms of appropriateness to the institution’s strategy and environment. This analysis covers both tangible and intangible assets, such as trust, loyalty and reputation. Secondly,
Clarke uses system network mapping that helps assess these competencies in relation to the complex, but flexible, interrelationships between staff and other facilities, highlighting especially those that are not easily imitated and are thus hard to replace. Taken together these are then viewed in terms of their usefulness in informing decision processes about strategy in collegiate institutions.

Clarke (1997) asserts that normally 'allocative mechanisms have always been derived from the overriding strategic paradigm' (p2), but that the approach suggested could indicate the value of distinguishing different types of higher education structures: collegiate, bureaucratic and functional, even within a given organisation. The implication of this resource based assessment of core competencies is that it allows for an assessment of the appropriateness of resources. This can then be followed by a prioritisation of the distinctive strengths revealed depending upon 'the flexibility of specific resources and the expertise of general resources' (p4). This work resonates with the work of Caballero et al (2002) above on using efficiency measures to guide strategic choices on resources. However the work of Stiles (2004) above suggests that things might not be so simple, as even within academic units different values might be in operation, such as around teaching and research and that this can cause tension and conflict.

Another approach to this problem of the flexibility of the resource base is explored using the similarities between professional service firms (PSFs) and university departments (McAleer E and McHugh M 1994). These researchers decided that of Mintzberg's (1979) five organisation types 'professional bureaucracy' was the one that most resembled a university. In this model there is a high reliance on highly skilled professionals who work closely with clients in complex work. They have control over work that is stable, leading to standard products in a process Mintzberg described as 'pigeonholing' (McAleer E and McHugh M 1994)(p2). This might describe the undergraduate programmes, however other more customised work also exists in the form of doctoral studies, research, and other initiatives. So there might be an accumulation of diverse activities built up by these relatively autonomous individuals and this might come into conflict with managerialist demands to meet corporate strategies.
These strategies they see as informed by the values and goals of the organisation that in turn influence the allocation of key resources (McAleer E and McHugh M 1994). These key resources in a university are the academic staff who are active in various markets, namely undergraduate and post graduate, research and consultancy. McAleer and McHugh then use Maister's (1982) model of the PSF to explore his professional service firm types: Brains, Grey Hair and Procedure, each of which targets a different market. For example Brains work on complex problems requiring novel solutions, Grey Hair provides a customised service requiring experience of a certain problem. Procedure on the other hand requires fairly standard solutions. They go on to describe how these relate to university work. For example first year undergraduate work could be seen as Procedure, whereas doctoral work as Brains. Maister's model of PSFs suggests that success in maximising the human capital is determined by the project mix, the allocation of projects to individuals and a consensus on the definition of excellence. The researchers go on to describe how this can be used to the benefit of both the individual and the organisation. They see the need to balance workload and to match staff to the different levels of task complexity. However they see that although this might give efficiencies it might not be stimulating or motivating, nor would it allow for staff development. To address this problem they go on to develop a grid with service types (Brains etc) on one axis and work types on the other. In this way the allocation process could move newer staff across from the more procedural work gradually into wider fields such as the Brain area. This would then enhance the numbers who could work in other fields. This would provide extra stimulation and interest to the individual, whilst assisting the university to become both more efficient and effective.

Looking at the resource allocation research it seems that workload allocation is a complex issue where driving for ever more detail can become counter-productive, it raises questions as to whether the aim perhaps should be to remain at a rough, dynamic level. Within the work on strategic choices there seems to be a dialectic in operation between the more technical aspects such as core competencies, and efficiency measures and the 'softer' aspects such as academic values and goals. As Becher and Kogan note (1992) central authorities may use the 'rational mode' planning and evaluating resources against goals and objectives, whereas at lower levels 'models of accountability are in contention' where 'academic reputation
remains the prime reward' (p175). It would seem from this that unless the model used is co-owned with the staff in question problems are likely to occur and efforts should be made to link the exercise beyond simple coping to take an organisational assets view of staff and to accommodate developmental aspects.

2.6 Summary

The earlier parts of the synthesis looked at stress and many sources showed the relationship between it and the degree of fit between a person and their environment, or work context. Many of these aspects seem relatively fixed, for example the total amount of work required to be done, or the person’s characteristics that make them respond to it in certain ways. Yet there are aspects that might be practically influenced by actions at a university and departmental level. The later sections reviewed aspects such as leadership styles, communication processes, models of trust and lastly resource planning models. These interpersonal elements have been shown to be capable of positively influencing job satisfaction and motivation levels and the sort of coping responses adopted. Thus, the synthesis helped to clarify, on the one hand, the likely impacts of a range of environmental factors and, on the other hand, the scope for action by universities using variables more fully within their scope of direct influence.

The literature synthesis has revealed that although many aspects surrounding workloads have been researched intensively the actual specific issue of the management of academic work loads as a process is a more neglected area. Overall there is not a clear proposition to test, but the literature has served to sensitise the researcher to a wide range of issues that might emerge from the fieldwork. The findings of the synthesis have implications for the methodology adopted and the next chapter responds to the lack of specific material in this area by looking at ways that can accommodate such limited pre-existing theory. It should be noted at this point that the literature will be reviewed again later in the light of the fieldwork findings.
3 Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Underpinnings

The philosophical positions underlying any research programme may be described in broad terms as positivism and phenomenology, and each stance has implication for research practice (Easterby-Smith M et al. 1991). Positivism assumes the existence of a social world as an external reality that may be objectively observed and measured using theory-neutral observational language. A number of implications run from this upon which there are various degrees of agreement. One implication that can be seen to follow from positivism is that the observer is independent of what is being examined and that choices made in the study are free from their subjective interests and beliefs. Another dimension of positivism relates to the adherence to the process of hypothesis, observation and deduction of causality. Phenomenology by contrast sees reality not as objectively determined but rather socially constructed, the individual interpretation of experience, ‘what one perceives, senses and knows’ (Moustakas C 1994) p26). The stance taken will obviously affect the approach taken and the methodologies used, however research methods adopted may work at a position between the two extremes. For example, positivist methods may be used, but this data may be seen as subjective responses rather than as objective facts. As Cassell and Symon note (1994) it is not techniques themselves that are positivist or phenomenological, but how that data is used and interpreted that defines epistemological assumptions (p3).

Another way of looking at this issue is the approach of Johnson and Duberley (2000) who look at both the ontological and the epistemological stances in relation to research approaches (p180). Broadly speaking an objectivist view of ontology assumes a social or natural reality with an existence independent of human cognitive processes. In a simplified representation the epistemological stances that may be taken in this context are objectivist, that is positivism as discussed above, or subjectivist approaches where the view is that reality can only be seen or described through the subjective responses of a given consciousness. On the other hand a subjectivist ontology, which sees reality as a function of our mental cognitive processes is also
compatible with a subjectivist epistemology (for example postmodernism), whilst an
objectivist approach would be nonsensical. So from this one can see that views of the
nature of reality, the ontological perspective, can strongly influence the choice of
epistemological stance.

The distinctions (Easterby-Smith M et al. 1991) between the two epistemological
paradigms has consequences in various areas of the research. For example it affects
the view of the independence of the researcher, the sampling design, for instance
through large questionnaires or through a focus on a small number of case studies
perhaps re-examined over time (p34). Another choice relates to whether research is
driven by a theory that is tested, perhaps through forms of experiment, or in contrast
developed as a result of the research fieldwork. As Easterby – Smith and his
colleagues point out the criteria for research design are influenced not just by the
researcher’s own views and potentially from other parties such as funding
organisations, but also by the context of that research and the need to generate
findings that have validity, reliability and generalisability. However from a
phenomenological stance there would be reservations about the latter aspects that
could imply the acceptance of one absolute reality in a positivist sense (p40).

These are issues that Johnson and Duberley (2000) develop in their book. In relation
to epistemology they describe a central paradox of circularity, ‘in that any theory of
knowledge presupposes knowledge of the conditions in which knowledge takes place’
(p3). From this they see that it follows that there are no absolute foundations from
which to start considering our knowledge of knowledge, rather there are ‘competing
philosophical assumptions’ (p4). These philosophical questions, that are beyond the
scope of this research, are also addressed by Williams (2001). In discussing
epistemology he both distinguishes between propositional knowledge and knowledge
such as that of familiarity and practical mastery and looks at their interdependence.
He discusses philosophical arguments about scepticism regarding any knowledge
(p61), but also notes that within all this fundamental argument there tends to be some
consensus over what knowledge excludes: that is ‘ignorance, error and (mere)
opinion’ (p16).
In view of this perhaps the best that can be done in relation to this is to become more self aware, reflexive, about these assumptions that affect the way that we see and interpret our world. Johnson and Duberley describe how this reflexivity varies in its type and degree depending on the epistemological stance of the researcher. They describe methodological reflexivity that involves attempts to more accurately represent reality through elimination of methodological lapses (p178). Such a stance would be taken in positivist epistemological approaches. However epistemic reflexivity can be seen as a process that probes the ‘knowledge constraining’ beliefs and assumptions of the researcher, where the implication is that these structures become themselves researchable. The authors acknowledge the potential problems inherent in such an approach, of ‘debilitating relativism’ and also the possibility of actually engaging with these meta-theoretical assumptions (p179). However they go on to show how this approach operates in relation to theories such as Critical Theory and Critical Realism that operate within the realm of objectivist ontology, subjectivist epistemology.

Johnson and Duberley (2000) describe the standpoint of the critical theorist Jurgen Habermas who argues that socio-cultural factors, that influence sensory experience and management theory, work to serve the interests of particular group. Habermas sees the solution to this problem in a situation where consensus and debate drive argument and analysis. This would result in the creation of legitimate knowledge and new interpretations, rather than through the authoritative views of a powerful privileged few (p186). Although such a situation of socially constructed definitions of reality is an ideal, because of the nature of society, Johnson and Duberley raise practical questions in relation to it and management research. Firstly who are the 'potential communicants in any discourse about knowledge’ (p186) and secondly how can there be any certainty that systematic distortions are not occurring within the process, so that other voices are silenced or marginalised. The other objectivist ontology, subjectivist epistemology in this group is that of Critical Realism. This approach argues that all knowledge is socially constructed, but would see that the veracity of theories and cognitive systems can be evaluated through their ‘practical adequacy’ (Johnson P and Duberley J 2000)(p187). The epistemic reflexivity arising from both of these theoretical stances leads, in the opinion of the authors, not to any better or more accurate account. However the reframing of the researcher’s self
knowledge about meta theoretical assumptions may lead to 'different accounts of the same phenomenon which thereby become available to transformation' (p188).

At a practical level Johnson and Duberley (2000) explain how such epistemic reflexivity brings about a recognition by researchers of their own creative role in the creation of knowledge about management. This brings with it a responsibility to question their aims, priorities and interests and interrogate practical implications of them. They conclude that this approach means an engagement with subjects excluded from the dominant discourses, focusing on the process of knowledge development, looking at both problems and organisational realities in new ways, that may develop knowledge to cope practically with problems.

In relation to the philosophical stance adopted in this research it would seem that although a subjectivist ontology, that sees reality almost as a function of our mental processes, might provide interesting insights it does not however coincide with the views of the researcher who holds a belief that the world has a reality independent of cognitive process. Further an objectivist view is also more appropriate to research that has the intention of providing some theories about a practical issue. However in relation to the epistemological approach taken the nature of the research would suggested a subjectivist stance, in that reality, in this instance the university, needed to be seen through the subjective responses of academics. These responses about the whole process of work allocation could not be objectively observed, recorded, or measured. Both the researcher and the interviewee response to the situation would not be neutral or independent. The recognition of this aspect might help to reduce the pitfalls, for example the researcher bringing their own prejudices to the issue, and help to increase the benefit, that is obtaining a wide, rich perspective on the issues.

For this research then the theoretical perspective of Pragmatic Critical Realism (Johnson P and Duberley J 2000) informs the approach taken. This approach considers that all knowledge is socially constructed, but would see that the veracity of theories and cognitive systems can be evaluated through their 'practical adequacy' (p187) or as Patton calls it the 'criterion of utility' (2002)(p579). It helps to bring awareness of the interests of the researcher shaping the research project, the questions
it asks, the areas it chooses to look into, even in to questioning its essential premise, that work loads should or can be allocated.

3.2 Methodological Decisions

The above has implications in the choices regarding techniques, for example with qualitative approaches often suiting interpretative paradigms. However the choices are not stark, as quantitative techniques can be used in conjunction with qualitative techniques within a phenomenological approach. Looking more practically it can also be seen that an approach using either questionnaires or surveys, that would most easily be used in quantitative studies, would be unlikely to provide the sort of information needed to understand the complex workings of this issue. Such an approach would give insights into areas such as the amount of time worked and how this was broken up between various tasks or roles, however it would not provide insights into how the process worked and about detailed aspects such as feelings about procedures involved. In order to get these sorts of insights qualitative methods would be more appropriate. There have been a variety of ways of looking at qualitative methods and traditions as described by Silverman (1993) such as the ethnographic tradition of direct observation, the semiotics of textual analysis that may be researched within the tradition of positivism or phenomenology described above. Moustakas (1994) provides a conceptual framework for the last, looking at a variety of descriptions of it, such as that of Hegel, who saw it as knowledge as it appears to consciousness (p26). This draws in the idea of intentionality, or the orientation of mind to object and the attempt to eliminate prejudgment, seeking the truth of things through perception (p41). Moustakas goes onto describe, like Silverman above, the various qualitative methods, such as the focus, intention and meaning behind appearances within a text in hermeneutics, the unravelling of the elements of experience in Grounded Theory and the puzzling out of a question on human experience through interrogating its various layers in heuristic enquiry. However despite differences in technique he sees some common bonds between the qualitative approaches such as: the focusing on the wholeness of experience rather than just on the parts, the searching for meanings rather than measurements and explanations, and the obtaining of descriptions from first hand accounts (Moustakas C 1994)(p21).
In summary then for this research the fieldwork could have utilised participant observation, diary keeping, conversational analysis or interviews. However financial constraints rule out observation methods and neither they nor diary keeping would help with understanding of the issues involved. Further as this was a relatively new area archival research alone was unlikely to be fruitful. Interviews on the other hand are, as Nigel King argues, (Cassell C and Symon G 1994) (p14) flexible and give a depth of understanding on an issue without causing discomfort to participants in the way that observation methods might. The question then arises as to how that interview data should be analysed. A useful approach is that classified by Cassell and Symon (1994) using a framework proposed by Miller and Crabtree (1992) for analysing qualitative data from interviews. These are: ‘quasi-statistical’ methods that turn textual data into quantitative data; ‘templates’ that use an analysis guide that is adapted through the process; ‘editing’ methods where the interpreter enters the text looking for meaningful segments, comparing in a cyclical manner, leading to a summary on the phenomenon; and lastly ‘immersion’ or crystallization methods that rely on immersion and reflection on the data over a considerable period (Cassell C and Symon G 1994) (p25).

The first method listed of analysing interview data, the ‘quasi-statistical, seemed inappropriate to the study because it would not uncover the subtleties and interrelated aspects of the cases. The ‘template’ approach would presuppose a view of the categories to be studied and this would be inappropriate in this new line of enquiry. The last method, of ‘immersion’, would be too resource intensive and would limit the field covered. For these reasons the choice made between these various methods was that of a cyclical comparing process of editing. Within this, the approach that was adopted was that of ‘Grounded Theory’ as pioneered by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This method involves inductively building up theory through comparisons of the same event or process, but in different situations. The inductive work here involves then the move from the particular, the processes, to the general, the theory. The specific area of work allocation for academics, where there appears to be little research done, seemed fitting to this method. Locke (2001) sees Grounded Theory as sharing some of the aspects of Modernist approaches in its concern for verifying hypothesis and the replicability of findings. However its concern for subjective experience locates it within the interpretative paradigm.
Strauss and Corbin (1990) provide Grounded Theory techniques and procedures as a guide to practice. Their book describes how the main purpose of grounded theory is to develop a theory and that to do this a question is needed that allows an uncovering of the phenomena involved through free, deep and flexible exploration. Theoretical saturation will eventually be reached through constant comparisons about a given phenomenon. This process will then involve the development of substantive theory, closely related to the practice domain as opposed to the more abstract formal theory. The question might start broadly and as the data collection proceeds become more focused as the relationships involved became more apparent. Theoretical sensitivity would be encouraged through an awareness of the technical literature that might show areas that were repeatedly seen as relevant in a given area. Importantly the process itself of, asking questions, making comparisons between responses and organising these into mini frameworks about concepts and their relationship with each other, helps in the process of evolving theory (p43). This process then involves interplay of data collection with its analysis, as Patton notes triangulation between methods can help to strengthen the research (2002)(p574).

Within this process Strauss and Corbin (1990) emphasise the need to minimise bias and assumptions by questioning the findings and hypothesis by comparing them with the data itself. In this research on the allocation of time to academics’ work the general grounded theory principles were followed, but an effort was made to simplify the approach and relate it to an organisational level of analysis. Partington (2000) describes his attempt to simplify the approach to accommodate the specific problems of ‘mode 2’ management researchers, using a simplified paradigm of environmental stimulus cognition to management action (p95). However the model does not seem to follow through strongly to consequences resulting from actions, something that Strauss and Corbin (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990) do stress, and this seems a loss when understanding of outcomes is key to judging management actions.

Within this general epistemological approach it was necessary to clearly identify the object to be studied. For this particular study it can be seen that there was a hierarchy of possibilities from: the HE sector in general, to specific universities, to units such as departments within universities, to individual academics. Given the desire to
understand how workload allocation processes operate in context the intention was to take a case study approach, which as Locke (p16) suggests, primarily concerns the identification of the “bounded system” to be studied. Yin (1989) suggests that case studies are appropriate to research where the focus is on contemporary events and where the investigator has little control over events as they would in an experiment. They may be used as a tool to explain, describe or explore real-life interventions. Also in his definition of case studies he states that the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly defined and that it is a method that utilises multiple sources of evidence. Further the questions posed in this type of research relate to ‘how’ and ‘why’ areas of understanding gained through techniques such as systematic interviewing (Yin R 1989)(p17-19).

Following Yin’s terminology (1989), as several universities were being researched it had to be a multiple case study design. Further because subunits, such as departments, were attended to, the design would be of “embedded” cases (p49). This unit of analysis was, as Yin suggests, determined by the initial research question (p.31), in this research this entailed understanding how the workload of academics was allocated in universities and the reasons why it occurred in such a way. Information was drawn from interviews with individual academics supplemented by archival data where available.

In relation to analysis of the findings Yin (1989) describes how pattern matching within cases might be used to test out theoretical propositions, which might then be modified in the cross case analysis, so that broad conclusions can be drawn (p56). However in this research, as described above, there was not a well-developed theoretical foundation to work from, and so within the Grounded Theory approach it meant that the theoretical propositions emerged out of the case studies (rather than being tested within them) in an iterative process that Yin terms ‘explanation building’ (p114). Cross case analysis then allowed general findings to be drawn that led ultimately to conclusions on how the allocation process could be improved within the sector.

The starting point for this analysis in Grounded Theory (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990) is the breaking down of interview data in a process called coding. Open, axial and
selective coding ask different questions relevant to the different phases of the research. The first category of ‘open coding’ relates to the ‘breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data’ (p61). The steps in this process involve the conceptualisation of phenomena and giving each a name. These concepts may, when they become more numerous, be compared and those that seem to be similar grouped into categories however these relationships are still considered to be provisional. The categories have attributes or characteristics, called properties, that are shared that also have dimensional aspects along their continuum. The analysis of interview data may operate in a very detailed line by line way, or at the other extreme look at what is happening in the interview overall and comparing it with others that have been coded (p73). Memos are the means by which emerging thoughts are kept along the way on ideas about a category, its properties, and relationships.

The next stage after this is called ‘axial coding’ where the data that has been ordered into categories is put back together in new ways through making connections between the categories in relation to the conditions that give rise to it (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990)(p97). This includes the conditions and context of the category, the strategies by which it is handled and the consequence of those strategies. ‘Selective coding’ follows on from this as the means to conceptualise a story from the central phenomena of the study. In order to do this the core category must be chosen that is abstract enough to encompass all areas of the issue. Then the core properties of this core category are identified and its subsidiary categories related to it. These are arranged into the paradigmatic relationship of conditions, context, strategies and consequences around the storyline provided by the core category. The sequential order of the story is the key to ordering the categories. In this study the workload allocation process was the core category and a range of properties were selected as described below (see chapter 5). Another step in the process is that detail needs to be filled in to give conceptual density and specificity. Strauss and Corbin (1990) stressed that these stages in selective coding do not occur in a sequential order, but that the researcher moves back and forward between them.

See Figure 1 below. (Barrett PS and Stanley C 1999)
Such a process relies on the validity and reliability of the findings being tested. In relation to construct validity (Yin R 1989) this meant that the correct operational measures were adopted for the study area, this included tactics such as multiple sources of evidence as well as establishing a chain of evidence. In this research this was achieved through the stratified samples within and across universities as described below (see section 3.2). Internal validity relates to how causal relationships are investigated and this may require tactics such as pattern matching logic. In Grounded Theory this can involve a process of revision and refinement through comparisons between the cases (p113) that can be used in an iterative process of explanation building. On the other hand external validity, deals with issues of generalisability, and relies on replication logic that requires the development of a rich theoretical framework about a phenomenon and its context (Yin R 1989) (p44; 53).

Making as many of the research steps as operational as possible may enhance reliability that may be then checked by another investigator carrying out the same case study again.

Denzin (1970) refers to this process in relation to investigator triangulation (p303) as a means to reduce bias and ensure greater reliability. Although this might be ideal, in this research it was not practical, however subsequent researchers would have a clear methodology to follow in any replication studies. Further Denzin sees theoretical triangulation as a means to consider various theoretical viewpoints in order to test
their usefulness, rather than choosing one central hypothesis. This may work well with Grounded Theory as it can eventually test out the robustness of the practical findings (Barrett PS and Stanley C 1999) (p149). These two approaches together have resonance with Soft Systems Theory, which works through cycling between real world problems and systems thinking until a fit between the practical problem and the theoretical model is achieved (Checkland P 1993). From that basis feasible and desirable changes can be explored and actions proposed (p163).

Checkland states that: 'every statement about a human activity system must be a statement about the system plus a particular W [Weltanschauung] associated with it' (p220). Thus, the perspective chosen must be explicitly acknowledged and will be a product of the researcher’s necessary practical, pragmatic choices. But there will be implicit biases as a result of the researcher’s individual experience and so there is merit in later stages of a project in challenging this primary perspective through using multiple theoretical approaches drawn from the literature. Further as Janesick (1998) notes the researcher also needs to understand and acknowledge their own stance, be it as an outsider or one actively participating with the processes under analysis or a combination of these extreme. She goes on to argue that through this the issue of subjectivity is acknowledged, understood and aids fuller understanding of the interpretation of data in the search for meaning (p62). This then complements the methodological triangulation in this research, which is using case studies within a Grounded Theory approach.

In line with Checkland’s theories (1993) it was also necessary to identify the particular Weltanschauung of the study (as opposed to the researcher). This could be individual staff members, university leaders, heads of departments or schools, union representatives and so on. As the study was involved with the interfaces between individuals, departments and university the most appropriate perspective seemed to be HoD/S. Individual perspectives by their very nature would focus on subjective experience and perspectives from the wider organisation, whilst broad, would probably not encompass the detailed experience of workload allocation. Heads on the other hand would be a link between these two, with experience of the model, its impact on staff and an awareness of how it linked to the organisational environment and strategies. The stance of the researcher was identified as an informed outsider.
Informed because she was working within one of the work spheres, research, involved within workload makeup and aware of many of the contextual issues through family contacts, these would have informed her stance on some issues. However the researcher would consider herself an outsider in that she works within a research unit of a university and is not part of the a department or school that has to balance a variety of work types to meet many and changing needs.

Other considerations to give structure to this type of study (Checkland P 1993)(p225) are: a root definition for the study, that involves the focus on the main activity or transformation to be studied, for this work this is the work allocation process itself. The time frame for the study also has to be identified, and this set at a period of approximately a year, as this would probably account for a full cycle of allocation. The ownership of the system, those with the prime concern and ultimate power over it, and this could be said to be the university itself; the actors within who carry out its main activities, these would be academic staff; and the customers, who would again be the academic staff. Environmental constraints are also part of the root definition of the system, introducing aspects of the wider university and sector that impinge on the process. As mentioned above the outlook on this whole process, the Weltanschauung, would be that of Head of Department/School. So although the methodology accommodates multiple perspectives, ultimately the soft systems approach focuses them around this primary view for the analysis.

In sum the Grounded Theory approach was chosen as being appropriate method to research a complex social issue, founded as it is on multiple perspectives in the real world, with an emphasis on theory building. Within this a case study framework seemed the most fitting way to capture the interaction between university and department level rather than interviewing discreet individuals, however a main focus, that of HoD/S, was chosen. The findings from the Grounded Theory approach were then analysed in relation to appropriate theoretical studies from the literature to triangulate the emergent findings. Such an approach is informed by Soft Systems ideas that advocate a cycling between real world problems and theoretical models until a fit, between the two is achieved.
3.3 Selection of Sample: Universities

As the study was theory building in nature and to maximise the robustness of the findings, the research design stressed achieving triangulation from a rich variety of sources. Thus the universities themselves were not selected randomly, rather they were chosen to give a broad picture across the sector, so that size, geographical location and type of university grouping were taken into account. For the last, the groupings are as set out in the UUK 'Patterns of Higher Education Institutions in the UK: Third report' (UUK 2003). Care was also taken to avoid selecting those universities heavily involved with other external research projects. Some universities that were approached initially also declined to be involved owing to heavy commitments resulting from issues such as restructuring. Apart from the six UK universities two non-HE knowledge intensive establishments and two Australian universities were selected to add richness to the perspectives captured in line with Denzin's (1970) theories on triangulation.

This sampling frame is partly summarised in Table 2, but full details cannot be given in order to preserve the anonymity of the case study organisations.

Table 2: Diverse Selection of Sample Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>No. students</th>
<th>UK university grouping</th>
<th>O'seas Unis</th>
<th>Non-education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>CMU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19,500</td>
<td>CMU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Russell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>47,000</td>
<td>Non-aligned/Alliance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>31,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3.4. Selection of Sample: Staff

In order to get a broad view of the process the interviews were designed to cover a range of staff at each university using purposeful sampling (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990)(p183). In each two lecturers and their heads of department were interviewed, as well as a senior staff member, and representatives from Personnel and the union body. Through the paired interviews of the lecturer and Head of Department/School, insights were gained in detail on two departments. From the other interviews, such as the senior member of staff and the union representative, the insights and information
gleaned ranged over a wider number of departments. Staff members interviewed were usually selected through the university, often via the personnel office approaching a department who then selected someone or asked for volunteers. Obviously this process was not perfect because of the potential for staff to be chosen for example due to their compliant nature. Consequentially a full range of issues and practices relevant to the research question might not be covered. However the diversity of responses and their forthrightness indicates that in practice it was not as problematic as might have been expected. Further a wide range of disciplines were seen. See Table 3.

Table 3: Range of Departments / Schools Involved In Case Studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arts and Humanities</th>
<th>Law x 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built Environment</td>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Medical and Radiation Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering x 2</td>
<td>Psychological Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Specialist History dept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Transport Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT and Informatics</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior to the interviews each member of staff was sent information on confidentiality and on how the information would be stored and used (Moustakas C 1994). They were informed that the interview would be taped and the interviewee coded to maintain confidentiality and the computer files codeword guarded. They were also informed that they could stop the interview at any point and decline to answer if they so wished. After the interview the transcriptions would be sent to them so that they could see that the account reflected what transpired. If there was agreement the ethical consent form was signed by both the researcher and the interviewee.

3.5 Summary
The preceding chapter has identified the ontological and epistemological basis of the study and describes the specific methodological approach to be used and the implications that this has for field work choices, such as the sample selection of universities and staff. The following chapters on fieldwork, coding, case study and mapping diagrams give further details within the methodological approach of inductively generating theory. However another aspect covered in a later section (section 12.5) is use of a framework to plot field results in order to assess the emergent theoretical model. Further an additional case study (section 12.6) is specifically
chosen because of its attributes and because a longitudinal view of change within the process could be examined, again to test out the theoretical model. This reflects the unfolding iterative nature of the theory building process.
4 Fieldwork

4.1 Semi-structured Questionnaire

Many of the issues that seemed pertinent to the research area were revealed in the large surveys that provided evidence that academic staff felt overloaded with work and that a large portion of them felt that they were not coping (Kinman G and Jones F 2004). Research, in relation to issues such as coping and stress, looks at how the ‘fit’ between an individual and their environment influences their response (French J et al. 1982). Such research then gives insights into areas that could be investigated in relation to workload allocation, namely the context in which the staff member works and also about the person themselves, for example asking how they feel about their environment. This approach could range from objective questions, such as on the actual processes used for the allocation, to more subjective responses on, for example, the benefits or disadvantages of such an approach.

An initial draft of issues, stimulated both from the literature and personal experience of the researcher was compiled. These worked across three interrelated areas, university level, academic unit and individual. Broadly it covered:

- Generic areas such as codes of practice within the university, departmental context and the normal allocation process that the interviewee experienced and the transparency of it.
- Own workload.
- Work relationships (specifically in relation to the process and consequences of the allocation).
- Perceptions on the organisational culture.

It was expected that this broad set of questions would become more focused during the interview process. It needs to be stressed that although there was a checklist of issues that could be covered care was taken neither to direct or bias the interviews (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990) (p180). In practice this meant that these rather open questions allowed for responses that ranged over a lot of the areas to be covered. So,
the approach in each case was then personalised to accommodate these sorts of responses, with the questionnaire in the background as a checklist in case major areas were overlooked. However as Janesick (1998) notes although the researcher must acknowledge and understand any subjective ideological bias they can actively use their skills in the interpretation of data and understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon. She notes how within a disciplined plan of enquiry the researcher must use all their senses, including those of intuitive feelings, to sharpen up their enquiry into those areas that are often left hidden or unsaid (p62). This may be seen as part of the an understanding about the gaps and silences of a discourse and the relationship between the explicit and the implicit (Macherey P 1990). Such awareness led to the researcher, at times during the interview to sense that something was being left unsaid and this led onto a line of enquiry that was often both unexpected and fruitful.

More generally though within the above four main areas there were more detailed questions (see Appendix 1). Examples from the ‘generic’ section would be: perceptions of the effectiveness of the process and the benefits and problems that had resulted from it. From the section on ‘own work allocation’ questions ranged over; how representative their workloads were within their department; the ways that staff managed competing demands at work, for example as teacher and researcher; their degree of autonomy in the work and even their feelings of competence; and the satisfaction they gained in their work. In relation to ‘work relationships’ the literature opened out a wealth of options that were relevant to the research question such as: the degree of consultation involved and how decisions were communicated and opportunities for feedback in the process; perceptions of fairness in the system and also issues such as trust between the parties involved. The section on ‘organisational culture’ elicited views on issues such as the sharing of information and communication between all the university levels; aspects such as mergers, restructuring or other initiatives such as centralised timetabling. At the end of the interview time was given for the interviewee to raise any other issues that had not already been covered that they felt was pertinent to the issue.

This was just the broad initial framework that was adapted to fit each specific, university, role and individual. For example, it might relate to their role as a recipient of an allocation, or for heads of department it might cover how they developed or
acquired their resource allocation system and whether they had any training or support from the university in this area. Further they could cover areas such as the systems that they used to monitor and review the process to maintain equity. Senior, union and personnel staff were asked more generally about different mechanisms operating across the university and about the different outcomes resulting from them. Further a range of issues resulted from the different university contexts and this had an effect on the activities and preoccupations of staff. So although there was an initial range of issues that seemed pertinent the interviews themselves generated new avenues of enquiry, so most importantly the interviews had to remain open and responsive to the interviewee’s thoughts.

These new issues related to both general and specific areas. The general areas that these responses opened up were issues such as how the process worked strategically, for example directing work in certain areas and also how adaptable the allocation model was to incorporate the demands of new modules, new staff and sabbatical leave. Another issue that emerged from the initial interviews was that of space in the allocation for creative thought, and whether this was provided for example in numerous small slices or fewer longer periods. Another aspect that came out of the interviews was whether the process was linked at all to the appraisal process and in relation to the Head of Department/School perceptions of their leverage to influence performance. From the interviews with heads of department issues arose around how their own allocation was decided upon and whether generally certain types of work were linked more positively with promotion. A frequent, but unexpected issue, also arose about how staff with high workloads present, for example with pride in their industry or feelings of doubt about efficiency.

Other more specific contextual areas also arose for example out of a university’s origins and out of its plans for change. This opened up issues such as relationships with union representatives and their impact on working practices. Or taking another example the relationship between strategic plans by the university to invest in research to improve their RAE status, their recruitment plans and on the way this affected work allocations to members of staff.
Once again it needs to be stressed that few of these actual questions were posed, as usually a general question elicited a wide-ranging response that covered many of the more specific angles. At the end of each set of university interviews a short summary was made of the general findings about that institution as an *aide memoire*. The interviews were recorded digitally and then downloaded as voice files before being finally transcribed into word documents. Once checked these records were sent to the participants for their confirmation as being a good record of the interview.

So in summary the fieldwork chapter covered choices on the range of questions and the more mechanistic choices involved in practically accomplishing the interviews. The following chapter looks at how the material produced was analysed within a Grounded Theory approach.
5 Open Coding

Coding of the documents then was carried out based on the general procedures set out by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and described above (section 3.2). This involved the comparing of phenomena leading to groupings of similar issues under a general category name. As part of this process informal memos were written about the categories and their properties and these were eventually summarised in a criteria table (see Appendix 3). So for example one such grouping was “work allocation practices”, and this had attributes, called properties, such as transparency and consistency, which in turn had dimensions along a continuum. As the interviews proceeded these categories were added to and, on occasions, merged where similarities and overlaps were found, additionally the appropriate level of detail was tuned through experience. The final form of the categories is given in Table 4.

NVivo software was then used to plot and explore the findings as an aid to uncover relationships and to help to develop theory from the findings (Gibbs G 2002). To do this transcripts were analysed and coded, this could be at the level of paragraph sentence or even word. This then allowed the researcher to call up all the references to a given category or property from wherever they chose, from one interview from all interviews or from a particular set of interviews. Further different categories could be placed in sets together to allow for different sorts of comparison to be made.

Note: the terms category, phenomenon and node are used interchangeably, although the word node is the more technical term used in NVivo to cover all dimensions used, category and phenomena are mainly used in relation to the broader groups.
### Table 4: Coding Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories/phenomena</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allocation Process</strong></td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Common or diverse across the university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equity / Fairness</td>
<td>Ranging in degree. HoD/S role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model development/ history</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disputes/Conflict</td>
<td>degree experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>open or non-open process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Hour unit / FTE/Other. Accuracy/Allowances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staffing-Balancing Roles or loads, including recruitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility (including sabbaticals)</td>
<td>Range of flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Staff</td>
<td>Allowance made or not made in allocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOD/S Role</td>
<td>Leadership/ strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Range in degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dept / faculty Strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dept / Faculty Environment</td>
<td>Including size, subject, RAE etc and existing methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home working</td>
<td>Extensive or limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Code of Practice / Policy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>New or stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Issues relating to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment and marking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Range of class size. Number of Modules Involved. Hours*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scholarship Activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Teaching Staff/Students.</td>
<td>Part timers (and Research students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>RAE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Empirical/ Non Empirical</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bidding / Grants</td>
<td>Time allocated or not. Grant Implications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research Students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Allocated/residual time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administration</strong></td>
<td>Types</td>
<td>Quality Audits. Finance. Marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workload</strong></td>
<td>Fit</td>
<td>Degree of match Work to Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Hours* etc. Over burden/Creative space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support Factors</td>
<td>IT mechanisms. Library. Staff aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distribution Patterns</td>
<td>Spread and work combinations also holidays/research days/evening work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Specific tasks undertaken and open-endedness. Part-time staff.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Timesheets</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Activities/ Influences</strong></td>
<td>Consultancy work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Professional Associations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Contracts</strong></td>
<td>Part-time or sessional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Response</td>
<td>Service length / Age profiles</td>
<td>New/Experienced staff etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Efficiency and quality. Student assessment of teaching. Extra activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behaviour/Relationships</td>
<td>Responses to the allocation system such as changing teaching methods or even social interactions. Home/Work balance. Motivation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>Prioritise / slog / lower standards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Role/research/Teaching</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Frustrations</td>
<td>Areas that in T/R, or A irritated staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Autonomous/Interference</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Union</td>
<td>Degree of influence. EB agreements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Management style</td>
<td>Collegial / managerial</td>
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<td>Leadership</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strategies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Communication / shared</td>
<td>Good / poor communication / sharing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Values/Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>High / low trust. Dept or university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Degree of Involvement with Org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Systems</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Full Economic Costing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review / Appraisal</td>
<td>Linked to process or not linked to process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Availability of schemes</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Degree related to work types</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Framework agreement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Centralised Timetabling</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

* Noted potential overlap between these two nodes on hours in teaching and workload area.

** This table was modified through use to incorporate new nodes as more cases were done and also as coding was carried out the appropriate level of detail was tuned through experience (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990)(p181). See Appendix 2 for the initial coding categories established.

After completion of the coding of the interviews for each university individual case analyses were written. The analytical framework for the cases was drawn from the open coding categories and properties, which were progressively reviewed and
simplified through the practical process of writing up the first two cases. This was based on an assessment of which categories / properties, in practice, were heavily populated or felt by interviewees to be important (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990) (p177).

All of the major categories were used with the exceptions of: “employment contract” (which was incorporated, as appropriate, in “teaching”, “research” or “organisation” sections) and “other activities” for which the few issues arising were covered elsewhere. Not surprisingly given the focus of the study, it was found that several of the “properties” under the “allocation process” category figured very heavily in the transcripts. To allow a clear analysis these were either grouped under “allocation methods” or made separate categories individually, or in natural combinations. Thus, the classification structure used for the individual case and cross-case analyses in the Chapters 6 and 7 below is as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Analytical Framework Used and Link to Open Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Framework</th>
<th>Link to Open Coding Categories / Properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Existing category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation Methods</td>
<td>Comprising of the following properties of “allocation process”: methods, consistency, model development,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>timings, staffing – balancing roles, new staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency and Equity</td>
<td>These two properties of “allocation process”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>This property of “allocation process”, plus home working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department/School Role and Consultation Process</td>
<td>These properties of “allocation process”, plus department strategies and department environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workloads</td>
<td>Existing category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Existing category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Existing category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Existing category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td>This property of “allocation process”, plus disputes / conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Response</td>
<td>Existing category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Existing category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Systems</td>
<td>Existing category</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This allowed data on each framework node category, such as transparency and equity, to be looked at across each university. Following the analysis of all these categories an initial summary report was made of each university interview set. This report described the range of methods, issues, experiences and feelings about the process. Through doing this various problems and also the positive aspects were highlighted.
The summary reports for each case study university are given in the Chapter 6 below. They still operate as part of the open coding process where phenomena are identified and their characteristics attributed. This continues in chapter 7 where cross case analysis of each node is presented. Together these two chapters provide the initial steps in presenting and categorising the raw data.
6 Summary Reports

6.1 Case Study 1

Policy
In relation to workload allocation the Code of Practice within the University was that each department developed its own scheme, however certain guidelines were issued that covered various principles to be considered, so that it was ‘equitable, transparent and defensible’. Departments were also advised to be able to map workload assessments onto student FTE data, so that it could be assessed if workloads were commensurate with funding and also to allow for interdepartmental comparisons. The code of practice also addressed the essential elements to be included such as the list of duties and the values attached to each and how each unit was measured; an explanation of how research was calibrated; how debits and credits were handled; how shared or part-time posts were accounted; information on audit schemes to ensure the scheme was free from discrimination. The Code of Practice then listed the various advantages of such a workload allocation scheme. These included issues relating to staff such as protecting junior staff, and on the creation of norms so that imbalances could be rectified and discussion could be based on principles rather than personalities, so helping to provide fairer systems that could improve morale. In relation to resources it might be used to identify uneconomic activities and to monitor changes in workloads and rectify imbalances. Further it might be used to protect research time from other pressures.

Allocation Methods
The study found that there were lots of different methods used and this was often a reflection of the particular culture of the department, historical precedent and the individual style of the Head of Department. It was generally felt that the University had had stable work patterns and relatively few problems or disputes in relation to workload. However it was felt that large organisational changes, such as reducing the number of faculties from five to three, and greater pressure from external sources, such as the RAE exercise and ‘Top Up’ fees could dramatically affect that culture, especially in relation to the teaching/ research balance. Generally throughout the
University there was an acceptance that the allocation system relied on equity, trust, and transparency in the process, and in all the cases seen this seemed to be working.

At an operational level some members of staff expressed an opinion that the various methods used for allocating workloads relied upon a ‘gut feeling about what was comparable’ rather than any exact science. They suggested that this might be ‘fuzzy’, in terms of accounting for aspects such as preparation and marking, and best really only at pinpointing the extreme positions of staff workload, that were either heavily or lightly loaded. Generally there was an abhorrence of the idea of any system that relied upon tight time accounting mechanisms, with the feeling that this would prove counter productive as staff discovered the actual number of hours that they were working and then choosing to limit them. One of the methods used was a points system that reflected the hours teaching that need to be covered; this then was given a scoring out of a hundred. However there was recognition that what these points reflected might increase as workloads went up over the years. This system also needed refinement to take into account the extra preparation and marking time for larger classes. The use of Full Time Equivalent student numbers (FTEs) went some way to accommodate this problem. In this case the load was calibrated on how much proportionately of the yearly student teaching was done. The advantage of this method was that it allowed staff the flexibility to divide their work up, in terms of the size of class they taught, as they felt most appropriate. Another advantage of it was that it also reflected the marking load that was involved, so that units with high student numbers were fairly measured.

Transparency and Equity

Potential friction between research and teaching areas was felt to be reduced through the transparency of the systems. Prior to having transparent systems one member of staff talked of ‘the good natured ill feeling’ that occurred where staff were suspicious of each other’s workloads. Transparent processes were felt to increase appreciation of the contribution of each side, for example in terms of research grants won or huge classes taught. The departments visited had open systems of accounting with some negotiation available within the process and publication of all staff workloads. However anecdotally some areas of the University had systems of allocation that were less transparent in their operations. Generally problems seemed to have occurred
when a department moved from a relatively transparent approach to one that was less so. Transparent systems were also felt by staff to have advantages at times of appraisal and in relation to promotion as they allowed hard work to be quantified and evidenced. However the appraisal process was seen to vary across the University, dependent very much on the stance of the Head of Department. Where workload allocation processes were transparent it worked well for staff planning, however there was a feeling that in some quarters that it was an irrelevance and not actively performed despite University efforts to promote it.

Promotion was reviewed in relation to all the different work areas however, there was still a feeling that research was the ‘stronger currency’, the ‘added spin’, especially in relation to research grants. There was some unease that this might become a problem adversely affecting other work areas, ‘through lack of joined-up-ness’.

**Head of Department Role and Consultation Process**

The role of the Head of Department was seen as a pivotal link within the University. Lecturers felt that their HoD/S were good at representing their views to the University, but had concerns that these heads were not always listened to, especially in relation to the competition existing on campus between departments. The changes that were taking place within the University, where small departments were being amalgamated, was seen by some as potentially beneficial in terms of opening up links between areas in both research and teaching areas. However some areas, described by one as ‘loosely linked cottage industries really rather than, kind of, a big industrial model of academic production’, were seen also to have worked quite productively in research terms. There were a few concerns about the centralisation of management and the erosion of departmental autonomy. There was some feeling that traditional collegiate structures were being eroded and areas such as the reduced academic representation at Council were seen as a worrying concentration of power. On the other hand there was an acceptance by staff of the need for the University to be economically focused and to respond to government targets and directives. Departments were working with their Faculty to develop business plans that would then form the basis of resource allocation.
Uncertainty was an issue. The right level of involvement and information were seen by some as the key to confidence, and trust in organisational decisions. There remained though a desire for greater ‘recognition of the human issues’ involved. However within the department the consultation processes were perceived to be working quite well.

**Workloads**

Workloads were felt to be high especially in those with high undergraduate numbers. This had led to unacceptable practices such as relatively new members of staff being given big administration jobs such as admissions. This then caused problems with new staff not being able to establish their research. However in other departments early retirements had led to recruitment of new staff who were given reduced teaching workloads and this too had increased the load for other staff. Many did acknowledge though that work overload was ‘partly [a] personality’ issue. Further there was a feeling that staff needed to match the job allocated and that when a mismatch occurred, problems and work could rebound on to other members of staff.

There was quite a lot of feeling surrounding the level of administrative work, the ‘huge infrastructure of support staff purely to effectively support external audit pressures’, rather than supporting ‘people on the ground’. Staff also talked about the pressures to ‘become more and more efficient’ in their work, in both teaching and administration. Some felt that they had to be quite ‘ruthless’ to protect any time for research. The problem of maintaining standards in all these areas made some staff feel fraught, ‘being pulled in every direction’.

**Teaching**

The demands and expectations of students on top of all the other work tasks had led some to feel that they had not had ‘the extra bit of energy that you need for teaching’. Staff were looking into different teaching modes to optimise the situation. Capping of class sizes did not usually occur and with the relatively small size of the departments, along with the specialisms being offered, had caused problems. Despite this staff seemed very committed and attached to their teaching, as one said they ‘sort of own their courses’. There was a strong belief in the importance of personal interaction with students and strategies were in place to assist with this, such as the distribution of
student's photographs. Another factor that had made planning difficult in relation to student numbers was the first year for students that had three parts, so that students took two subjects other than their main choice.

**Administration**

Administrative tasks within the FTE method of allocation were worked out through consultation between staff and Head of Department to equate comparables between a given role, such as being Part One Director equating to so many FTEs. This task once again involved considerable tweaking and renegotiation as certain roles proved to be more time-consuming than might have been expected. For example pastoral care roles were seen as time-consuming with many 'knock on' activities because of the relationships involved. On a few occasions there were suggestions that these sorts of roles fell more often to female staff members. Generally the pivotal role of Head of Department as arbitrator was apparent. As one Head also suggested this was exacerbated by the issue that they have, 'all the responsibility and none of the power' – especially in financial terms. Another issue in relation to the distribution of administrative roles was that certain roles required particular personal qualities and 'the safe pair of hands' option could often lead to 'willing horses' being overburdened. Personality issues were frequently referred to in the discussion as an unquantifiable aspect of the problem.

Other issues that fell to the discretion of the Head of Department were aspects such as the development of new courses and whether this should be reflected in the model. University-wide surveys revealed a feeling of overload especially in relation to administrative tasks. This would appear to be a vexed issue. Attempts had been made to strip some of the administrative work out of the departments, but a lot of what was felt to be administrative work was actually teaching related. Further, extra capacity brought in from more general staff was felt also to be meeting the ever-increasing demands from external bodies.

**Research**

The research element of workloads was taken into account, but often not actually weighted as such in the same way as teaching and administration. The supervision of research students and grant income were often used as drivers in the assessment.
However certain areas were seen as problematic. Research, especially in relation to RAE, was seen as important yet when teaching and administrative loads were high very little time was actually left for research. This was a problem for both lecturing staff and more senior figures. Effort had been made to provide a day clear of teaching for research, however problems of timetabling and the growth in postgraduate numbers had made this provision more vulnerable. Work with postgraduates who were on campus all year round had also affected space to work on research in the Summer vacation.

Problems
Potential problems that were flagged up were issues such as the use of teaching assistants, who might teach in seminars, but could not mark work such as the final exam scripts. This could cause huge surges in work volume that might not be reflected in the apparent work volume of the staff member responsible for the unit. However in the cases seen these issues were satisfactorily resolved through consultation with the Head of Department who was able to adjust the weighting to reflect the work involved. A practical aspect that caused problems for staff in planning out their own work was the encouragement given to first year students to flexibly choose from a wide range of module options, which had increased problems in allocating work. To smooth workloads then it was often necessary to balance over a period longer than a year. For example periods of between three to five years were sometimes used to smooth over discrepancies between loads such as when a staff member had to pick up a larger load to cover sickness or sabbaticals of other colleagues. Such problems were exacerbated by the fact that many of the departments were relatively small in size, with fifteen or fewer academic staff. This reduced the flexibility for the Head of Department to accommodate disturbances in the patterns of work. Another aspect that resulted from it was that in some departments the small numbers of staff meant that they were all specialist in their areas, so reducing the options to move staff between the teaching of the different units.

Retirements and new staff had also greater impact on the model in these departments. However despite this, in all the models seen provision was made for new staff to have a reduced allocation. This was achieved by allocating a 40-50% teaching load to new
staff in their first year and stepping this up to a full load over the following two years achieved this.

**Individual Response**

In relation to workloads generally there was a feeling that compromises were being made owing to high workloads and the open-endedness of that work. There was a mixture of responses to the problem, but teaching was seen as a priority where needs were met first, however, staff did feel that they were not giving the students the time or energy that they would wish. Expectations of students were also seen as part of the problem. One member of staff described ‘the fairly high degree of spoon feeding’ that was expected from lecture material. The goodwill of staff was seen as pivotal means to ‘maintain quality despite quantity’. The strain was felt though, often shown in small ways such as ‘tetchiness at the photocopier’. Weekend and evening working were often the response to this and also reducing involvement in certain fields such as conferences. The feelings of staff about this were complex. There seemed to be both a sense of pride in the accomplishment of a difficult task and also a degree of self-questioning that they ought to be able to work more efficiently to somehow reduce the sheer volume of work. At University level concern was obviously felt over workloads with various surveys covering aspects of it. One finding was that ‘the majority of the people feel that their workload was excessive’. Another finding from the survey reported that ‘teaching times are fine, administration is excessive, research time is too little’. One Head of Department felt that ‘most of my colleagues work sixty, seventy hours a week’ and expressed frustration at the University’s ‘unrealistic view’ of the work involved. He felt high work levels were dealt with by staff ‘sneaking away’ to quietly plough through the work. There was also a feeling that having to work longer than the suggested allocation created feelings of inadequacy in some staff. The other aspects that staff felt unhappy about in relation to high work loads was the loss of any space to think creatively and explore new areas or lines of enquiry.

**Organisation**

This University had experienced a relatively stable environment, but this was changing and there was some anxiety about these changes from staff. There were also worries that the new student fee system would have a negative impact on the University. There was a felt need by the senior staff for the University to be flexible
so that it could respond to these external pressures, but acknowledged that this could be expensive in terms of resources, such as in drives to widen participation. Along with faculty restructuring there was a large building programme running. Changes were being made on the use of rooms, so that teaching rooms were all separate from staff rooms, and that the latter would all be single rooms. Some staff were disappointed that they had lost both a personal teaching space, its learning facilities and the timetabling flexibility this system offered to the department.

Senior management were concerned about high workloads and codes of practice reflected this. Many of the problems in relation to high workloads were exacerbated by the fact that a lot of the departments were relatively small in size, an aspect which restructuring may change. However despite this care was taken and provision made for new members of staff in relation to their teaching provision. Research, although viewed as a vitally important, was not always adequately accommodated in the models. Within the departments there was a feeling that their autonomy was being eroded, some spoke of the departments as ‘fiefdoms’ and felt that there was ‘a lot of competition on campus’. However levels of transparency and trust did also seem high within the organisation.

In relation to the management of the University, apart from the changes at Pro Vice Chancellor level, there had proposals to make changes to Council makeup, reducing it from thirty-one to fifteen. There were also moves to change committee structures with a desire to ensure in both these areas that representatives ‘were A, interested, and B, who can make a positive contribution’. As one noted in relation to this issue, ‘there is a huge dichotomy in the University between, the one sort of view of life is that it's a community of scholars and the other is basically a managerialist group’. This remark did capture the feel of the place, with a balance of both views and emphases evident.

In relation to the new Vice Chancellor there was an appreciation by some for his leadership and work as an ambassador for the University.

**University Systems**

Various staff surveys had been done looking at workload and aspects such as communication. Benchmarking against earlier results showed both the volume and the balance of work as broadly the same as earlier, but some improvements were seen in
the area of communications. Some did feel however that communications from their journal and from emails lacked the open, and sometimes controversial, comment of previous publications.

Other systems such as staff training were believed to have been a little neglected in the past, where there had been radical restructuring it was felt that training provision had not kept pace with staff needs. However this had changed and new programmes, such as on leadership, were being offered. In relation to the appraisal system there was a range of practices, in some departments it was used to discuss workloads and plans for sabbatical, in others the system was not a very active process and not at all 'embedded'.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 6: Summary Departments in Case Study 1</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Department 1a</strong></td>
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</table>

**Department 1a Context**
Department of History. 26 academics. Large teaching programme. Use of some teaching assistants.
Specialisms and 'ownership' of courses.
New course being developed to overcome problems of oversubscription in some courses.
Care not to distinguish between 'teachers' and 'researchers'.

**Department 1b Context**
Department of Engineering. 15 academics. Mix of lab and lecture based teaching. Mix of specialist and general modules, but courses tended to 'stick' with individuals.
Courses were being renewed or revamped at the time. Some older teaching staff retired recently and new staff employed were given space to become research active.

**HoD/S 1a**
Enjoyed knowing what was going on across the university, as well as in the dept. Enjoyed not having to do so much teaching. Research squeezed. Anxieties about faculty restructuring and University's new strategies on rooms.

**HoD/S 1b**
Fairly new member of staff, 'trouble shooter' from industry used to managing larger groups of staff. Enjoyed the challenge of the work. Believed University had unrealistic view of workloads and that it was also unrealistic to say research was important when just doing teaching and admin took at least forty hours.

**Allocation Method 1a**
Inherited system using FTE's as unit of measure looking at teaching and administration only. Teaching money comes in through FTE so look at who is producing it. E.g. second year students do four courses, so if teaching one of them staff would get a quarter of an FTE per student. Loads were then weighted to reflect things like new appointments (50% load), HoD/S role (40%), leave (0%), most people however were on 100% load. Advantage of FTE model meant lecturer could teach the students in however big a group that they wished and the marking would also be reflected in the numbers. Revealed who was overloaded and under loaded. Evolved by agreement. Equity levels good. Balance might average out over five years period. Admin jobs had agreed FTE. Suspicion of the model by new members of staff. Research not explicitly weighted. Transparent. New staff given extra space. Problem of numbers may inflate over the years.

**Allocation Method 1b**
Had an allocation model where teaching hours were put into the model-allowing three hours per lecture for established courses and up to six hours for a completely new course. Weightings of the different work types under review and constant refinement, but problem that the model could not sort out the practicalities of who could teach certain specialisms. Teaching aspect sorted out in round table discussions. Research not included in model. Transparent.

**Staff 1a**
Consequences/Outcomes
Believed system to be fair and transparent. Worked long hours –believed that to maintain high standards demanded highly of the goodwill of staff. Certain roles with students were time intensive such as pastoral care. No space left (after done all the tasks) for research. Safe pair of hands- problem! Feeling of irritability due to workloads, but also pride in job. Sad to lose personal teaching space. Had some sympathy with the economic for decisions that needed to be made centrally, but desire for recognition of human issues from the centre.

**Staff 1b**
Consequences/Outcomes
Transparency good for promotion and at appraisal, only problem that model could only expose who is over/under loaded as practical difficulties of who can teach what prevent improvements.
Teaching load high, belief in the importance of his subject despite some opposition to it. Difficulty in maintaining momentum in research area – securing income had become pivotal- problem of venturing into areas without the time to fully get to grips with the subject. Believes standards had slipped a little in teaching areas. Prioritis. Conferences viewed more sceptically. Problem of giving research students sufficient time. Felt unsure of the HoD's plans.
6.2 Case Study 2

Policy
This institution had a broad statement of principle governing the allocation of staff workloads. In general it suggested that this was the responsibility of heads of department and that it was not feasible to recommend a standard model for this practice. It noted that this required a large judgemental element taking into account all the different duties involved. It also suggested that it might be desirable for heads of department to disclose the range of contact hours assigned to teaching duties so that staff members could see how they fitted into the continuum. The guidance also recognised as best practice systems of allocation that were the ‘result of openness and transparency’. However one informed member of staff felt that in terms of improvements little progress had been made, ‘there has been rumblings, but no systematic pressure to get it sorted out’. Generally there was a feeling that there was a whole ‘mish mash of systems, some of which work, some of which don’t’.

Allocation Methods
There were quite a few different methods used across the departments, in some there was no formal system operating, with the Head of Department using judgement on the balance, although as one suggested this balance could operate on a basis of ‘who complains the most’. As another also noted ‘it depends on how good at management and at how good, how fair the Head of Department is’. Other systems seen in operation were sophisticated mechanisms that took into account all the different roles and even different types of marking. Here consideration was given to new staff members and extra time given to the preparation and delivery of new courses. Emphasis was placed on consultation to get the relative weighting right between the various activities, the document remained ‘live’, constantly being updated.

There was evidence that some debate was occurring between heads of departments so that sharing information about the various schemes was occurring. Recurring problems were evident however. Even in the schemes that seemed to be managed most actively there were some problems, such as the allocation being set to accommodate a thirty-seven and half hour working week, which was seen to be inadequate to fulfil all the work demands. Another more minor issue was that in some
cases the allocation was done retrospectively, that is, this year’s work determined next year’s allocation, and there was a feeling that this might need updating more frequently to accommodate changes in circumstances.

Problems resulting from high workloads were especially troublesome in small departments. Despite mechanisms such as ‘buddying schemes’ to smooth work between pairs of staff, aspects such as sickness and maternity leave in small departments had a large impact. This was also an issue in relation to study leave. Whilst larger departments were often able to distribute work unequally between semesters in order to facilitate periods of study leave in the lighter semester, however small size precluded this approach. In those instances financial support from the University was then applied for from the departments. Administration was also a problem in smaller departments, as there were so few members with whom to share out the large numbers of roles. More generally certain roles within departments such as Graduate Tutor, Examinations officer and Welfare Officer were seen as particularly heavy with bureaucracy. The added problem with this was that it took a long while for staff to become fully conversant with all the intricacies of the role and by the time they had they were unwilling to relinquish the role, even though the load might be prejudicial to their career advancement. A related issue to this was that of the staff who were most capable and willing being loaded more heavily than others.

The case of new staff uncovered many issues related to workload allocation. In some departments, where attempts were made to give new staff space in order to get started on research, there was a resulting problem of overloading more senior staff, from whom there were also higher expectations of research outputs and funding. Another issue was the work involved in doing teaching qualifications. Both staff and heads of department found this course a large burden in relation to workloads.

**Transparency and Equity**

In terms of transparency of the model used, this also varied between the departments. In some there was just awareness by staff of the general responsibilities of others, whilst other departments published summary documents of the model. Generally there were feelings that work was allocated in a fair and equitable way, although views on this were hazier in areas with less open approaches. In some places confidentiality
between the HoD/S and staff member was seen as paramount, it was viewed as essential to stop divisive situations where ‘comparing and doing deals’ occurred. However taken to extremes such an approach in the past had caused problems in some areas, with difficulties in countering claims of unfair treatment and discrimination. Lack of transparency sometimes then caused problems in terms of comparability, however the Human Resources unit was working with departments on these issues to prevent escalation of problems and as a way to disseminate good practice.

**Flexibility**
Sabbaticals were a reality for many of the staff, with applications being made for a semester every three years, this had stretched departments in some areas, especially at times when other staff were absent, for example on maternity leave. Staff had to apply to a University committee to get permission for this study leave and a report at its completion had to be carried out to check on the outputs from the period. Benefits had been felt in research as a result of the scheme. Staff reported that some departments did not offer sabbatical schemes, this was often in small departments, where teaching programmes were not organised in such a way to facilitate them.

**Head of Department Role and Consultation Process**
Generally heads of department were seen to be working hard to balance the needs of students whilst accommodating the very pressing demands of the next RAE. As one noted this created tensions ‘to deliver a quality curriculum to our undergraduates, which we see as a priority and the time needed to be our RAE grade five equivalent which is a priority’. A response to this pressure from heads of department was to look for efficiencies, ‘my advice to them was always to try and reduce your workload’. A measure taken to facilitate this was the employment of administrators to undertake some of the duties. Another response was to look for consolidation in their courses, delivering a high quality service, even a ‘Rolls Royce’ service in some departments, with a focus on improving and updating what was on offer, rather than more speculative ventures, such as new courses. Responses in relation to consultation process varied between the academic units, some being very positive about the HoD/S inclusive approach, others being very unsure of the basis of allocations.
**Workloads and Individual Response**

Despite these strategies there was a fairly universal perception that many problems with workloads could be related to individual characteristics. Various dimensions were seen to be at the root of this. Firstly it related to staff being unwilling to compromise their high standards and another related to high degree of enthusiasm and motivation within a context of endless possibilities: *the willing and hopeful souls, there is a danger of them being overloaded*. Lastly came the notion that some staff were just inefficient in their approaches. Younger members of staff, who felt that they were coping, interestingly cited efficiency as their answer. Having said that there was also a recognition that, *if you want career progression, well work a bit harder*. There was a belief that pressure had increased within the University, with certain times of year, such as early May, being especially stressful. Again individual responses to this were seen as pivotal. There was a feeling by some that *a grieving for a way of life* was the basis of some of the disquiet. University surveys found that expressions of dissatisfaction tended to come from people that had been at the University for twenty or thirty years, rather than from newer staff.

Various responses to this situation were found. Some heads of department found that in order to respond to immediate pressures they found their own research slipping and a feeling that with the high demands of working fifty or sixty hours week, *any research I generate is a bonus*. Another told of how *I’ve had quite a few members of staff suffering from migraines*. Other members of staff also had sleeping difficulties as working evenings and weekends took their toll. Again in relation to workloads staff counsellors were reported to be seeing *quite a lot of business, particularly from female academic staff*. Personal demands were often the trigger in these issues, but there was also an awareness that certain time-intensive roles, were picked up by women. Roles involving welfare type work with students for example was seen as difficult as the demands of students were hard to control or limit in these areas.

**Teaching**

Some suggested that the University worked on the presumption that all staff did some level of teaching. Staff reported some problems as a result of workloads and research expectations in developing and updating their material. Staff who had gone on teaching courses felt that students could benefit from new teaching and assessment
methods, but were a little frustrated, as they had not had time to implement their ideas. There was discussion from various members of staff about the need for efficiency in teaching. Some remedies were cited such as increasing tutorial size and that of lecture groups, however in the latter case room size was often a limiting factor.

**Research**

Within the University as a whole research and improving its RAE profile was seen as a main focus. There was a general view that the University had become increasingly strategic in its approach and was an "aspiring university" determined to improve its position in the rankings.

To fulfil the University's strategic aims had required generation of surpluses to allow reinvestment and this had led to determination to reduce the overall organisational pay bill by streamlining measures. Departments were targeted and reviewed with strategic decisions being made about voluntary severance. For the union involved the negotiations had not proved too problematic. However there was a perception that for these departments the process had created a "siege mentality"; however for other departments it acted as a further spur to research activities, although there was a feeling that there was "a sense of humour failure about research grant income".

Internally the University had had mini-RAE exercises yearly, so that staff and departments were aware of their position. Through this staff were clear on their objectives and mentoring schemes also helped with tasks such as grant applications. There was a feeling by some that the targets and the pressures in relation to this had changed the atmosphere of their departments. Further there was some frustration with demands and monitoring processes and "league table culture". An issue that also caused some concern was that of retention of good research active staff who were "constantly being approached". One department for example had made a strategic decision to employ specialist-teaching staff in order to free up and develop a strong research team. However these "research stars" had "now walked out the door and gone two hundred miles up the M*". The idea was to "grow your own not grow them for other people" and there was a feeling that it had been a significant waste of investment.
The sense of research as priority was evident in many areas. It was generally perceived to be a pivotal aspect for promotion, staff are also told to try and allocate two days a week for research activities, although the difficulty of achieving this was widely recognised. The previously mentioned timetabling of alternate light and heavy semesters was seen as a means to boost research activity, so that a semester of study leave might be offered every three and half years, once all the necessary requirements were fulfilled.

In summary the University seemed to be aspiring in relation to research and, in terms of workload allocation, this had created strategies to ensure that study leave was planned to facilitate it. Heads of departments were seen as pivotal in the process, but appeared to have little financial power to implement changes. Where there was extra capacity available it appeared to be directed towards the research area, whereas in relation to teaching and administration the focus was on efficiency and consolidation.

**Administration**

The level of support was variable between departments, some had given up a Lecturer post in order to employ a Departmental Administrator, whilst others were managing with low support levels. There was a general feeling about the high levels of administrative work.

**Problems**

Where problems had occurred these seemed to be as a result of a poor consultation process. For new staff this was especially problematic, as one reported, ‘so many things you were not told, you just had to find out as you went along’. Further there was no specific guidance in relation to the loads given to new staff and although some heads of department attempted to reduce the teaching loads this did not occur in all cases. As one staff member reported ‘the initial meeting was sort of playing down the workload’, however later they found ‘altogether I did fifty-two hours rather than thirteen in terms of teaching and practicals.... The workloads came from different people’. Anecdotally there was another recent case of a probationary member of staff being given a full workload from each of the departments that they were working in, effectively maintaining a double allocation. This problem did not surface until the interim probationary report meeting.
**Organisation**

In terms of the staff perceptions on this strategic leadership there was a feeling that the University was responsive to challenges and uncertainties and there was support and empathy for departments who fell in line with the thinking of the centre. Surveys across all University staff (33% response rate) found 85% of staff were happy working at the University. However the group least satisfied were the academic staff that felt that they had least flexibility in their work. Through the interviews there was also a feeling that the Vice Chancellor desired a relationship of trust with staff, however the management of the University was seen as having become more centralised and although there was transparency in the organisational systems and data on funding, the discretionary, non staff budget for departments was seen as very small. As one noted a little cynically, *‘the best thing is to actually dress up managerialism in collegiality’*. Budgets and Resources Committee was seen as a powerful and central mechanism making decisions on aspects such as new posts. Decisions in relation to this were based on total income contribution to the centre from the department involved, but also took into account strategic factors around departmental profiles. Because of this there was a sense that heads of department had very little control, but *‘seem to be responsible for everything’*. Further more senior staff acknowledged that these HoD/S had no escape from the daily dealings with *‘fully paid up members of the awkward squad’*.

In relation to communication between the University and themselves staff felt the information coming from the centre tended to be a little too general, so that it created difficulties in interpreting to whom it was directed. Some of the problems with communications were seen to be a result of the University being rather centralised. Further some felt that their heads of department were not good communicators and a survey revealed this to be a problem area. At University levels systems were being investigated into diversifying the ways in which information could be presented. Further new Leadership Development Programmes were being implemented; there was a belief by some at the centre that there was a *‘strong correlation between successful departments and the capabilities of heads’*. 
University Systems

Those departments seen shared out the task of appraising between senior members of the department. The Head of Department usually took on the responsibility of appraising staff on probation and the professors. There was some concern over this system of non-heads as appraiser though as it was felt to limit the possibility of things being acted upon. Also there was a feeling that the appraisal process often 'happened in a box' and that if it linked more firmly and actively with the allocation of work then the process would be taken more seriously by staff. Further in the past there had been feeling that 'nothing ever changes' as a result of the process, but staff interviewed felt a bit more positive about outcomes more recently. Discussions had been centred around problems, training possibilities and support. Human Resource staff felt that in the better-managed departments discussions in the appraisal linked in to workload aspects, in other areas staff often broached the area informally, often in relation to high workloads.

In relation to the promotion process there was some discussion about the criteria used. Most staff cited excellence in performance in two out of the three areas of teaching research and administration as the measure. However a union representative said that a few years ago it had been changed, so that it was excellence at research and one other, either teaching or administration. Staff themselves also felt that increment and bonus points were an incentive too, whereas some felt that achievement at the RAE was not in itself a motivational tool.

Various surveys had been carried out in the University, covering aspects such as attitudes and stress. The results from these suggested that a major problem was in the area of communications, with many feeling that their line manager needed to develop their 'people management and their communication skills'. Human Resource staff felt that this was an area that they wanted to develop in order to diversify the means of communication, however other demands meant that 'it just keeps getting squeezed'. Various training initiatives had been run in the University, such as senior management training and leadership development programmes, with intensive training provided at the start of the academic year. Heads that had been on the course reported that it was informative mostly in relation to common issues and practices on departmental management.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department 2a</th>
<th>Department 2b</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td><strong>Context.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12 academics. Specialist History dept. No undergrads just post grad and also a lot of distance learning. Also ran Summer schools. Teaching mixture of lectures and practical classes. Rewriting some programmes, as operated like a business income wise, - could project income streams and bid for funding from Uni. Centre.</td>
<td>24 staff. Geography dept. Big turn around of staff recently, lot of retirements and new staff being employed. Lots of time commitment to PG Cert. Decisions to update rather than change what they taught as high workloads recognised. Core business teaching – problem if wished to increase research income.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HoD/S 2a.</strong></td>
<td><strong>HoD/S 2b</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had employed administrator to help with workload saw the work as being heavy on admin and student support and light on teaching. Complicated structure so hard for all to be aware of what happening. Had a research centre as well where staff did no teaching. Advised staff to reduce workload and be efficient. ‘Family type’ character of dept in the past - RAE pressure and targets changed this. Methods to reduce marking loads, such as associate tutors. Transparency limited to knowledge of roles. Believed enthusiasm and motivation of staff and inefficiencies contributing to high workload. Aware of problems relating to work stress –migraines etc. Believed in reward of giving staff titles (such as Deputy Head and Programme Director)-but no more pay. Saw HoD/S as key manager.</td>
<td>Recognition that there were high workloads, but if they wanted career progression staff needed to work hard, but at the same time believed this decision came down to staff and should not impose pressure. Believed individual effectiveness pivotal factor in loads. Problem of retaining high quality research active staff. Believed staff were treated fairly. More senior staff in the dept got more heavily loaded at present, due to lots of new staff and the need to give them relief. Commitment to gain a five in the RAE and believed that staff were performing well.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Allocation methods.2a</strong></td>
<td><strong>Allocation methods.2b</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work carved up into three areas; campus based work, distance learning and research centre. People then had responsibilities in one of those areas as means to consolidate work. Administrator taking up many tasks. Research not allocated. Teaching element worked out and then divided equally between staff. Issues of specialist teachers and small groups making balancing more difficult. Marking, rather than teaching, a large part of workload, so quota worked out with different weightings given to different markers (first or second, campus or distance learning) then balanced across the dept.</td>
<td>Inherited model with ‘sets of rules’ on contact hours, prep, marking. Data entered onto Excel spreadsheet- 3 hours allowed overall to cover each hour lecturing on repeating courses, and 5 hours for new courses. Staff entered the data on all work done in the year onto the spreadsheet, on teaching, admin, research and outside duties, so balance work on retrospective data. 'It's a live document, it's constantly being revised'. Some aspects capped. Table then gave staff hours per year for each activity type. Only problem- model relied on thirty seven and half hours a week. Identified balance supposedly 40% for research. In terms of transparency staff saw a summary printout and their own workloads only. Sabbaticals planned for every seventh semester. Lighter load to new staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff 2a. Consequences/Outcomes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Staff 2b Consequences/Outcomes.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New staff member found the work confusing in terms of the actual work and 'knock on' aspects of it and also work came from different quarters. Unaware of what other members of staff were doing. Had appealed to HoD/S because of overload -working long hours, evenings and weekends, after this given some relief.</td>
<td>All the work undertaken was recorded and put in to the model and it was used retrospectively. Although relied on the low fixed hours the advantage was seen to be that it allowed staff to be able to show what they had done, so that hard work was recognised and rewarded at times such as appraisal and promotion. Consultation with HoD/S worked. Not interested in knowing others workloads. Believed own efficiencies had eased his work situation. PG Cert had created some pressures. Need for more admin support, as had to take minutes for all meetings.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
6.3 Case study 3

Policy
In relation to workload allocation there was a general view that departments should administer their own schemes working around the spread of academic activities. This process was informed by the contract of employment where formal scheduled teaching should not exceed eighteen hours a week with five weeks ‘self-managed’ time in the Summer. However the union involved, NATFHE, had concerns about issues of transparency and equity in the process. This had led to the formation of a Workload Review Committee in the University. A form had been developed for staff to list all their duties, but the union was unhappy that duties were being totalled across a year in a way that might be used to undermine the professional decisions of staff about their work. It was a widely held belief that there was a problem in producing a model that could encompass all the different types of work across the University.
Things were felt to work generally because, ‘Heads and their staff reach some sort of mutual understanding’.

Allocation Methods
A variety of approaches were being used, but the main one seemed to be based around contact and target hours with other activities such as administration being divided up as decided by the HoD/S. Research activities were then fitted in, and on some occasions, such as in order to complete work for the RAE, some remission from activities might be given. Significant roles, such as Course Leader, and new courses might also lead to an hour or two remission from teaching. Other more innovative approaches had been experimented with such as accounting in hours for all the activities and duties in a year. Again this approach had run into difficulties with the Union, as although figures might average out over the year, staff could be exceeding the weekly limit. Problems had occurred in some departments because of deterioration in staff student ratios. This had led to adaptations in teaching methods, such as moves from seminars to larger workshops supported by research students. The problem of marking large lecture groups had been tackled through efficiency in approaches to assessment and to weighting of the marking load. The aim with these measures had been to try to free up some time for research. However as one HoD/S put it, ‘Academic time is like closet space, however much there is you will always fill it’.
**Issues of Transparency and Equity**

In relation to transparency there was a belief that levels varied over the University, but all the systems actually seen were transparent and published. However there was a feeling that, although at the allocations were transparent, in other areas, such as how certain decisions were actually made, there was less transparency. There was also a feeling in relation to equity that things were worked out fairly by heads of department. However there was recognition that in most departments there were one or two staff who did the minimum, and that problems arose from the extracurricular activities where, 'if you get a reputation for doing things, you will be asked to do things!'

**Flexibility**

There was a feeling by some that because of the constraints, both in terms of staff numbers and contract conditions, practices such as study leave were unavailable in the University. Although there was evidence in many places of new staff being given relief from full teaching loads. There was also a belief by some senior staff that the limit of eighteen hours of teaching contact a week was problematic in relation to innovation in courses, such as intensive Masters courses, where a module could be taught in a week or might run through the Summer period. There were also issues surrounding the fact that, although there had been a relocation of many of the departments, some staff had not moved house and were reluctant to travel the forty or so miles, unless they had something specific timetabled in.

**Head of Department/School Role and Consultation Process**

Generally there was a feeling that heads acted as advocates for their department and negotiated for it within the Faculty and were doing their best to 'juggle limited resources', although internal consultation about workload allocation had often not worked out positively. The heads interviewed were relatively new appointments and were actively managing their departments in order to increase their research profile, in line with University objectives. In this they felt empowered from the University to develop and innovate fairly freely, yet staff had been more cautious. At one away-day, in discussions on the research agenda, one individual had 'ranted and stamped out of the room' and 'fairly robust negotiations' followed. The Head involved decided that although it 'wasn't democratic, that I would lay down what we did, but that I would
Incorporating research into the allocation seemed to be a pressing issue and HoD/S felt that the 'passive resistance' to change could be helped by new staff that would change the climate 'through a dilution effect'. Senior staff recognised the need for management training of these heads of department and also for more administrative support.

Workloads

Many of the issues discussed in relation to workloads revolved around the issues of peaks and troughs that made life stressful. Heads of department were using innovative approaches in delivery methods to reduce the volume from seminars and assessment, however many of the staff reported having to work at weekends and in the evenings. Marking was an often-cited issue, being unpopular as it was copious, mundane and tightly scheduled. In relation to administrative work there was a realisation by many that these areas were time consuming and required strict discipline to limit them. Personnel had perceived that problems had been caused by the increase in bureaucracy and staff shortages, with a hundred job vacancies at any one time. This had resulted in staff being, 'more fragile and vulnerable than they would be in the private sector'. Because so many of the staff were, 'working at the margin' responses to processes such as the appraisal process were mixed. As one suggested, 'bullying and harassment in this university is much more systemic than it is personal', in that fraught reactions or bad temper were misinterpreted as bullying. In relation to workloads, Personnel were finding more female staff presenting with problems, but there was a perception that this was related to less developed support mechanisms at home.

Teaching

Efforts were being made on various fronts to smooth out the problems caused by fluctuations in teaching work resulting from areas such as marking and differences in class sizes. Small departments and specialisms were a problem owing to reduced flexibility to adjust teaching loads. Although generally some account was taken for the preparation of new modules or units it was felt that it was more efficient to simply enhance existing courses and this was in tension with the desire to innovate and compete on course provision. Although staff student ratios had deteriorated, innovation was happening in areas such as teaching delivery and in assessment, with
information technology being used to reduce workloads. In many areas requirements by professional organisations had also had impacts on the teaching load in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

Research
Although there had been 'no standing tradition of research' within the current contract of employment there was an expectation surrounding it, which the new Vice Chancellor and Senior Management Team had pushed. Within departments practices varied in relation to research, some giving relief to work on specific tasks related to the RAE submission. There were also some suggestions that cliques were forming such as between new research active staff. Heads of department were also aware that some inequities were occurring where some staff used their vacations to work on research beneficial to the department whereas others did little work during that period. However there was a perception by many research active staff that research, despite the lack of a promotion policy, was the route for personal progression.

Problems
Problems seemed to occur not so much in relation to quantity, but rather to do with particular subjects and staff being asked to take on or develop new units. However there was an issue that people 'do mutter about somebody else having less'. Particular problems in relation to overload appeared to have resulted from changes in University timetabling that removed semester breaks that had allowed for assignment marking. Departments were working to accommodate such peaks in demand by staggering hand in dates.

Most of the problems seemed to result from the dynamic interaction between the change of the University to a 'mixed mission', promoting research, and the contracts of employment, that limited flexibility to accommodate this aspect within the working week. There was a feeling that relations were improving, although there was some concern about accountability of staff time especially over the summer period and that, over the years, there was a worsening in staff-student ratios. Conversely, a view held was that, 'In this institution academic freedom is almost anarchic because it comes with, 'I'm free to do what I want, when I want'. One senior staff member expressed the opinion that such problems about contract terms would not be sorted out within
universities and the necessary flexibility required to compete with other institutions on different contracts would need to be sorted out nationally. Other 'damaging practices' cited were that limitations on weekly hours reduced flexibility to accommodate aspects such as staff sickness and that the incentive to work efficiently had been removed by the use of paid overtime in some departments.

**Individual Response**

Many of the responses and coping mechanisms in relation to workloads seemed to depend upon the quality of communication involved. Problems were exacerbated when staff felt that they had been dealt with in highhanded or 'autocratic ways'. It was interesting though that when staff did talk to their heads of department about their feelings of inadequately managing work, the reassurance that they received helped both to relieve feelings of guilt and to reduce the stress of the situation. Although individuals made efforts to prioritise in their work, that work was intensely important to them. As one said 'my personality is tied up with this job'. Again when asked about coping with workloads one staff member stated that we would be, 'better off speaking to my wife as I go home and the first thing I do is to go into the office ... there is no boundary'. One experienced personnel worker said about this reaction to work from academics, 'I think they stress themselves as much as anybody stresses them'. She felt that this was because they were 'a cross between actors and NHS consultant', that is vulnerable as they were acting a role in front of large numbers, but also having the 'arrogance of expertise'. On the positive side staff felt that they had plenty of autonomy to innovate within their work and research gave a great deal of personal satisfaction, although some felt a little reservation in stating this, as it felt for them contrary to the traditionally accepted teaching ethos of the University.

**Organisation**

Many issues that were discussed related to the relocation of departments to new sites and also to the changes from polytechnic culture towards new university practices and customs. As one senior member of staff said, 'we have skirted over the day-to-day nitty gritty stuff' and were only recently starting to address these issues. Yet there was also a feeling that the University had rather too many committees operating with an 'antiquated' national framework agreement. In relation to the new research thrust
there was feelings in some quarters that this meant an ‘imbalance of aspiration and practical reality’.

In terms of management decisions there was a feeling that decisions and changes in policy were often made quickly, with communication of changes happening rather more slowly. Others felt that management was ‘quite ruthless in terms of its decision making’ in relation to issues such as closures and restructuring and that there was a general feeling of mistrust of management, although this was not at all personal. Countering this, management felt that the information went out, but that there was little feedback from staff. The Vice Chancellor also made the effort to twice yearly have a lecture with a question session for all staff that was repeated at different time spots. In terms of strategic vision this appears to have been effective, as staff did seem conversant with the strategic vision for the University.

**University Systems**

As a result of the recent changes to the University some of the systems in place were rather patchy, for example an appraisal system that was still being negotiated with the unions. The system at present centred more on development rather than evaluation. The University was also working on the Framework Agreement and this had meant that promotions policy had been rather left hanging in relation to clear criteria. As a result of this uncertainty staff tended to work on their own intuition about career development. This was a sensitive issue, as there was lots of competition, and a limited number of Principal Lecturer posts that were allocated centrally, not from faculty or school. Another system that seemed to cause problems repeatedly was that of timetabling, especially surrounding aspects such as appropriate room size. Many of these issues were a result of the changes within the University and a question of priorities, where issues such as fees, student recruitment and retention were a main focus.
Table 8: Summary of Departments in Case Study 3

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department 3a</th>
<th>Department 3b</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Department Context 3a</strong></td>
<td><strong>Department Context 3b</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law dept. Ten staff and some part time staff paid on hourly basis. Over 300 full time undergrads. Most modules ran for the whole length of the year. One departmental administrator. Sabbaticals were not really available.</td>
<td>Dept of IT and Informatics. 17 academics. Small and specialist. Had moved from another site. Some unease about new HoD/S’s experiments with WLA model. Huge changes to dept on courses and teaching methods. Staff student ratios had increased a lot. Quite a lot of new staff who were research active at slight odds with old culture and staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HoD/S 3a</strong></td>
<td><strong>HoD/S 3b</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced HoD/S, but two years at present university. No P.A. Works closely with dept timetabler using inherited WLA system. Active researcher, but organised and felt less pressure than in larger depts. managed previously. Problems he saw for staff were the bureaucratic procedures and the lack of promotions criteria. Marking period too short as set by the Uni. HoD/S argued successfully over this.</td>
<td>Experimented with different WLA methods causing some unrest, had problems with contact hrs. Looked to a yearly balance of times and all duties, thought he had union rep acceptance of it, but appeared not to be the case. Changed curriculum, introduced new masters courses and mainly a new research culture. Problems with some staff working as paid overtime in evenings to run courses. Ensuring work now in daytime with economically viable class sizes. Belief that new staff would ‘dilute” old attitudes, E.g. over research and contracts.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Allocation Method 3a</strong></td>
<td><strong>Allocation Method 3b</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation starts with overall target contact hrs for the year, e.g. for them about 410 over 30 weeks, so usually around the 13/14 mark. Weekly contact hrs as set in employment contract not to be exceeded-. Marking attached to seminar groups of 18 in number each member of staff gets 3 (i.e. 54 to mark) Admin loads spread out evenly- extra relief perhaps for new or large role, although time not specifically allocated against admin duties. Research is expected to fit into hours remaining. Faculty expectation that all should research, but feeling that this was the area that had most uneven distribution. May get extra relief to finish larger projects for RAE. System of bidding for research time attempted, but not a success. Size of dept and expertise make flexibility difficult. Process transparent, but some feeling that decisions behind the process less open.</td>
<td>Had experimented with various methods looking at all activities over a year- union objected as against professional ethos of judgement etc. Had replaced seminars with larger workshops staffed by research students to reduce contact hrs. This actually problematic as still got the marking without the seminar time accounted. So had now made preliminary timetable of lecturing duties allocating units to spread the load more evenly and given staff flexibility in how they are delivered and supported them. Also using student 2nd year projects to fine tune the balance. Transparent process.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Staff 3a Consequences and Outcomes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Staff 3b Consequences and Outcomes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seemed to find the system moderately equitable. Lists of allocations appeared without a real rationale, but they fall in line. The outcomes were transparent, but the decision making process less so. No remission on research, but seen as the way to progress, so out of work hrs used. Quantity of work, due to research etc, caused some anxiety over quality delivered, but HoD/S reassuring on this. Feeling of the need to be efficient through stable courses, - new courses seem to be a bit of a threat in terms of the work they result in. Lines of communication from the Uni rather weak much picked up from gossip and the union. Much of the Summer vacation disappears with courses and re-sit exams in Aug.</td>
<td>View that some staff had concerns over their contract and how the new model would affect their hours. View also that some staff were willing to work long hours and to accommodate the needs of dept, others do the minimum and this latter group had concerns about the transparency of the model. Research was a real issue within the model for many keen researchers and amongst the newer staff as not enough time to do it. The need to compete, be dynamic and promote the University also taken seriously.</td>
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6.4 Case Study 4 (Australian)

Policy
The University had a general policy in accord with their Enterprise Bargaining Agreement that workloads would be proportioned into a 40:40:20 split between teaching, research and administration respectively. The actual model for allocation was then left to the discretion of schools, as was the quantum and nature of the work. However the general principles set by the University were that workload allocation involved the management of ‘a finite resource in priority areas’ and that this process should be both transparent and equitable. The context for this should be a constructive, challenging, supportive and rewarding work environment that facilitated the University aspirations. Further where possible the allocation should take into account the goals of the individual and not exceed a normal working week. This work would involve a balance of activities as set and agreed with the Head of school. The document then set out the responsibilities of the Head for setting, in discussion with the staff member, achievable strategic goals, and for monitoring, supporting and reviewing progress. Within the process the member of staff was also responsible to discuss difficulties and report variation. There were three college workload committees set up to monitor implementation generally.

As a guide work was supposed to cover a forty eight week period with weekly hours at around the level of thirty seven. However in relation to how the 40:40:20 division worked it was recognised that this was spread over the full year period, so that the research quota, for example, would not be fitted into the intensive teaching period. There had been some disquiet, especially from the unions, about precision in relation to accounting for hours. There was a feeling in some schools however that this policy was too vague and did not give enough direction for heads of school. There was also a sense that it did not really accommodate the research aspect, which tended to have the greatest variation between individuals and often occurred in time left over when all other duties had been accomplished.

Allocation Methods
In general the methods used were very sophisticated, with a focus on giving the student a good experience and wide choice. The other aspect that their models focused
on was maximising research potential. However differences in research funding had a big impact on how ‘tight’ their systems needed to be. On the whole the processes were very consultative, with discussion occurring on the best ways of sharing the teaching units and also on equivalence between various areas in research, teaching and administration. Points or units, rather than hours, were often used to express workload and some schools had more than one model running that allowed different weightings to reflect the varying load determined by the programme. For example a lecture to a group of sixty, compared to the running of the practicals sessions for that same group. Another refinement when looking at the balance between the work types was to cap various aspects. So for example research funding and papers published would be capped at a certain level, so that the very successful researchers could not build up so many points so that they did not need to teach. This sort of practice was seen to occur in both Arts and Science faculties.

The main problems that it was felt needed to be addressed were around the varying amount of research undertaken and the resultant inequalities in workload. Despite this there was a strong feeling in many quarters that all staff should teach. In fact in some of the most research active schools this belief was the most widespread, so that all staff taught, even those with Research Fellowship grants. In other faculties the desire to keep the best scholars in front of students meant that funding was often pooled to buy in new academics rather than casual relief.

**Transparency and Equity**

Generally levels of transparency were good with lists of duties, and committees available for all to see. As a result of this in some faculties there was a feeling that there was a ‘move towards the middle’ as staff became aware of their workloads compared to others. Heads of school also felt that it was a helpful instrument for persuasion, even ‘coercion’, of those who were relatively unproductive. Another issue that arose from transparency was the need for exactness before publication, as staff were quick also to use it to argue that they were overloaded.

In relation to equity the models were often of use to reveal inequalities in loads, often owing to research work. The schools involved had good systems for ensuring that teaching and administrative duties were shared out fairly equally amongst all staff.
Sometimes this was just through a simple principle with all having to teach and for example having some input into the large first year group. Others had sophisticated mechanisms that ensured that even when that allocation had occurred weightings were included to allow for class sizes and for the type of delivery involved

*Flexibility*

Sabbaticals were an entitlement, not a right in the University and strangely had proven to be slightly problematic on both sides of the research issue. Highly successful research units found their researchers were reluctant to leave their research groups as they needed to be present to manage projects. Other schools that were in areas where research was less developed in the discipline found that they have not got spare capacity to take this time away. In the past a scheme operated for staff in departments new to the University to go on sabbatical to encourage study at higher level. In other faculties there had been the problem that staff worked themselves very hard just before going on sabbatical and consequently due to exhaustion were not as productive as they might have been. In some areas a sabbatical points formula operated, where a certain degree of productivity, in terms of research or teaching, was needed to reach a threshold level to be considered for sabbatical.

*Head of School Role and Consultation Process*

Heads of school tended to carry a significant teaching as well as heavy research workload. Those interviewed took care to be consultative. Some had mechanisms in place to moderate their style, such as by having associate heads for teaching and research, so that they did not become too dominant. They were also aware of the need for the confidence not to micro manage and to delegate. Having said that, they also felt the need to challenge those members of staff who were shirking their responsibilities. Generally this was done at review sessions and this was more possible now as under new terms staff were no longer able to choose their reviewer. Heads were also aware of their role to mentor and encourage staff and all interviewed seemed very aware of those of their staff who were taking on large roles and were monitoring the situation.

The problems that they felt were that of at times ‘*just not knowing*’ enough about organisational procedures. There was a feeling that, although many of the training
sessions were excellent they needed to be timed to start earlier in the Head’s term. A new website for senior staff had been developed as a sort of ‘operations manual’.

Where complex changes had occurred and new workloads models introduced, there had been intensive periods of consultation, and pilot studies, before the transition period and more consultations and readjustments after it. During this initial period people actually described what they did at work in a particular role and this helped with a fuller understanding, so that estimates of the work involved were more realistic. In general it was felt that through this people were better informed of the complexities involved and were more supportive of the solutions. Through the process staff also became aware of the problem of the endless exceptions that could endanger any relatively simple, seemingly equitable system.

**Workload**

In general staff felt their workloads were high, even ‘*horrendous*’. The origins of this were wide and various. Bureaucracy was generally agreed to be problematic, ‘*eating heavily into the creative hours*’, but research as a huge focus in the University was also making a big impact on workloads. This was especially evident in those areas with less experience in the field and less funding to support them. What the models had made clear was the inequalities between staff in relation to their research work. The response to this varied though. In the successful research areas the response to staff who were not bringing in grants, but who were still bidding was to encourage them further and not to give them a greater load that would be ‘the worst thing you could do’. Other schools had less scope to be sympathetic to the research non-productive and felt it equitable to balance their load with more teaching.

There was serious concern about ‘*burnout*’ by some HoD/S and a realisation that ‘often the best researchers are also the most popular teachers’ and that such intensity might be sustained for only three to four years. Generally to safeguard research a day at least was left with no face-to-face teaching allocated. As one noted though ‘*academics are masochists by nature and many of them tend to think ‘‘oh no, I should be doing something’’ and therefore over-teach*’. There was feeling that staff needed to more creatively use their time for example alternating light and heavy semesters to create periods of research focus.
There were some good mechanisms to support staff, however, such as a ‘duty tutor scheme’, where ‘casual’ staff were employed as the first port of call for students with problems. Another scheme was to employ administrators qualified up to the level of PhD in the subject, so that they could use their skills across a wide area, such as the preparation of exam papers, assignments. Such staff had made a huge impact on academics’ workloads. The amount of administration work was a problem and one Head said that it was the biggest complaint he got from academics, with the mundane nature of tasks such as photocopying causing annoyance.

In some areas the model had also revealed that staff employed on a fractional basis were actually far exceeding their allotted time, even when aspects such as freedom from administrative tasks were considered. Such an area might have gender implications, as one Head described how their ‘casual’ staff were often women on maternity leave or with children. Another Head described how at the present their school had no women in tenured positions, although they were in the process of recruiting one. This aspect was causing concern and the faculty was reviewing the situation.

Research

Research was a major driver in the University strategy and was felt to be ‘top down and you hear it at every level’. It was also felt that the idea of the split of work 40:40:20 was unrealistic and that for many ‘whatever you have got left before you go to bed is research’. There was a long-term approach to research evident in many of the strategies taken. For example in one school even the most successful researchers, with Research Fellowships, carried on teaching to enthuse students through their expertise. Also there was an eye to the future as students graduating with a first class honours degree could get Federal Government Scholarships where they could choose their own supervisor, so that there was ‘an element of people having an eye on recruiting future research students’.

For HoD/S in other research-intensive schools there was a problem in keeping their research going, so they had adopted strategies, often used in Science, of teams working on research projects. This also worked to develop and encourage new staff.
A more general problem in the area of the Arts was that it was hard to justify large bids, because time was often the main requisite for 'thinking' rather than expensive equipment. Funding being earmarked for teaching relief had accommodated this. Again the issue of wanting to maintain the quality of teaching for students was addressed by a pooling of funding monies to buy in a full post rather than 'casual' cover.

A school that had a weaker track record in research was taking quite an assertive stance on it. They felt that the University strategy meant that despite being less well resourced, to survive in the long term they had to invest in research. So they used the University base line level of three publications in three years as a measure to reward some or 'punish' others with more teaching. The problem that they had was that being a relatively new discipline in relation to research they had so few staff with doctorates that there was limited capacity to take on and supervise students. To accommodate this those staff that had a PhD were encouraged to bid strategically for funds, including a stipend for a PhD student, who would take on some of the teaching for the member of staff. Their active policy was that all staff would be engaged in higher degree study. The problem remained that with no tradition of research funding it was hard, without that rolling programme of funding, to actually plan investment.

Administration
There was a belief that work from this had 'gone right through the roof'. A response to this by some was to try to limit the number of committees operating. However there was also recognition that these administrative roles were the route for promotion in many cases and HoD/S could persuade staff to take on this load through the 'carrot' of promotion from lecturer level to senior lecturer.

Generally devolution of administrative responsibility was seen as the root of a lot of the work, where the new budget units and funding constraints actually hit the academic with a lot of extra work. There was a feeling that there were lot of new tasks and 'old tasks now made infinitely more complex'. The dilemma for HoD/S was the choice of employing 'general staff' to try to shoulder this burden, set against academic staff unwilling to lose a post in order to create the resources for such support.
Yet the University Centre felt that their approach was that of a ‘trust culture’ rather
than a multi layered ‘approval culture’ and that procedures were being standardised to
help matters. It seemed that the University was actually in the process of change in
this respect and felt things were working more efficiently. However one member of
staff said, ‘every admin facility we have gone onto in the University has suffered
badly because our old system has been better’.

Teaching
In relation to teaching there was a belief in the importance of the best people being in
front of the students. However generally, in order to support research, teaching was
the area where it was felt economies and efficiencies could be gained through
adapting teaching methods. However there was also a belief in the need for stability
in teaching, and where changes had been made to syllabus the move had been to share
out the work evenly.

Staff in many schools often agreed together in consultation who should take which
subjects and year groups. However there were widely differing practices in relation to
class sizes across the schools. In one Science school lecture sizes for first year student
had been at the level of 350, but were now around 220. Tutorials that followed were
around the 80 mark, although in reality only a ‘needy’ thirty or so turned up. So in
these schools class size was not factored into workload. In others, schools such as in
Languages, the class size had to be small and such resource intensive conditions did
place a strain on schools, especially as these were often the areas where research
funding was not generous. Other factors that affected teaching included requirements
from professional bodies on the syllabus and aspects such as clinical work placements
that were necessary for accredited courses.

To accommodate resource issues solutions were found, such as PhD students taking
laboratory demonstrations, and part time teaching support for tutorial groups. Other
means of balancing the budgets included distance-learning programmes that proved
popular with foreign students.
Problems

The success of Research Fellowships in some schools had caused a dearth of senior staff available to take on management roles such as head of school; as a result relatively junior staff were taking them on. Apart from the loss of staff in certain key areas issues arose either from certain groups becoming ‘precious’ about their work or more rarely from individuals being difficult. One head of school was in dispute with a member of staff, who was involved in areas outside of the University, and so the errors and problems resulting were both far-reaching and embarrassing. There was a feeling in this instance that the University was not giving much help and direction.

Other problems could be seen in both extremes of the professional experience. In some areas in the Arts Faculty there were issues of senior staff not being very computer literate and in other areas there were feelings that new staff were not getting sufficient mentoring.

Individual Response

The issue arose of how the same task could be reported to take such widely differing amounts of time. There was an acceptance that efficiency levels varied greatly between individuals and, even within an individual, time management got better with experience. There was a perception that many staff worked evenings and weekends and that certain periods in the year were more intensive than others. Keeping their research profile going was hard for more senior managers and the emotional tiredness, often related to trips abroad, did have impact on family life. Administration and the burden of funding were central to many of the discussions, such as the problem of competing for international students. As one senior member of staff said there was a ‘huge number of financial and administrative responsibilities imposed on the University and filtered down through the system, and [these] have hit the ordinary academics’.

In terms of satisfaction, staff at all levels enjoyed the buzz and excitement of research success and of working towards long-term goals. Even the most jaded member of staff felt pride in the way their new discipline was leading the way in research in that area in Australia.
Organisation

In general there was a feeling of optimism about research and ambitious plans were evident. However there were worries over budgets in those quarters where research was not attracting large funds. As government funding of the University was so partial some felt ‘prey to the market’ of student fees. Yet there was also a belief that the government saw the sector as important especially in relation to the lucrative international student market. Fears though led to a belief in the vulnerability of areas such as, ‘Medieval Music, or whatever, because there is no market interest in them, but that doesn’t mean they are not worth studying’. Others at the University centre felt that although some ‘tough decisions’ had to be made where class sizes were small, that in relation to areas such as the Classics it was ‘just inconceivable that we couldn’t continue to support them’.

In relation to the budget the University centre was working at inefficiencies in administrative processes. There was a feeling that these were, ‘eating heavily into their [academics] creative time’. However some academics felt that, although these measures might be saving the university centre time and money, the burden was falling back on academics. For example, for purchasing, a ‘trust culture’ had been introduced, so that invoices did not go through lengthy checking processes, but rather were filled in on-line. However staff found the forms complex, exacerbated by the fact that they ‘timed out’. The view of the Vice Chancellor was quoted as seeing the need to improve their business processes, whilst being true to the ‘fundamental moral commitment to intellectual discovery and development, responsible social commentary and the promotion of cultural and economic wellbeing’. The appointment of a Chief Financial Officer, from industry, was felt to have brought a good deal of change to the University management. He had taken on many of the roles usually fulfilled by senior academics and was powerfully advocating strategic direction. The response to this by some was ‘a feeling of jaundice’ that they had little power in decision making, however others gave examples of how at consultation meetings the views of more junior staff could overwhelm the feelings of, for example, selection panels. Also in relation to the University five-year research plan, this had not been developed at Senior Executive Group, but rather from the inputs of a conference group of over one hundred and fifty people. Certainly it appeared that even in its initial stages this strategy was well known throughout the University. The
emphasis was that despite a business like approach the core business of the University was paramount.

One view from the Centre was the need to try to direct Deans to work 'like Chief Executives of major subsidiaries', with an understanding of the dynamics of the student market. To do this real measures of student satisfaction, through interviews, needed to be gained, as well as the more objective financial indicators of success. Through this decision making and choices could be made in a more total context. Interestingly some staff did echo this and found it useful not just to have data, but have that data explained. Throughout the University it was interesting to see how the student perspective was central, for example issues of timetabling revolved around maximising the opportunities for the student to have the best possible experience, rather than accommodating academic preference. It might have just been a difference in emphasis, but it was different from the UK, and one could speculate whether this emphasis will change as the fees here increase.

In relation to communication there was a feeling that within schools meetings were often too large for useful discussion and became instead reporting sessions. Some schools had solved this problem by breaking down into smaller discussion streams. There was a feeling that although the University might be more managerialist, the schools were still working in a collegial way.

**University Systems**

The University operated a type of appraisal system called Performance, Management and Development. This was a new system that had been changed to incorporate aspects such as the probationary period and confirmation of tenure. The achievement levels of 'credit', 'superior' and 'outstanding' had also been aligned to fit the promotion categories. Another aspect that had changed was to put a little more onus on staff in the process to account for their level of achievement. Further, whereas in the past staff could choose their reviewer it was now the decision of the Head who undertook that task. Often it was delegated amongst the more senior members of staff with the HoD/S themselves only taking the difficult or threshold cases.
Administrative roles such as committee membership, were often advocated as a route to promotion, this was especially so in areas where nearly all staff were successful researchers. Promotion criteria demanded different levels of achievement in teaching, research and service to community or University depending on the position.
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<th>School 4a</th>
<th>School 4b</th>
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<td><strong>School Context</strong></td>
<td><strong>School Context</strong></td>
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<td>Chemistry unit 40 staff. Staff age profile young. 2,500 undergrads. Very successful in research - allocated over 25% of chemistry funding across the country. Nearly all staff had external funding. 'Golden List' Post-Docs had their own fellowship money. Undergrad courses streamed e.g. 4 levels in the 1st year. Sabbatical scheme operating although hard for researchers to leave their group work. Aimed for flexibility in teaching provision. Undergrad lectures large numbers e.g. over 200 in 1st year. Tutorials 80, but only 'needy' 30 might attend. Aimed to keep teaching stable, although syllabus overhauled recently.</td>
<td>School of Medical Sciences. 400 students and 3 undergrad programmes plus post grad. Specialisms, MSc and PhD. 25 academics. Also some part time staff used. Previous use of 'casual staff' hit budgets badly. No sabbatical scheme operating really. Clinical Education courses operated with a placement system and this entailed a lot of extra work as students had to be visited etc. 'Some leniency' for new staff. Campus for them not on main site situated some miles away.</td>
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<td><strong>HoD/S4a</strong></td>
<td><strong>HoD/S4b</strong></td>
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<td>Still actively teaching alongside his research. Belief in the importance of teaching as good for students and it feeds back as research investment. So little teaching 'buy -out'. Even research Fellows might continue to teach. Students with 1st class degrees got scholarships for post grad study but they chose their supervisor, kept staff competitive. HoD/S active policy of recruiting highly trained administrators extended the scope of their work to relieve academics. Some admin roles suggested as good for promotion. Discouraged proliferation of committees. Use of part time 'duty tutors' for student problems.</td>
<td>Very aware of the need/ expectation to 'produce' in research, use of WLA model to highlight those staff not performing- who would then be given more teaching. Appraisal put more onus on staff. No real guidance from Uni. or union on a model though. Adamant that hours were a bad measure as did not encourage efficiency in teaching methods etc. Area was new in research terms, so problems of supervision of PhDs, but pride also that they were leading the way in Australia. Admin a big problem as 4 different professions involved and clinical placements. Getting an admin assistant now. Salary budget a problem as no increases and so rises absorbed from main budget. Also problem of poor budget info from Uni. Training for HoD/S also needed to be provided more upfront. 6 weekly faculty lunch for HoD/S good for support.</td>
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<td><strong>Allocation Method 4a</strong></td>
<td><strong>Allocation Method 4b</strong></td>
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<td>Method involved equal weighting of points between teaching, research and admin. Although research was capped in the number of points that could be gained, - in practice research was a residual. Those few staff who had no research funding etc might take on a little extra admin, but no more teaching, as the aim was to maximise their chance of getting funding. Teaching was not capped and a point was gained for each hour, tutorials were not formally counted they just followed the lectures. Typical teaching was a unit per semester that included a two hour lecture, one tutorial and 3-4 hrs in labs. Equitable workload - (less than 50% variation) everyone had the same teaching load, only exception was new money specifically given for teaching relief. No account taken for class sizes as all did the large 1st yr groups. 50% Reduction of work loads for new staff. Loads reviewed yearly. No extra time given to refresh courses. Process transparent.</td>
<td>Lots of consultation involved in creating the models-basically points on the teaching aspects. Different models were used with different weightings for the different types of study e.g. undergrad/ post grad/ course work/ PhD and Masters. Teaching was then divided into three areas: Coordination, Facilitation and Assessment. Then looking at the coordination and facilitation aspects negotiated how much of these aspects were student dependent and how much independent (e.g. a lecture to 40 as opposed to 120, not much difference) Basically models took student numbers and credit points for a unit as the constants, with student numbers weighted dependant on the degree of dependence. Staff entered own data onto database. Admin tasks were shared out equally and left outside the model; only exception to this was Undergrad Course coordination. Assumed all research active, with a minimum 3 publications in 3 yrs. Rewarded or punished if differed from this base. Research weighted, through comparables to teaching load, this was to encourage staff to move the balance between the two areas (Analysed work of 100% teachers and 100% researchers to get comparables). Some attempts to adjust light /heavy semesters to encourage research work. Process transparent and consultative, but union not officially involved in the process.</td>
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<td><strong>Staff 4a</strong></td>
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<td>Belief that the process was open, and fair. People took their admin and committee roles seriously. Only real problem areas seemed to be the need for more extensive mentoring of new staff. And also some concerns about communication and lack of influence in decision-making.</td>
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<td>Saw the process as consultative with the impetus behind the model to drive behaviour in a way that enhanced the student experience. In terms of the workload student placements were seen as a little problematic in terms of time inefficiencies. Research seen as important, both personally for promotion and for the school. Teaching and admin work volume meant that research often done in unsocial hours e.g. early mornings - some stress felt over coping with this.</td>
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**6.5 Case Study 5 (Australian)**

*Policy*

At the time of the fieldwork visit the University was working through a new policy document. The Enterprise Bargaining process with the Unions had involved the listing of approximately twenty work types that fell into the three areas of teaching, research and service (term that covered work for both the community and the university itself). Negotiations had led to an agreement of a reasonable five-day week across forty-six weeks a year. However the University had resisted union pressure for a cap on hours and a quantifying of a weekly hour limit. However in the background of this process there was the 'notion' of thirty-seven hours a week as a guideline. If a staff member was consistently working beyond this general amount then a test of unreasonableness would be triggered. This process would involve the supervisor checking that the work involved was, that which was actually *allocated*, rather than that *chosen* to be done by the individual. The University's guidelines for schools in the task of allocation of work stated that it should occur in a stimulating, safe and supportive environment and allow equitable distribution of work amongst staff. Additionally resources should be allocated to *ensure both the maintenance of workloads at a reasonable level and the delivery of a high quality service*. However the actual model used fell to the discretion of Schools to choose their method to fit their discipline. Workshops were run for senior staff on alternative workload models and in the Performance, Planning and Review process, further guidelines were set for both supervisor and staff on strategies and aspects needing consideration.

The Enterprise Bargaining agreement stated that academic work embraces: academic leadership, teaching performance and leadership, research, scholarship and other creative activity, and professional leadership. Staff should have *adequate and appropriate opportunity to perform* in all these areas and opportunity to demonstrate performance that might lead to promotion. The EB agreement again talked about fair, reasonable loads, that took into consideration changing circumstances, and work-life balance, but hours themselves were not prescribed.
**Allocation Method**

A variety of methods were used, including hours and point systems, but within all the systems seen negotiation and consultation, between the parties, seemed to be central to their operation, with the aim of identifying those falling outside of a 'broadish band'. This often involved staff in initially rating their own workloads, across all the main areas, against a set scale. They then might set their preferences before entering into discussions with their head of school about adjustments, qualitative or quantitative. Research was widely felt to be the trigger for workload systems, owing to the large range in the amount of it undertaken. However there was a general feeling that, despite the thrust for research, teaching was a central and vital part of the University. So diversity of staff was recognised through research or teaching only positions and mechanisms were in place to promote this, such as in the Teaching Fellowship Scheme. ‘Sessional’ staff were used extensively to pick up on areas where there was overload, such as in marking.

Generally a reduced allocation was given to new staff, although it was not a University requirement. Time was also often given for their personal development and unofficial mentoring assistance provided. The probation period for new staff was three years, and some expressed the belief that they could be 'hopelessly exploited' during this time, however none of the staff interviewed had actually experienced this.

**Transparency and Equity**

Levels of transparency were good and many felt that this had helped staff relations, as those with heavy teaching loads could actually see what researchers were doing, and it cut out the 'suggestion of sweetheart deals or favouritism'. Another aspect that some liked was the way it promoted diversity, with staff able to find their niche and the flexibility this brought in terms of the makeup of workload.

In relation to the question of equity there was a feeling that the issue of research had brought this aspect into focus. Consequently how equity was perceived was dependent on the nature of the individual’s work and there were some niggles about the adjustments. So although some with high teaching loads might feel aggrieved by a more active researcher’s lighter load, there was also a feeling by HoD/S that actually researchers might not get as 'lower load as they might deserve, because we simply
'don't have the numbers'. Further some felt that a detailed WLA method encouraged staff to argue over the detail, and that it worked best at distinguishing those outside the middle performance band. Some HoD/S felt that the system allowed and encouraged staff choice in the make up of their work, although they did recognise that some would describe it as a 'forced choice' in that if they chose not to do research they would get more teaching.

**Flexibility**

Sabbatical schemes were in operation, with a semester leave possible every three years for approved work. However take up varied across faculties and schools, often because of the difficulties in organising cover when teaching across a wide range of units. Other schemes in operation were Teaching Fellowships to support scholarship in this area. Also many staff had accumulated many days of Long Service Leave entitlement that they had failed to take and the University saw this as a long-term liability for the organisation. Generally there was a feeling that the University provided a flexible work environment, not just on the work areas, but also in terms of fitting in with home demands.

**Head of School Role and Consultation Process**

There was recognition by HoD/S that the actual loads for people were high, but that WLA methods were necessary for equity and to help implement the University research strategy. To help with this a heads of school’s Forum operated to share approaches. Often strategies were set at faculty level, in line with University principles, and these were then fine tuned at school level. Further HoD/S saw the need to balance accountability with their own discretion, so that they had the flexibility to adapt the model to circumstances. They saw the need to develop and mentor their staff, especially junior staff, whilst at the same time working strategically with the Deans to move strategies forward. Although processes surrounding WLA were highly consultative, there was a feeling by some of the impossibility of HoD/S knowing what all the staff were doing and that really the responsibility fell to the individual academic to assess their priorities in their allocation. Generally there was a feeling by HoD/S that their methods could be refined and improved, but there was a resistance to systems that took away flexibility to act. In relation to this they felt that
small problems and disputes needed to be dealt with promptly to avoid escalation of the issue.

Workloads
There had been discussion between the University and the union about what was a reasonable workload, but no figure, in terms of hours, had actually been placed on it. Generally there was a feeling from staff that, ‘everybody thinks they are overworked‘ and that ‘the more you do, the more you are asked to do‘. Many academics talked of the need to prioritise and ‘work smarter‘ and the HoD/S talked of the struggle to employ new full-time staff. There were some recurring features of the discussions, for example the open-endedness of research, the rise in bureaucracy and the new work created through factors such as email. Other aspects in relation to workloads related to the issue of jobs that no one wanted to do, such as coordinator of large courses. The unions had also pointed out to the University that it was inappropriate for junior staff to pick up these roles. The other issue that figured was staff doing work that was outside of their allocation, perhaps because of interest or enthusiasm, and this was an area that HoD/S felt needed to be watched.

Although many staff felt the quantity of work was high, they did appreciate the flexibility offered by balancing work across the three areas to build a portfolio. The importance of the Head of School in the balancing process was felt to be to smooth out small inequalities and changes of circumstance. On the other hand heads of school felt that the solving of these small problems, whilst essential, was very time consuming, and so much of their other work had to fit into evenings.

Research
The University had decided that research should be placed high on the agenda and had invested heavily in this area, advertising around thirty new ‘research only‘, professorial appointments. However there were some concerns about the creation of this new ‘elite‘ group and the problem of integrating them with other staff. Further, as the University had not performed as well in the teaching assessment as it had hoped there were feelings that, in relation to this and research, ‘we’d better be careful that we don’t fall somewhere in the middle, we’d better be good at something‘. There was a feeling from some that it might be a risk, which it was worth taking a ‘shot at ... but
not to the detriment of other staff'. In order to make some assessment of the research strength of the University schools were engaging in the Research Quality Framework Exercise, in a trial of the new guidelines from the government. Other initiatives at University level included the development of new Research Institutes. Some staff saw potential problems here in that these might become separate from faculty research activity. Another issue that had cropped up in schools was that to meet research targets staff had been encouraged to work within centres of interest to strengthen the team. This was seen to be problematic in terms of support to the individual if their research interests lay outside of the work of these centres. The age profile of the University was balanced towards the middle or older end and so there was a scheme to appoint early career academics who were felt to be more focused on research.

For individuals the problem regarding research seemed to be that it was last on the list to be tackled, after all the other commitments. Further because it was open ended it filled, 'the rest of your time and the evenings and weekends'. So for them the Summer break could be a very busy period, writing research bids, etc. Another aspect of this was the persistent perception that research was central to promotion prospects, despite University schemes to suggest the importance of teaching. There were also some feelings that the research imperative needed to be managed fairly, so that staff with higher teaching commitments felt they were being treated equitably.

Administration

There was a feeling that work in this area had increased dramatically in terms of accountability and recording. The work created through, for instance, government directives, was then being passed down the line from University centre through to the schools and then on to the academic staff. Specialist staff in the schools were assisting with this burden, but themselves had high workloads managing, for example, the budgets for teaching and research. Generally these staff and academics worked smoothly together, although small problems did occur with grey areas of responsibility. New areas of work such as online provision also created extra work in terms of its audit, and in the area of assessment, marking criteria and performance standards had to be addressed.
Teaching

Teaching was felt to be centrally important to the University, but there was a feeling that it was being placed under some pressure because of the research focus. However active researchers often wanted to retain some teaching in order to recruit the best students as postgraduates. Moves to prevent a divide had been made through the use of Teaching Fellowships to promote scholarship in Teaching and Learning. As one academic said ‘we don’t really want to produce teaching drones’. Further in terms of workload models there was a belief in the danger of using teaching as the ultimate balancing item, as it could be viewed as ‘the least valued piece of workload’, that which people ‘get dumped with’.

To cope with high teaching loads a variety of techniques had been deployed. One interviewee typified matters as a need to be ‘smarter with how we allocate teaching time’. So for some to reduce the problem of large class sizes, lectures were interspersed with on-line provision, so that resources could be freed up to support smaller tutorial groups. Students were said to be happy with the flexibility afforded by on-line work, but staff were divided. Many were aware of the huge initial time investment in doing this and for some it would require a big cultural shift to teach in that way. Another response to teaching pressures was the employment of a relatively large number of sessional or ‘casual’ staff, this was often because there was insufficient funding to employ full time staff and because numbers of sessional staff were not capped. These sessional workers cut down the load for full time staff and provided flexibility in the teaching provision. Over the last ten years, whilst student numbers had increased by 30% and full time staff had remained relatively constant at 950, these sessional staff had increased from 280 to 380 fulltime equivalents. They could lecture, run practical classes, tutorials and some also did marking. They were made up of research students, professional ‘experience from up town’ and others with experience of teaching in the area. There had been problems with inexperienced sessional staff, as students complained and full-time staff spent much time mentoring them and moderating their marking. However there was also recognition that for many this work was the starting point of an academic career and so investment here was vital in relation to issues of quality and mentoring. With the new research focus there was also a problem in that these staff could not contribute in this area and so a full cost benefit analysis was being done. Further the University had a programme to
replace sessional staff vacancies with full time posts for new career people, and were currently recruiting a cohort of around twenty-five.

Student expectations and demands, such as for extensive assessment feedback and lengthy emails, had contributed to increased workloads. It was felt that timetables were set to suit students and their jobs, with repeats of many lectures being offered in the evening. For new courses and large marking groups, provision and adjustment were usually made in the allocation, and sometimes sessional staff ‘mopped up’ excess marking. Some academics suggested that units that had a large marking element, rather than say multiple choice, were unpopular and that this workload dimension needed to be more explicitly acknowledged.

*Problems*

In general there were few disputes to report and any that arose were dealt with by the Head of School, with a ‘nip it in the bud’ strategy. Staff were felt to be generally quite acquiescent and prone only to minor grumbling. The more general problems that did arise out of workload issues related to semester timings, on-line provision and students emails. For semesters the close proximity of the first and second semesters meant that staff felt overworked with little time to catch up on aspects such as marking or research. Further there was a feeling that the long Summer break and short third semester squashed the available time for teaching programmes. Another aspect that was mildly problematic was the expectations of students, in terms of comprehensive feedback on assignments and exams with, in the background, feelings of concern about the threat of litigation, and in fact a case had occurred already over PhD supervision. Lastly there was some disquiet over equity regarding staff that provided their teaching on-line. Although many students seemed to prefer this, it was not, despite the high initial preparation time, felt to justify its hourly allocation. Even so there was a feeling that for many staff it would require a huge cultural shift to move in this direction.

*Individual Response*

Many staff cited their research and actually dealing with people as the most satisfying aspects of their work. A University “climate” survey of staff had found that there was a not a significant negative correlation between workload levels and job satisfaction, a
finding that echoed sector wide surveys in the UK. Commitment levels to the University were found to be high. However workload itself had the highest negative score indicating that most staff put in more hours than was expected and this had created problems with work-life balance. Yet for many it seemed that certain aspects of the work were seen as 'a hobby as much as a job', as a 'vocation' even. Because of this it was felt that 'you won't get them [staff] to put pencils down at 5pm'. However there was an appreciation that 'workload is all about the onerous task', and that there was 'a personality element' in how efficiently things were accomplished, as 'some take a very long route'. For some, workload levels created the need to work at weekends or in the evenings. However, more experienced staff generally seemed to 'know the ropes', whereas some felt that junior staff were more vulnerable. There was however a fairly widespread belief that to get promotion and advance there was a need to work quite long hours and bring in funding.

The aspect of autonomy that was appealing for staff at all levels was the facility to 'find your niche'. They enjoyed the flexibility that they had in prioritising their work and the freedom in many areas to choose where and when they did it. Some of the women members of staff found this useful when balancing the demands of a family.

**Organisation**

There was a general feeling within the University that they were experiencing a great deal of change. The origin of some of this was Federal Government initiatives, such as the Nelson Review, with its reforms on research funding and training, and the Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements, discussed below. The University had its own strategy for areas such as teaching and learning and also research. The plans of faculties and divisions then had to link to this strategy plan. The emphasis was felt by many to be on research and some felt that this had drifted away from the Institution's teaching focus that were a product of its origins as a technical institute. Some voiced sentiments along the lines that revenue streams were all important and that in relation to aspects such as pastoral care of students there were, 'the martyrs in the organisation who do those jobs and there's the people who get ahead'. Further trends that affected the HE sector generally in Australia, the growing casualisation of the workforce and the aging of academics, had had their impact too in this case study. However organisational surveys also showed that,
despite the complaints on workload levels, people felt that it was a good place to work.

There was a general feeling that the University had become more bureaucratic, with many referring to its documentation on policies and procedures. However there was a wide range of responses to this. Some felt that there were ‘royal edicts by email’ with exhortations to ‘work smarter’, and that the down side of being accountable was that to be ‘done by the book, everything is written down’. However others felt that the bureaucracy had benefits and meant the University was, ‘very well run and highly respected as a University and why it never runs into money problems, doesn't have any debt’. In relation to leadership some felt that operations at senior levels were friendly, cooperative and open to new ideas from other sectors. Another view was that senior managers were ‘flying below the radar’, that is, operating to avoid drawing attention to the institution. Generally people felt that they were well informed on what was happening and on what direction the University was taking. However the other side of this was a feeling that communication was not working so well in the other direction, so that views from below were not heard and there was a belief that their problems were not understood. Some did feel though that their autonomy compensated for this to a degree. At a more informal level some wished that there could be a ‘board of professors’ to meet regularly to discuss strategy. Some staff members also lamented the lack of people in the communal lunch room, that was now ‘like a morgue’. As one said ‘I could die in my office and not be noticed, the only way we would notice was when students complain’. There was a general feeling that, although staff were ‘committed and pretty compliant’, this sort of communal facility was helpful because ‘it's good, to some extent, to let people let off stream’, especially in relation to discussing new issues such as workload allocation models. The large size of many of the faculties was a factor in the discussions around communication.

University Systems

The University offered guidelines for both supervisor and staff member in relation to the Performance, Planning and Review system. So, for example, for the supervisor this included aspects such as the consultation process, regulation of workloads, monitoring and recognition of pressure points and reviewing progress, all set within a focus of development and progression. Practically this might include defining duties
and clarifying timeframes, help with prioritising work, and proposing training. Such a
system naturally led into the promotion process. In order to achieve promotion
academics needed to perform in the three areas of research, teaching and service,
however they could choose their weighting on each of these and the Promotions
Board then rated these. So this meant that staff could now be promoted to higher
levels through their teaching work. However many staff felt that research was still the
deciding factor, as it was easier to measure and evidence relevant activity. Yet staff
were interviewed who had gained promotion via the teaching route.

Union representatives described their anxiety about ‘teaching only’ appointments. It
was felt that these were ‘regarded as being the death of an academic, in that there
was no chance for promotion’. Further it made it difficult for staff to gain positions in
other universities. This area, and the employment of sessional staff, had led to
extensive union involvement. Further, there had been extensive activity in the HE
sector generally that had impinged on the Union, for example Higher Education
Workplace Relations Requirements, that facilitated flexible employment of ‘casual’
rather than fulltime staff, and the Nelson Review, which many felt had weakened the
union position in relation to the conciliation and arbitration system. With regard to
workload, the main focus of the Union had been related to definitions of a reasonable
workload. The centralised timetabling system was felt to have caused some problems
for staff. As one said, ‘it drives me nuts because every semester they start from
scratch and throw everything up in the air across the University’. It was felt that this
was done in the name of equity, so that no class was at the same time, but it caused a
lot of disruption to staff especially when practical classes were involved that had to be
timetabled very specifically to fit with technical staff.

Table 10: Summary of Schools in Case Study 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School 5a</th>
<th>School 5b</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Context</strong></td>
<td><strong>School Context</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Law School that had about 40 academics and a lot of 'casual' staff and about 2500 students, with a large distance-learning programme. Numbers had fluctuated widely. A sabbatical system operated and also a Teaching Fellowship scheme for teaching and learning research. External reviewers saw problems of critical mass in terms of research interests and now pressure was there to fit into 4-5 centres. Advertising for research only professor, but at present just about all do some teaching.</td>
<td>School of Life Sciences with three specialist sections-little cross teaching between them, but team teaching within. About 1,200 students taught, including service teaching to other Schools. 40 academic staff, plus casual and PhD demonstrators. Strong in both teaching and research, although about a third of staff not actively researching. Flexible environment. Committed staff. Scope for consultancy/research overlap. Timetabling problematic due to specialist requirements and system approaches. Sabbaticals</td>
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<tr>
<td>HoD/S 5a</td>
<td>HoD/S 5b</td>
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<td>Belief that HoS needed some discretion to make adjustments to WLA. Work wise admin had become a big issue-devolved down. Research also a big priority, so needed to make WLA fairer and more flexible to encourage it. Needed to experiment with delivery mixing lectures with on line lectures to make space. One big problem for workloads was that semester 1 and 2 had no gap between them, for marking, prep. Changes in funding from Federal Government, after the Nelson report, meant students now paid more for Law, up to 25% top up. Hope to fund more full time staff to lower staff student ratios.</td>
<td>Acting role as Dean at present. Believed that staff worked hard and were committed, few at appraisal wished to give up tasks even if overloaded. Problems of overload mainly from research active, as they taught too and wished to keep in contact with best students - 'no it's not equitable, but I don't think you can do anything about it'. Belief that although their system was not detailed, or prescriptive, it was broadly right and avoided points that could be argued over.</td>
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<td><strong>Allocation Method 5a</strong></td>
<td><strong>Allocation Method 5b</strong></td>
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<td>New system to accommodate the research thrust of the Uni. - Staff volunteered to HoS the units that they wished to lecture, tutorial etc. HoS then 'jiggles' the preferences, (using sessional staff too) and comes up with a draft list and negotiates, say for those with large research grants. Standard loads set for all the areas, e.g. for teaching base line 12 hrs contact and the coordination of a least two units a year. Variations in student numbers were balanced out by spreading say, a large core module with a smaller elective. Adjustments were also made to the standard load owing to aspects such as research student supervision and unit coordination, which also had a scale determined by the load involved. Those wishing to elect a teaching focus might, through consultation with HoS, undertake an additional 2 hrs a week contact, because their research load was below the set standard research workload. Student numbers taken in to account for coordination not the delivery of large units. New courses got 50% mark-up. Marking groups divided up proportionately the assessment load, excess went to 'casual' staff. Problems here if they were not experienced as other staff had to mentor them. Aspect seen as unfair were assessment aspects and high allowance given to PhD supervision: (1.5 hrs a week), but in the past University sued over this! so reasons for it understood. Transparent in that all see everybodies average allocation. At present 'haven't got glowing approval' of the method but would review it again soon.</td>
<td>Broad based model aiming to fit staff into reasonable band and not have outliers. Basic number of teaching hrs worked out. Then using broad guidelines staff ranked their loads using a scale for each of the three areas (from 0-5). Then these were used, through negotiation with the Head of Section, to adjust loads against a notional 'teach only' allocation of 21 hrs. However this 21 hrs was a weighted workload e.g. 2.5 hours per lecture. However the ethos was that teaching hours were not the balancing mechanism, i.e. 'a dumping ground', and although those doing well in research might have a lower teaching load it was not prescribed how much lower. Staff had 'pretty much the same total teaching workload' and so belief that the strongest researchers worked hardest overall. Account was also taken of new staff, or units, and large classes (over 150) using weightings and multipliers. Could use demonstrators for practical work, sessional tutors, or negotiate with Section Head. Transparent in terms of the overall out put, not names. This has helped staff to see equity in the system. Fine tuning of system.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Staff 5a</strong></td>
<td><strong>Staff 5b</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some staff reluctant to teach units with lot of marking. Issue of equity about online teaching - not all staff comfortable with these new modes of delivery. Student high expectations on feedback mechanisms. Flexibility good in the school, - good for women with families. During teaching period hrs in excess of what suggested, but claw back at other periods. Research was what was shelved, but also seen as central, especially for promotion. Research time was what differentiated people's load. Feeling that kept fairly well informed of the direction of the University.</td>
<td>Believed that needed to think hard about priorities to work efficiently and get promotion- research viewed as central. Needed to be 'savvy'. 'The more you do the more you are asked to do'. Staff more aware now of how work balanced and could see equity operating generally. However problem of equity in online lectures needed to be addressed. Feeling that the Uni. was becoming more managerialist. Student expectations were rising -lecture notes on line, emails, etc. Had worked a lot at evenings and weekends but now reduced- as pay to park at we! but work still did 'creep' in. Split site for work in the future might be problematic.</td>
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6.6 Case Study 6

Policy
A review group had been working to develop principles to underpin faculty models. The group's findings, endorsed by Senate, Council and the Union, stated that all faculties should operate workload activity models. These should be clear, account for all the principal activities, and be agreed by all parties. The main areas covered should be teaching (including scholarship), research, and administration. Further external activities and knowledge transfer should be accounted for in one of these areas. The requirements were that the models should be fair, and transparent. The degree of transparency might vary between, knowledge of an individual's position relative to others, to a more comprehensive view, such as all workloads being published. Additionally the model should be simple to implement, both for ease and to avoid dispute in interpretation. Staff might have different balances in their activities, but overall the workloads should reflect the strategic plan of the Faculty concerned.

The review group aimed to provide commonality across the faculties and to assist this it wanted models to be convertible to notional hours (a FTE suggested at 1650 hours a year) in order that comparisons might be made. So although it was left up to the Faculties to define how each was measured, no matter what unit was used in the models they should provide an indication of the time an activity could reasonably take. It was hoped then that the relationship between workloads and funding could be better understood to help with the Transparency Review process and to feed into Activity Costing and ultimately Full Economic Costing processes.

Allocation Methods.
Methods varied across the schools depending on factors such as the complexity of the situation, also on staff profile, where some staff were employed on academic-related contracts and were not required to research. So for some smaller schools, where staff were also nearly all on academic contracts, the situation was deemed simple enough for the HoS, through consultation, to informally work out a model that relied on a simple balancing of modules. In other larger schools databases were used to calibrate loads before balancing could be finalised. In these contact hours and multipliers for class size were used, and modes of delivery accounted for. One school even operated
models using both points and hours, in order to check them against each other to ensure that the system was fair. Another had a series of template models where staff could choose the pattern with the nearest fit to their own range of activities. There was some agreement that ten credit modules made the task of allocation and balance harder because of the need to run so many modules concurrently. Practice also varied between departments on the treatment of new staff and their workloads, some making more allowance than others. Generally there was an expectation that new staff undertook a teaching qualification and accommodation was made for that.

Administrative work was often shared out as equally as possible, however some roles were seen as very large, although there was recognition that they might be beneficial to the individual in relation to promotion. For research some schools actively allocated time against it dependent on research activity, papers and funding, one even deciding according to the research ‘grade’ of the individual. Others expected all staff to research and to accommodate it in their timetable.

In doing the workload allocation models various issues were revealed to HOD/S. For example in some areas activities were exposed that were not deemed necessary. Other issues were that the amount of time staff judged to be necessary for a role varied considerably and that to get some consensus on this required quite wide sampling. There were benefits seen in that developing a comprehensive model helped staff to appreciate the wide range of work needed within a school to keep all aspects working efficiently and for the welfare of both the students and the staff.

Size was a common feature of many discussions. For example there was a feeling that problems about workload allocation occurred when sizes of class grew rapidly thus raising issues of equity in relation to marking. Also it was felt that informal systems of work allocation became inappropriate in relation to large staff groupings because it was impossible to be aware of others’ workloads. Another issue raised was the problem of staff working across schools, or even faculties, where there had been problems balancing two model inputs, and this aspect also highlighted the aspect that schools often gave different allowances to the same sort of work. This aspect had created some disquiet.
Transparency and Equity

The levels of transparency varied quite considerably across the University. Some HoD/S felt that workloads were confidential between the individual and their Head, others were transparent, so that the workload of every individual was visible. More often though a sort of semi-transparent system operated, where staff were given their own work and the ranges in load of all staff. Another form of this was where certain aspects were published, such as the administrative roles and the modules taught, but how this and the weightings involved were decided upon was undisclosed.

Some suggested that transparency and knowledge of average weightings had made some ‘hungry to pick up tasks’. In general the University view was that openness and transparency is better than ‘secretiveness’, and that ‘the black box’ system used by some HoD/S was problematic. Other issues that emerged were that models needed to be comprehensive in their listing of individual’s duties or they might not fairly represent their work levels. Additional factors mentioned by staff in relation to transparency included the ethos of the department and its physical environment, both affecting staff awareness of the situation and their trust in its operations.

In relation to the issue of equity some HoD/S felt the impossibility of bringing workloads to within 10% of the average, simply because some staff had the capacity to ‘thrive on significant workloads’. Other staff members did feel that within their department there were always one or two staff that had lighter loads and levels of responsibility, and that this might be because they were ‘more vociferous in their complaints’. They also noted that it was hard to address the issue of staff slightly lightly loaded. Another issue raised was that some felt that staff who were ambitious ‘need to be quite selfish’ and avoid the large administrative roles. This was felt to be an area of inequality, but it was generally felt that workload models avoided the ‘grace and favour’ distribution of workloads.

Flexibility

There was not an explicit University policy on sabbaticals, but many faculties had a facility for them through application, after completion of a certain number of years’ service. The application usually needed to fit in with the strategic plans of the faculty involved. Some faculties felt that a sabbatical could be offered after staff had finished
a major administrative job so that research work could be revitalised. In other areas large amounts of external funding facilitated the sabbatical application. HoD/S were receptive to the strategic management of work so that its distribution could assist research activity.

Head of School's Role and the Consultation Process.

There was some feeling by Heads that they had not in the past had adequate preparation for the demands placed upon them. One described their first term as 'pretty agonising' with long hours as they tried to balance various demands, from the staff, students, budgets and administrative tasks. It took a long while to learn how to manage and control the work. Others described the variety of small problems that were time consuming to resolve. Further remarks were made on how input into problems early on could avoid the formal route that 'kills everybody' and where 'nobody wins'. Other HoD/S talked of the time spent representing the needs of their department and how within the University there had been a 'certain sniffiness' about their discipline, so that there was not equity within certain practices, such as holding award ceremonies.

New schemes were to be implemented in the University on the appointment of HoD/S. Previously staff elected them, but the new Vice Chancellor had introduced a process where candidates must apply for a post, and provide a vision statement, that staff might comment on to the high-level selection committee. Another new system affecting HoDs was a new training programme for reviewers of staff. In the past this process had been patchy across the University and it was hoped that this programme would bring more consistency.

The levels of consultation offered by HoD/S were greatly variable. Some consulted widely about the weightings to be given to certain roles, even looking to other schools for comparability. Consultations about the work to be done was often quite fulsome with discussions around a 'wish list' starting around February, however in some departments the heads were a little more dictatorial. There was also a feeling that the process of workload allocation could be more problematic than the model itself, if for example things were imposed and not consulted on widely.
**Workloads**

A survey of staff had revealed that workloads were a major issue, although it did not identify which roles were the problem. From the interview evidence staff felt that administration was a big area of work and many tried to find support staff to help them with the larger roles. Another aspect that emerged was the *'peaks and troughs'* in the workloads through the year.

Those managing workloads were using the allocation models to see how individuals were loaded in relation to the school average or even how schools were loaded in relation to the rest of the Faculty. This gave HoD/S and Deans useful information to use in response to resource requests.

**Teaching**

Staff seemed happy with their teaching and there was a feeling that professors should continue to lecture, even if on a limited basis, in order that students benefit from their expertise. However there were a few less positive issues, and one of the areas flagged up repeatedly in relation to teaching was that of assessment. The problem was exacerbated by the relative popularity of certain modules making it hard to balance the loads involved. Another issue was that student numbers had increased dramatically in some schools. A variety of approaches were used to tackle the issue, some schools using second marking as a means to balance loads. Other schools treated the marking loads independently of lecturing to determine the work. The issue surrounding exam marking was made worse by the exam timetable coming out too late to manage the problem and exam board timings squeezing the available space.

Other aspects that were noted were course validations, both internal and from professional bodies. Although these inputs were welcomed, in that they monitored aspects such as staff student ratios, it was acknowledged that they were time-consuming.

Some staff, often those from institutions that had merged with the University, were on different forms of contract, this might be *'Academic Related'* or *'Teaching only Fellows'*. These staff had no contractual obligation to research, however there was a
move to bring them into academic contracts, although it was acknowledged that this might have implications for the RAE exercise.

Research
The University strategy suggested that the drive should be to improve staff: student ratios, decrease teaching time and this might then shift resources into research. The University was felt to be ‘more hands on’ now in its approach to the RAE exercise. Regular reviews of staff, in relation to their research activity were being undertaken, with ‘ratings and gradings’ being applied. There were objections in certain quarters to ‘secret meetings deciding that ‘x’ is a one star researcher’, there were feelings also that the criteria about RAE submission were meant to be based on outputs not on people as the ‘currency’. How this approach was interpreted depended on the context of the school and the approach of the Head. In those schools with less of a tradition of research, although there were aspirations, it was generally less of a ‘driver’ to activity. In other schools HoD/S had interviewed staff to note activity and to suggest objectives, although there was a feeling that there was a limit to how much could be achieved in the time available. Some hoped to ‘recruit a star person, if we can find one’. However one Head did admit that in doing the ‘grading’ process some anxiety had been caused to staff and some had been hurt to find themselves not figuring in the RAE process. Other more research active staff felt that the process ‘hadn’t been heavy or daunting’, although there was a feeling that the area of research involved could determine both the ease of gaining funding and of publishing in ‘top journals’, where applied research findings were not usually seen.

In terms of time allocated to research, approaches again varied, some gave a blanket 40% to new staff that was then reviewed to take into account research outputs and awards. Another approach, in response to ‘diminishing resources’ from research funding, was to give ‘differentiated allocations’ through giving staff a research grading. Another issue was that schools were increasingly focusing their research into given areas and resources were felt to be limited to those teams.

Administration
Generally administrative loads were felt to be heavy although some schools had employed more support staff to ease the load. In relation to the loads involved some
consultation had occurred to set weightings for roles and generally there was a consensus that these were pretty accurate, although certain roles such as Director of Undergraduate or Postgraduate studies were felt to be very time-consuming. Some HoD/S suggested that such roles were a lever in the promotion process and this had helped with staff reluctance to take them on. Generally there was a feeling that although the WLA model needed to be simple, there did need to be recognition for work done at University level, on committees and so on, that could be very time-consuming.

**Problems**

There had been no formal grievance over workloads. The approach of the HoD/S was to sort the problem out quickly. Where problems had occurred it had been related to a poor consultation process over the WLA model, so there was no ‘buy in’ by staff. Another issue was that of staff working across schools or faculties where HoD/S had not together coordinated the workload for an individual. Increases in student numbers and large marking loads had also been problematic. There was a feeling that the increase in size of the University, which had tripled over the last couple of decades, had caused a lot of extra work. This had been through administrative activity from mergers and also because staff: student ratios had deteriorated in that time.

**Individual Response**

Following on from the above section on problems in relation to coping, union representatives had recorded an increase in problems over the last three years from 40 to 120 formal complaints in the last year. These cases required a fairly substantial input and were based around issues of pressure, which might not be workload related, they could be to do with problems with a staff manager. The problems that were noted in relation to work often revolved around marking issues and ‘pinch points’ where the time available to accomplish the task was wholly insufficient. For example a case had occurred where it would take ‘24 hours a day basically to get that marking done within time’. Most HoD/S found the means to compromise at this point, but if they did not, staff felt they could ‘go stir crazy’ trying to cope.

Senior staff reported working long hours into the weekends and evenings, but their degree of autonomy helped to compensate for this. They described how they managed
through being selective and delegating. Some HoD/S with little previous management experience described how at first it was hard to cope. They found that thinking strategically under pressure was quite stressful and told how it took quite a time before they actively managed to control their work. Lecturing staff felt that at times their personal life could suffer, especially at peak times in the year. However those staff interviewed also reported positively about how they enjoyed a busy work environment and the autonomy to structure and manage their portfolio of work. The issue of thinking time again emerged as an area that was often compromised, although as one said about tasks, 'I would rather get them done and not be 100% right than leave them undone'. In relation to performance it was widely agreed that staff varied enormously in their capacity to produce good work quickly, and in their perceptions of how long a given task would take.

Human resources ran a ‘Well Being’ survey every year so that they could monitor trends. One of the findings from this was that academic staff had significantly higher stress levels than other staff groups. Another interesting finding was that these levels varied between faculties, so that some faculties had double the average rating of others. They concluded that there was a need to look more closely at how staff were managed. Another issue that the survey revealed was that there was felt to be a lack of support from other academic colleagues. As one reported, ‘the academic culture that relied on collegiality and mutual support, there are cracks in that’. However a University wide survey that asked questions relating to trust in their manager found that over 70% of staff gave positive scorings.

In relation to satisfaction staff seemed to enjoy the variety of work and their autonomy in managing it. Senior staff cited research and also mentoring colleagues as rewarding, as well as problem solving and working on University initiatives. Lecturers also found research satisfying as well as the interaction with students.

**Organisation**

The structure of the University had changed recently with the number of schools being reduced and the Faculty Deans managing budgets and negotiating with the University centre. There was a desire because of this to get some consistency on WLA models between the faculties’ schools. The University operated a resource
allocation model that had been stable and provided schools with information on the income that they had generated and about the charges that had been applied. The system was transparent with schools able to see information on other schools. There was a desire to avoid ‘short term fluctuations’ and to smooth out finances. Although the University did not see itself as rich, it had quite a good surplus last year.

The University had a strategic plan and there had been requests for comments from the staff on the strategic propositions so that they could inform the process. Feelings on this were mixed, some felt it had been a ‘bottom up approach’, whilst others felt that not much had changed as a result of staff comment. ‘Away Days’ had also been held in relation to this, but in some places attendance had not been high. There was a feeling that allegiance for staff was centred mainly in their school, with the University Centre being seen as the ‘seat of power’.

It was felt that one of the main aims of the University strategy was to indicate to staff where efforts should be placed, and to encourage them to engage with a collective process. Some staff felt that the sheer size of the University had led to a loss of collegiality; others reported how in the past competition between departments for income from student electives had created a situation where staff were ‘at each other’s throats’. Some felt that the new leadership wanted to change this atmosphere and to ‘strengthen the core’ of the University, with a common set of principles and practices. Various changes had been made, Council size had been reduced and committees had been ‘streamlined’. Some, such as the Academic Development Committee abolished, others reduced in number. Some of the reasons cited for the changes were that the new smaller committees made staff feel more committed and influential and also the old large hierarchical decision making structures were unwieldy and inefficient. However some felt that there were negative effects, with less opportunity for staff to engage and shape the University. It was also felt that it was now even more vital that Senate provided a forum for full discussion on issues.

A desire to have staff who actively wanted to lead, rather than taking the job on sufferance, had led to initiatives to help this such as ‘Tomorrow’s Leaders’. Through this those identified at review as having potential could go to workshops to help develop these qualities. Further a ‘Leaders Forum’ of HoD/S from all areas met
monthly to discuss strategic plans. Many felt that the VC staff had been very visible, actively striving to meet all staff over the last year, so that they were aware of his plans. Some felt pleased with moves to encourage diversity, but were less sure on the research targets and the criteria used to assess this activity.

**University Systems**

The University had had a biannual review and development scheme for staff, but some staff felt that it was 'fairly haphazard' in its operation, with some not wanting to make use of it. A new process of appraisal and performance review was being developed. It was proposed that this would run yearly and a new programme was being developed to train reviewers.

The criteria in the promotion schemes for a move to Senior Lecturer level were usually a presumptive level at research, teaching and administration, although a new route allowed for higher-level performance in just the two latter areas. Despite this official stance there was a feeling that 'to get on you probably need to be quite selfish' and not take on any of the big administrative roles.

To support these various areas the University had provided an extensive training programme to support teaching and learning, research, and knowledge transfer. Many of the new staff were undertaking teaching certificates. For HoD/S there were new courses covering financial, leadership, legal, disciplinary and appraisal issues.

**Table 11: Summary of School in Case Study 6**

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<tr>
<th>School 6a</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>School of Health Care. 160 staff academics of which only approx. 25 were on academic contracts, the rest were academic related. School covered 6 different professional groups. Care taken to avoid group boundaries being problematic. Team teaching and teaching across modules coordinated by Group Leaders. All staff taught, but only academic staff required to research and this was focused around 4 key areas. Sabbaticals infrequent. Professional revalidation of course time consuming element.</td>
<td>Institute of Psychological Sciences. 34 academic staff nearly all on academic contracts. 20 plus researchers. Student numbers had grown rapidly in recent years and so new staff had been recruited partly through directives from the accrediting British Psychological Society. Feel fairly autonomous within the Faculty. Research doing well. Teaching input also on Joint Honours programmes, but had reduced this because of high workloads.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HoD/S 6a. Still did some teaching, but unable to find time to research. Strong wish to bring school academic leadership rather than previous management control. Worked on WLA model, desire to keep it simple and to help with school decision strategic.</td>
<td>HoD/S 6b Experienced long term Head with a Senior Management Team met monthly to align with organisation's strategies. Inherited a WLA system that he had refined. In the past another staff member developed a complex model, but it never</td>
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</table>
making. Worked to stop divisions between various professions and academic and academic related staff.

became operational, it did highlight though a comprehensive scope of work. Knew that still 'some rippling unrest' on student numbers and admin. Saw review process as useful, but not all staff saw it as so. Admin roles presented as a way to promotion. Had been interviewing staff regarding RAE submission. Devolved finances etc brought large admin workload, but appreciated the clear principles and leadership from the new VC, for example on mechanisms for appointing new HoS. Saw the 10 credit module as inefficient. Felt personally had got better grip on work, but for a long while the volume and range of activities difficult, performed at 80%. Kept own research active, although had diminished.

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<tr>
<th>Staff 6a</th>
<th>New staff to have a reduced workload allocation, but as yet not factored in. Group Leaders saw their role in nurturing staff, and having an awareness of their workloads and pressures. New review procedure to help with this aspect.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Staff 6b</td>
<td>Appreciated flexibility to use a day a week on research. General feeling of trust in the HoS. View that although some admin roles were higher than others that generally there was a good level of equity. Feeling that those who wanted to advance avoided these roles, this perhaps contrary to HoS's view on it in relation to promotion. Some unhappiness last year on student numbers, but situation improved through new staff recruitment. Well supported on research. Some feeling that new University initiatives not appropriate to their unit, for example in relation to diversity of student intake, belief that cultural differences made Psychology unattractive to some nationalities.</td>
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| Allocation Method 6a | The model was being completed and the roles had not been collated together. Drive to ensure that model did not drive work, i.e. 'done the hours, so finished the work idea'. It included a workload database where information was collated with a fixed element (credit rating and module level) and a variable element (number of students). This gave a total tariff for that module that could then, on the database, be divided between the staff that taught on it. An algorithm was used to create a rating tariff for preparation, delivery and assessment. To avoid over complication (and to encourage appropriate modes) all the mode of delivery carried the same credit rating (i.e. Lectures or practicals). Extra allowance was given for new modules. Individuals then got their report. This would then be available to them and probably only the Group Leader. The tariff for admin roles had been calibrated through consultation process, and would be tested. For researching staff notional tariff would be determined for the various activities by the Director of Research, up to 40% of allocation envisaged. Scholarship time and a 'catch all' category for other activities would also be included. The workload results would be in hours relative to the whole workload. Problems were that often up to 20 people input to a module, and some modules were complex with no immediate data base solutions. Belief that most staff would be within normal distribution with just a few 'outliers'. Staff and their Group Leader would see their profile, but not wholly transparent. |
| Allocation Method 6b | Faculty desire to have standardised model in place. Basic system now that staff delivered two modules, the subject of which was determined by the HoS, in consultation with staff, in relation to aspects such as specialisms and competence. Marking for modules could vary a lot as some units were more popular, so accommodated this inequality through varying the 2nd marking allocation. On top of this tutorials and project supervision were shared out evenly amongst staff. Admin roles worked through a SMT consultation process, this area had the most variability in terms of volume. All staff were expected to research. The actual workings of the process were not very transparent, but the results were, and were all on the website. |
6.7 Case Study 7

(Note: the name of the new faculty structure is rather identifiable, so has been labelled generically as the 'new university structure'.)

Policy
The general stance of the University in relation to workload allocation was that it was left to the discretion of HoD/S of school to allocate work. Staff were required to perform duties, such as were reasonable, as required by their line manager. However the University was in the process of developing a new Human Resource strategy.

Allocation Methods
Although there were some schools that operated comprehensive WLA models, those that were seen operated through informal consultation mechanisms, often based on historical precedent. In those instances weightings for work had been agreed on for the various contact hours and then distributed out. However even with such informal methods some HoD/S had databases that held information on work types, module level, assessment mechanism and student numbers in relation to teaching load and information also on research outputs and income. This then allowed the head to make informed decisions on work allocation, but the data itself was not combined in any formal or numerical way to give an overall loading for staff. As one noted it was relatively easy to quantify teaching work, but research was rather harder to assess. Another issue was that the research/teaching balance created a 'chicken and egg' situation where staff who were not getting the research outputs got heavy teaching loads, thus making it more difficult for them to perform in the research sphere. Another aspect that had created problems was the input into external activities, where some had felt this aspect had not been sufficiently recognised.

Administrative jobs were shared out as equally as possible and HoD/S reported again the necessity for consultation on this, as although some roles were universally unpopular, others were more subject to personal preference. Generally attempts were made to give new staff lighter loads with incremental increases. Staff were also supported in the working towards their teaching qualifications. It also appeared that the University monitored staff workloads during the probationary period.
Transparency and Equity

The level of transparency seemed to vary and in some instances this was a function of department size. In the smaller departments staff were often quite aware of the workloads of others and tasks such as administrative roles were often worked out in department meetings on a blackboard. Staff in these situations welcomed the openness and found it helpful. In other departments, that relied more on the Head’s judgement there was less openness and clarity about loads, although HoD/S still felt that staff had a ‘fair idea of what their colleagues are doing as well, so they keep a healthy eye on it’.

In relation to transparency and equity there were feelings that the new changes to University structure would necessitate more open procedures. Staff from Human Resources felt that more transparency could be assisted either through clearer guidelines or from more numerical systems. Another view from a senior member of staff was that HoD/S of these new structures would need to be aware of all their departments workings and that it would be difficult if there was a discrepancy between them. It was felt that it ‘corrodes moral’ if workloads were not seen to be equitable and that in small groups staff could have an intuitive feel for each others’ loads, but in larger groups there was a need ‘to create a structure rather than just depending on intuition’.

The feedback from staff themselves was that some felt happy about transparency and equity, whilst others felt that there were inequalities, especially in relation to the differentials between marking loads that resulted from widely varying class sizes. Another view was that it was hard to show that you were overloaded, as there was no mutually agreed idea of reasonable load, so it had to be shown from a position relative to others as, ‘things are seldom based on anything measurable’. Another recurring comment was that ‘amenable people’ got greater loading and an informed source also suggested that there was some feeling that certain administrative roles tended to fall to women, as it was felt that they were ‘good communicators’.
**Flexibility**

The use of sabbaticals varied between schools. Some were making active use of them strategically in relation to RAE pressures. Others said that sabbaticals were *'few and far between'*. In the latter cases this was often owing to staff pressures from early retirements. Some schools that took a full year sabbaticals, rather than semester, spread them over two academic years, i.e. the last semester of one year, followed by the first of the next. Other schools reported that they made use of the Arts and Humanities Research Council scheme that matched an institution investment to fund sabbaticals.

School’s role and Consultation Process.

The Board of Studies elected heads of department for a term of usually three years. Some felt that as long as their finances and RAE submissions looked good then they would be left alone to manage. However where that was not the situation then there were meetings with the relevant PVC, where difficult questions might be asked, such as why a certain non-research active member of staff was employed.

Heads themselves reported how they negotiated with staff, shifting jobs around if staff complained in an effort to find a compromise. Some staff felt that this system worked quite well, others felt that in these negotiations they always seemed to come away with rather more work than at the start!

**Workloads**

It seemed that a lot of staff were working long hours, with evening work being commonplace. Reactions to this varied, some felt that it was fine to work like this to cope with special projects, but that it was not a good long-term practice. Others felt working long hours was *'not a martyr complex'*, but often related to the satisfaction of doing the job well. Certain tasks were also difficult to fit into office hours, as one Head noted, *'I think a lot of grant proposals get written in the middle of the night, because those things don’t fit in easily during the day'*. The open-endedness of the work was something with which staff at all levels were conscious.

Staff noted variation in the amount of work, both through and across the years, for instance at exam times or in years where higher proportions of staff were taking
sabbatical. Staff said that they managed their research by shifting it into non-teaching periods. Further most departments had managed to provide a day a week free from teaching responsibilities to support research work.

In terms of actual contact hours this varied considerably depending on research activity. In one department the average was ninety hours contact teaching a year, but ranging up to one hundred and eighty for those staff less involved with research. Marking and assessment and student projects were not included in this figure. Staff in other departments had contact hours of about ten or eleven hours a week, and one senior member of staff, with many other responsibilities, had five hours teaching a week timetabled for the coming year.

The doubling of the credit rating of modules had been carried out because there were feelings that the ‘multiplicity of small take-up modules’ was inefficient in terms of staff time and timetabling. It had been suggested that this would reduce teaching loads, yet in the short term it had increased loads, as staff had had to prepare new lectures to fit the larger module size. Another factor that staff felt affected their workloads was the size of their department, where small departments had fewer support staff to help and also the sharing out of administrative roles was between a smaller group. Heads were commonly using support staff to alleviate workloads in areas such as admissions and teaching administration. Technical staff in the Science departments were also felt to be in much demand.

**Teaching**

There was quite widespread comment on the disparities between teaching loads in relation to poorly subscribed modules. Union and teaching staff commented on it in relation to inequalities that had repercussions beyond the actual teaching, to the space available for research and the esteem that was subsequently granted. In relation to this issue senior staff were also aware of the inefficiencies of operating these modules. There was a feeling that departments had to look beyond what they had always provided and look at modules that were feasible and viable. It was felt that the new University structures could possibly assist in this through integrating certain taught areas. For example it was felt that in relation to first year generic modules could be
provided, to an extent, across these units rather than from the department. There was a feeling that this area needed refreshing in recognition of the broader student intake.

Some staff had heard suggestions in the University that ‘over teaching’ was going on. However staff felt that this was not the case, in fact, as one noted, ‘the people that have been short changed at the moment are the students’. The ‘wretched RAE’ was felt to be responsible for a lot of this pressure. Staff felt that they had not provided the standard of teaching that they had a few years ago, for example not updating their notes. Further the ‘open door’ policy towards students was felt to have been eroded. Some expressed a belief in the need for more teaching assistants. In some areas, such as Science, PhD students were used as demonstrators, but the amount of work that they could do was obviously limited because of their own research work.

An area in which some departments had reduced pressures in relation to teaching was that of not having an exam board meeting between the first and second semester. This meant that although for the student’s sake they needed to get results back they could prioritise the marking, with third year work taking priority.

Research

The new strategy for the University had been to move from a teaching university to a research-led one. This had caused some pressures for staff because of the tight RAE deadlines, and some felt that it was ‘close to the wire’ on publication deadlines. Heads of departments were responding to this by making ‘tactical judgements’ and taking teaching responsibilities from some people, such as major research players and ‘borderline’ staff, so that they could complete research work. Some departments, such as Languages, had responded by joining together for a joint submission. The approach of the University was to enter a selective submission and a task group had been set up to organise this. The PVCs for Research and that of Teaching and Learning had devised a strategic response, reinforcing the message that these two areas were ‘complementary activities’ within the University.

Such a strong research strategy had caused some problems for HoD/S when preparing their draft RAE submission. It had meant that in certain departments some staff would not be entered for the RAE. Heads felt that this would have to be dealt with on a case-
by-case basis, as some individuals would not be surprised or worried by this, and others might be hurt. The question that then concerned managers was, *what is the role of these staff in the department?* Some felt that they might try in the longer term to engage them in larger successful research groups, but the other response was that they would have to take on more teaching. Union representatives had also registered that in some cases staff had been approached to take voluntary severance.

Staff responses to this general situation varied considerably depending obviously on their research record, but also importantly on the nature of their department. In some departments there was an expectation that all staff researched, in others there was no long tradition of research, in still others there were successful researchers with some staff not attaining the same outputs. Members of the Research Committee had carried out interviews with staff in this position to discuss how they could manage their performance. As one staff member noted in relation to the pressures on staff, *the RAE has got a lot to answer for*, further suggesting that *we need more research going on into the experience that people have at work*. Another, also in this position, noted that research needed quality time and with high teaching loads this left little time to spare, so that, *at the weekends, I am so tired from everything else*.

**Administration**

Although this area had caused high workloads efforts had been made to reduce this. Heads were using various tactics to reduce loads, such as breaking roles down into smaller units and employing support staff to manage various aspects of them. If certain roles were seen universally as unpleasant then they were offered for a fixed term. From the University stance the introduction of faculty type units would, it was hoped, *professionalize administration* and relieve departments of some of this work. However staff were feeling unsure within departments what this would mean and which roles would be retained, for example Admissions Tutor.

**Problems**

Generally the problems related seemed to result from the tension between teaching and research workloads. Mainly this was in the way of ‘niggles’, but the union had had problems in one department where *three people were targeted for voluntary severance* because of low research outputs, who were in other respects the
‘workhorses of the department’, with high teaching and administrative loads. Although this matter was resolved the Union felt that others in this position were also unsettled by a similar threat. Human Resources acknowledged that in the areas of restructuring, ‘we are in severance deal mode’, and this reinforced the importance of knowing the criteria on which judgements were made.

**Individual Response**

How individuals responded to high workloads was felt to vary enormously, as one said, ‘*some people thrive on overwork*’, but this ignored the issue of work life balance and that ‘*if you talk to their families they might not be very happy*’. Heads of departments noted that it was difficult not to overload the competent and that, ‘*some people make an art form of making themselves unsuitable for certain jobs*’. What staff did agree on was the autonomy in the job and how this allowed them to work relatively when they wished, so this suited both ‘the night owls’ and ‘the morning person’.

In terms of satisfaction HoD/S often reported happiness at the way they were involved managing things, the ‘projects and schemes’ and keeping the whole department, students, staff, teaching and research moving on. One stated though that managing academics was challenging, like ‘managing 26 small companies’, whereas support staff were usually ‘*a joy to work with*’. Lecturers often felt that it was the variety of work, the teaching and the research, that they enjoyed.

The University had run surveys from the Occupational Health Unit to assess how well staff were coping with demands and generally it was felt that there were support mechanisms for staff with stress related problems. Both HoD/S and staff recognised the need to prioritise work and to not exceed the quality requirements of any given job. To help managers with these challenges a new training scheme for HoD/S had been recently started.

**Organisation**

The location of the University, without a large student catchment area to help support it, was felt to make the task of financially managing the University more difficult. To meet the challenges facing them the new VC had brought a change in management
style and had, with the Executive, produced a new strategic plan for the University. The new direction was focused on research, but also teaching excellence, with commitments to Third Mission activities. To achieve this it was felt there was a need to recruit and retain the best staff and students and a new structure of six units, replacing the old faculties, was going to be introduced. To further support this strategic approach committees had been streamlined. In the past the University had operated with a lot of committees and a fairly cumbersome decision making structure, where ‘nothing happened’. So executive management had been strengthened and smaller groups were taking decisions, with less discussion and consultation. Despite anxieties over communication issues most staff seen acknowledged the need for change and felt some ‘grudging respect’ for the new approach. The old system, although friendly, was viewed as ‘unrealistic in the current climate’.

The Executive Group felt they were operating coherently and collaboratively on projects and were working to disseminate information about strategy to various working groups within the University. The VC himself was doing so at Departmental and Boards of Study ‘away days’. The Human Resource department was also working actively to unite their strategy with the University one, so that issues, such as staff development, could be linked into the plan. As noted above communication of some of these changes was an issue for some members of staff. Some felt that HoD/S worked hard to keep them informed of the developments, but they felt these were ‘imposed’ on them. Surveys had been done within the University that highlighted this problem, however a new Director of Communication had been appointed and there was a belief by senior staff that once staff could see the strategy working then perceptions would change and this would be motivating.

However one HoD/S talked of his dilemma, in one sense wanting to inform more junior staff of the urgency of their financial predicament on the other hand not wanting to worry them unnecessarily. He said they needed to realise that ‘radical change is essential, it is not an optional extra’. Such financial imperatives were found to be worrying some junior staff in those departments that were suffering from problems with student recruitment. It was reported that the actual model used by the department had been developed from a model designed in another very successful unit within the University. The general approach was felt to be that of concentrating
resources, by not operating small or widely ranging modules within departments. So for the new structure Shadow Management Boards had been set up to prepare for the changes and to 'rationalise and improve and avoid overlaps'. There were suggestions that quite a few of the departments, set to move together into the new units, were not altogether happy about the proposed subject mix.

**University Systems**

A new system of Academic Performance Reviews had been approved by Council and would soon be operational. The new system would ensure that staff were clear about their objectives and would allow managers to 'identify shortfalls in performance as well as achievement'. It was felt that it would help to identify with more clarity both over and under burdened staff. It was felt that the previous system of review was a 'bit hit and miss in the past' and too focused just on individual objectives.

Another procedure that had recently been changed was that of the promotions policy. Here to accommodate clinical professional staff individuals could be promoted to at least Senior Lecturer level, based on distinctive performance in two out of three work types of, teaching, research and administration. Staff originally from the Nursing College had had different forms of contract without a research element included, there was differing views on whether they had all converted to the standard Lecturer contract. Human Resources also acknowledged that there had been discussions about 'teaching only' contracts. Despite this change in the promotions policy staff and HoD/S still had a perception that one needed to 'work quite a lot harder to get promoted on excellence in teaching and excellence in administration'. Work was also being carried out on the Framework Agreement. An initial model had been created and job evaluation interviews were being done for the generic groups.
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Context</strong></td>
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<td>School of Arts and Humanities with 8 departments and employing 100 academics altogether. School was soon to become a new unit that would coordinate most admin, but academic units would stay in the department. General feeling that this reorganisation would bring a drive for consistency/formality in allocation processes. Also hopes that changes would bring awareness of synergies between departments. Interviews were carried out in: Theology, Modern Languages, and English depts. In all pressures were felt over the RAE. Sabbatical scheme in operation and being used actively to help staff finish projects for RAE. Research was not in focused areas, but moves for this. Small departments meant little scope to share tasks. In Theology Dept extra work created through bilingual provision. Modern Languages had anxieties about their future, as was hard to recruit students, so income poor, and needed to be very, 'careful with money'. Input into some Joint Honours programmes. Placements abroad also quite large organisational task. English Dept. arrived at agreed weightings for the various contact hours and then distributed across available staff.</td>
<td>Biological Sciences, but under the new structure would be merged with two other schools from related fields with whom they had competed in the past. Expected that management for this would be done centrally and were looking for overlap between courses for efficiency. Present structure had 25 academic staff, numbers here had been on a downturn with early retirements, but student numbers (450) had increased. This had meant revisions in teaching provision to 'plug gaps'. Decision made that they needed to be more strategic in teaching provision - subject too wide to teach all areas. Felt to be operating in a 'state of flux'. Strategy Group formed for the school to help with this. Extra problems were felt to exist because of location split over two buildings. RAE had created extra pressure. Draft submission had been done, problem seen of managing those few unsubmissable staff. Support staff taking a lot of the admin burden, e.g. aspects of admissions. Demonstrators used for marking of first year practical work. Some work assessed by multiple-choice questions and computer assisted assessment. Sabbaticals few because of workload pressures. New staff did get reduced loads.</td>
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<th>HoD/S 7a</th>
<th>HoD/S 7b</th>
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<td>When first in the role found he worked late at the University three days a week, now settled a bit and not a 'crushing or onerous burden' as enjoyed it. RAE pressure had meant less time available for preparation of lectures. Felt need for change, if not 'the financial implications are dire'. Was still teaching and researching himself. Said of the dept 'we don't have shirkers' and WLA mostly worked well, with just a few 'little niggles and tensions, because of the human condition'.</td>
<td>Still taught, and involved in student recruitment, at the time not research active. Felt school not too big, so aware of staff loads, mixed a lot informally, also Director of Teaching advising. Felt that she knew who was light on their duties, but problem of personality aspect meant not easy to redress this. Competent staff could get overloaded, and were sometimes unwilling to relinquish roles that they had invested in. Kept an unallocated 'job in my pocket' ready for those sort of negotiations. Felt that the HoS job could be lonely, as the next level up, the Deans, had been abolished. Believed that the RAE and new university structures would force changes in the WLA.</td>
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<th>Allocation Method 7a</th>
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<td>All the departments seen allocated work through consultation. For teaching this was often on the 'basis of history' - who taught a module the last year. Admin tasks also worked out by HoD/S and in department meeting, split fairly evenly. Research done in the time left - usually a day a week timetabled for this. Balancing out on teaching tasks to accommodate fluctuations in class size. System seemed transparent with a good degree of trust present.</td>
<td>Data base with information on teaching loads, research outputs and grant income. But it was felt that a lot of the research was 'nebulous' and hard to quantify, unlike the teaching where class size, assessment and module level were taken into account. However this was not done through a formal model in numerical way, but rather through HoS judgement. Heavier loads were given to those not research active, despite a desire not to act punitively. Was aware of the danger that this would prevent these staff engaging in research in the future. Most staff taught across all years, and lectures and practicals were separate modules. Contact hrs average 90 a year, but could be up to 180 if no research. On top of this staff had, on average, responsibilities for 4 undergraduate Projects.</td>
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Admin roles were allocated for a set period after consultation with HoS- aspects considered here not only ability, load, and promotion targets (eg Director of Teaching), but the need for fresh impetus to the task. Research in time left over. Attempts were being made to give more space for this, to meet RAE challenge and help staff to complete work. Not especially transparent system of WLA, but it was felt that most staff would know others' loads.

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<th>Staff 7a</th>
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<tr>
<td>Felt it to be a friendly and sociable dept, students felt able to call in on staff, but controversial attempts had been made to control this by use of 'office hours'. Larger load at present owing to staff on sabbatical, also new staff taking a teaching qualification. No visible concessions for new staff.</td>
<td>Felt that there was a problem in WLA in relation to inequalities in marking loads. Exam time constraints could also be difficult. Work felt to come in waves and research fitted around that. Pressure felt in relation to RAE to publish in 'high ranking journals'-had been 'hauled up' for consultations with HoD/S over research outputs and alleviating teaching load to accommodate this, but really felt nothing had happened. Felt some uncertainty over the future of the school in relation to the new University structure. Felt that consultation not really working yet. Working groups had been formed, but were slow to start and felt that things 'appear from on high' and were 'imposed on us'. Felt that senior staff were 'beating the table and saying we must recruit more students, and be a research led university'. Open-endedness of work also problematic. Noted too that early retirements had led in some areas to large class. Had seen in other universities teaching assistants used to good effect.</td>
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6.8 Case Study 8

Policy
At present they had no actual policy on workload allocation, but a working party had been looking at the various models used to find good practice, with the aim of establishing some norms and guidelines. In the past an attempt had been made to develop a University-wide model, but there were problems with accommodating the needs of the different disciplines. There was a feeling that the approach would have benefited from higher-level leadership and the Vice Principal was now overseeing the current approach. Within one faculty there was a policy that each school had to operate a system or model, although the workings of these could vary.

Allocation Methods
The actual consistency of approaches across the University was described by one as ‘bumpy’. This described a situation where some, such as in the Engineering and Computing Faculty, had ‘sophisticated’ models, whereas others had an ‘ad hoc’ system of basically dividing up the teaching and leadership roles that relied on a ‘kind of traditional grandfatherly Head of Department’. Complications were often felt to arise because of complexity in workloads and radically different approaches in allocation methods and this often precluded faculty-wide models. For example in the Health Faculty, in Nursing and Midwifery, the allocations worked through the third Summer trimester, whereas other models saw this as a non-teaching period. Further within this faculty there were huge differences between schools in the nature of their work types, for example the emphasis on research between the Life Sciences and Nursing, and the need for differences in weightings to reflect this.

Within the models seen the allocation of teaching duties was often worked out by subject group leader, with the heads of school then balancing out the other elements in the model such as administration and research. Weightings were often given for the size of the teaching task, in terms of assessment, preparation of new material, and the type and level of delivery, although not all models differentiated between lectures and tutorial work. In the administrative work similar type weightings were used to reflect the size of the task, and for research, funded research was given full weighting.
whereas non-funded work was capped. The models used often ran on notional units that did not correspond to hours.

One of the problems faced by HoD/S was that staff within a school were often employed on different forms of contract, some on the older FE64, others on HE2000. The issue here was that the former had a slightly lower number of contact hours a year and longer holidays. Some HoD/S coped with this by applying the lower contract hours to all staff, whilst acknowledging that all staff worked over their contract and allocated hours. Others kept the contracts in mind when allocating, but a lot depended upon how tolerant the group of staff were. Yet HoD/S stressed that, despite the usefulness of the models, they did not use them 'religiously' and that 'it gives a feeling of accuracy, but I would never treat it as accurate, it can’t possibly be'.

**Transparency and Equity**

There was a fairly general consensus from those with an operationalised model that, although it was ‘by no means perfect’, it was ‘reasonably equitable’, and that staff ‘accepted it for what it is’. Others noted how the models had been ‘tweaked’ over time to be fairer and that it allowed staff to ‘play to our own strengths or desires’. More negatively some staff questioned, not the model, but ‘the reality of the allocations’ in relation to the time allotted to do a certain aspect of work. Heads had also noted some problems with certain members of staff complaining about their allocation. These staff often complained about their allocation comparing it to another school’s weighting for the same sort of work. Heads felt that this was a possible downside of a very open process, but that such comparisons were out of context and did not show how in other areas the weightings were more favourable.

In relation to transparency there was no University policy, but those systems seen were totally transparent and published online, ‘everybody can access, everybody knows who is doing what’. Staff seemed to feel positive about this and HoD/S acknowledged that it eliminated accusations of favouritism, but the model still allowed for ‘strategic judgements’ and so they had to be able to ‘articulate why a decision is taken’, if they could not, then management weaknesses could be revealed.
Flexibility

Although under the new contract there was space for development activities there was no University policy on sabbaticals, in fact there was a feeling that the resource level of the University precluded them. However some HoD/S had invented their own and were trying, through long term planning, to accommodate special projects.

Head of Department/School’s Role and Consultation Process

Heads reported on the wide range of different tasks that they were responsible for. As one noted, ‘I was just told that you are responsible. I hadn’t realised that you were to be responsible for so much’. It was felt to be ‘a shock’ for which the limited training given (after appointment) had not prepared them. The increasing burden of financial accountability as schools got larger through faculty restructuring was also discussed. Others spoke of how staff grievances were time consuming and ‘extraordinarily destabilising and upsetting’. Both staff and the University were felt to have expectations of HoD/S and presumptions of both knowledge and agreement with past decisions.

Heads felt that they managed to fulfil the roles of representing their school’s interests to their Dean and of interpreting and relaying the University strategies to their staff. In terms of how staff responded to this, some felt that the consultation process worked constructively with staff actively engaging, others felt that, in areas such as the review of the workload allocation model, staff were reluctant to engage in a working party, preferring ‘to complain about it afterwards’.

Workloads

Loads did seem to vary between schools as a result of differing staffing and resource levels. For example one school seen had very high staff student ratios whilst another in the same Faculty was able to operate with a ‘slack of 10%’. Some felt that taking the Faculty as a whole the budgets and staffing level might balance, as some schools’ courses were not as popular as they had been. However this had caused some tensions between schools, with a feeling that others were ‘getting it easier’. As one noted ‘workload models are fine to measure within schools, but nobody had got their head around how it works between schools’. The Faculty response was to use part-time staff, but there was a problem here in recruiting good, qualified people. There was a
general awareness between the schools of their positions in relation to staffing. Problems here were often exacerbated by high recruitment levels (staff: student ratios in one group running at 1:40-45). Heads tried to keep within the various contract limits in their allocations for their staff, who they generally felt were very tolerant, for themselves their attitude was, ‘whatever time is needed I put in there’. Staff themselves seemed to feel that, ‘the University has required us to do more and more with less and less’, and that these increases in teaching and administration had negative impacts on their research. It was felt that the problem extended to all staff, and there was an anxiety that students would suffer. Staff felt unhappy that pressures of work meant that it took them too long to give students feedback on their work. Human resources felt that the University was ‘pretty lean academically’ and that many academic were working beyond their contracted hours. Some schools acknowledged that standards set by professional accrediting bodies could be used constructively to exert pressure in relation to student care.

Teaching

Some schools had experienced problems with recruitment and this had resulted in a ‘disparity of students’, where failure rates in the intake were problematic. Other schools, facing the opposite problem of high recruitment, were looking at commonality between courses in order to increase efficiency. They were, as one noted, ‘victims of our own success’. Other measures that were being contemplated was the capping of module numbers and postgraduate numbers in well-subscribed areas. Some felt that there was a danger that staff ‘over teach’, but one of the most commonly cited issues was that of assessment, especially the crucial period between exams and the module boards. One member of staff told how another with large classes had such a tight marking schedule that they had calculated that it was ‘physically impossible’ to do the task, ‘even if he worked for 24 hours a day’.

Other aspects that were discussed were the fixed block timetable system, which would create more stability, so that students would know when certain classes would run. It was hoped that such a system would prove attractive to part-time students. Another aspect of the ‘blocks’ was that it would allow staff to use the time as they wished, for example between lectures and tutorials, and that, further, an hour at the end of the session would be used for the Lecturers to be in their room for consultation purposes.
The University centre was keen that the stability of this system would not preclude flexibility of delivery, for example to allow for Continuing Professional Development activities to be timetabled.

**Administration**

Some staff reported that although certain administration tasks were branded as being good for promotion that this was not often the case and that staff often ‘backed off’ from them. One told of how an important administration role had ‘basically fatally wounded my promotion prospects’. The reason given here was that research suffered as a result of the activity. Another said, ‘my colleagues and I feel that all our processes are driven by administrative needs’. An example of this was the early demands for examination papers before staff felt that they had really been able to decide on the assessment needs of the students.

Another area that had provided disquiet was the allowances given for administrative tasks, it was felt that they were often ‘not an accurate replica’ of the time needed. Further staff felt that they had become ‘more and more accountable’, another stressed, ‘I don’t want to be an administrator, I am an academic’.

**Research**

There was a general feeling that, although schools varied significantly, the University had not got, overall, a strong tradition of research. It was felt that what did occur was mostly at the knowledge transfer end of the spectrum, which had been very successful in some schools. However there was a drive from the University to encourage research and allowances within workload models were being used to direct activities in that area. However since the last RAE some schools had had to reduce the allowances given especially as staff had become more established in the research work. Greater distinction was being drawn between funded and unfunded work, and for example allowances for the latter were being capped.

Those staff that were not research active were given the opportunity to discuss their situation with the Research Committee, so that they could have support if they felt they wanted to change direction. It was expressed by one that there was a ‘cultural challenge’ for the University in recruiting strong research active staff. It was felt that
although a few might be ‘a bit uptight about the RAE’ for most it just ‘passed them by’. However a senior member of staff had said that the difference between teaching and research was that, ‘invest a pound in research you get three pounds back, invest a pound in teaching you get 95p back’.

**Problems**

In some schools staff were felt to be tolerant of the work allocation system, not comparing between themselves on loads, just accepting that all were working hard. As a comparison with this one Head noted with surprise, ‘how vocal other parts of the University are’. In other schools heads noted that staff wanted clarification on weightings or adjustment to their allocation, some compared allowances with other schools, some even took up Grievance Procedures. However Human Resource staff felt that it was rare for Grievance Procedures to occur in areas where there was a model, as the complaint was usually around ‘the judgement of a manager, rather than the model itself’. Yet they also felt that, despite the success of the models, staff in those schools without one were not generally demanding a model either. Staff themselves felt that problems arose from the sheer volume of work, as one noted ‘the model is good in theory.....but in practice at times it is not acted upon’.

**Individual Response**

High workloads had been problematic for some members of staff. High staff: student ratios were felt to be ‘sustainable in the very short term’, and there were anxieties that it made a school vulnerable if, for example, any staff went off sick. In general it was felt that WLA models balanced over a year, but that the teaching element occurred within the a 26 week period, and this caused ‘pinch points’, especially around exam times. However staff enjoyed their work, the new initiatives, and the research and generally working with people, as one said, ‘the primary object becomes people’. Another felt that the student always came first in work priorities, ‘the student is the customer’. In relation to coping with large workloads the autonomy and variety of the work was often cited as a means of managing stress, the resourcefulness of the individual was felt to be crucial though. Compromises, when made, were often in the area of research.
The University had taken the problem of stress seriously and a working party on stress amelioration had been formed, as it was felt that there was ‘a lot of stress’ in the organisation. One factor repeatedly mentioned in relation to this was recurrent resource cuts over the last seven years. A senior staff member suggested that the organisation was ‘stretched’, partly through ‘strategies to generate surplus’, and that this might mean that ‘stress levels will squeak’. An audit of stress by a consultant occupational psychologists was going to be carried out. Surveys on the issue had also been planned, looking at workload issues, but also focusing on areas that could be actually addressed, such as the appraisal process.

*Organisation*

The University was about to undergo restructuring with a reduction from four to three faculties with fewer, larger, schools within them. At Senior Management level there were to be changes too, with another Vice Principal to be appointed, to bring that number up to three. The three deans would also have Associate Deans to work across the faculties in areas such as Academic development and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships. Some staff felt that these changes could improve communications and management within the University. There was some criticism from staff about the latter areas. Heads of school had made efforts to keep their staff informed and at briefing sessions to emphasise University priorities and to suggest ways that the schools might respond to them. However they recognised that for staff to be involved there needed to be ‘ownership’ on issues. One member suggested that a lot of staff responses related to their origins as a polytechnic. It was argued that the culture that this had created meant staff were good at ‘implementing the defined task’, but were cautious about constructively contributing, rather waiting for the ‘next command-boss’. Along with this came calls for changes at Senior Lecturer level with a greater emphasis on taking management responsibilities. The degree to which this occurred was felt to vary considerably across the University and there was feeling that some training could help this to be made more consistent.

Staff responses revealed the other side of the issue, suggesting that the management style of the University was very managerialist, with very centralised decision making. Another described this as a, ‘we will tell you what we have decided approach’, where reasons for these choices were not given. The management style was described by
another as 'like a benevolent dictatorship where the management aspects are not done particularly well' and there was also a feeling that the Principal was rather 'invisible'. Yet at the same time staff were also expressing the need for 'more guidance', for example in relation to the means to actually address falling part-time student numbers. In relation to documents informing of the restructuring plans one said, that they were 'just words' and 'it's above my head'.

Staffing levels and recruitment within the University were described by one as a 'crawl rather than stall', with there being a lag in replacing staff losses. The question of whether restructuring might prompt further changes made one comment on the University's desire to change its redundancy policy to make this process cheaper for the University. Human Resource staff reported that although the University was happy to recruit newly qualified Lecturers they had few applications and generally employed staff with previous experience. They also reported the need for 'fresh blood' and suggested that the rather sluggish rate of staff turnover might be partly due to academics being unwilling to leave and thereby relinquish their more favourable FE64 employment contract.

Heads with buoyant student recruitment felt that resource restraints were hampering them. They appreciated economic costing systems that allowed them to see the value of activities, and if and when they were subsidising an area. The staff generally took pride in the University's role in preparing students for the job market. However one academic, who had worked extensively abroad, felt that the 'provider culture' in the UK meant that pleasing the student customer was not the central priority.

Univ/ersity Systems

The staff review scheme was carried out by heads of school and through their senior lecturers with whom they had discussed issues and targets. This approach had been problematic as some staff refused to be interviewed by staff other than their head of school, as they felt others had no authority to make decisions. Heads also reported that within the process there was 'disparity in terms of seriousness' in the approach taken. Those staff that had had a review with their Head described the usefulness of the process, for example the setting of targets that could be later reflected on and
reviewed. One HoD/S however described the process as a ‘soft approach’ with the real hard issues showing up in the workload allocation.

The promotions policy required staff to excel in two out of the three areas of teaching, research and other activities such as administration. However staff tended to think otherwise, the following view encapsulates many of their sentiments: ‘*in reality the evidence would suggest that unless you are seriously research active then forget it*’. Another suggested that in relation to this that ‘*all people in academia speak with false tongues*’. For promotion to Professor then research and funding became even more vital, as one noted ‘*the University is more heavily swayed by money that’s being brought in for research and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships than it is by an extra 500 undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment*’. In certain schools without a long tradition of research, appointment at Chair level had been through external appointments.

The actual number of promotions a year across the University was set at six to Senior Lecturer level, although the previous year half this number had been promoted. Human Resources staff talked of a mixed approach to promotions, with an annual round that allowed staff the opportunity to go forward and competition for the real posts that were available. They believed that staff that had been disappointed in the process sometimes returned to their HoD/S to talk over their workload allocation. Union representatives expressed the potential dangers in the Framework Agreement to ‘sign off’ against a teaching and scholarship profile and thus cause discrimination in the promotion process. Another system running in parallel to the promotions was the Fellowship scheme for teaching and research.

Various other issues were touched on in the interviews such as Transparency Review and Costing. One felt that this had moved from its original intention for modelling and measuring time for funding purposes and was suspicious of how the data was being disaggregated and used within the University. Heads however had found data from Full Economic Costing useful in order to see the real costs of activities and to help decision-making.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>School 8a</th>
<th>Schools 8b</th>
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<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
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<td>New faculty structure soon to be created. This School of the Built Environment had 3 sections and 35 academic staff. Across these sections student: staff ratios were high ranging from approximately 30:1 to 45:1. Owing to financial constraints restrictions had been made on new appointments, but the market for students was buoyant. Considered capping student numbers. Staff felt to be all working hard. Two forms of employment contract in operation, the old FE64 and the newer HE2000. New staff and those promoted moved on to the new contract. Quite a lot of consultancy and KTP activity from which the University, but not the Schools benefited. Sabbaticals taken, but required careful planning to accommodate.</td>
<td>School of Engineering with 34 academic staff and about 600 students. Student recruitment numbers ranged widely, so as timetable prepared 4 months in advance- more classes timetabled than actually delivered, so rationalisation of workloads done in semester 2. Programmes accredited for Incorporated and Chartered Engineer status. Belief that because of financial constraints staff retiring would not be replaced. Various measures had been adopted to cope with increasing workloads- support staff had been used to take on some of the academic admin work. Part time staff had been employed to cope with some teaching and lastly there had been changes of teaching in the lower years to introduce commonality to some modules in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering courses, thus reducing the demands on teaching resources. Resource cuts felt to have created stress for staff as had some admin aspects e.g. early planning of exam papers.</td>
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<td><strong>HoD/S 8a</strong></td>
<td><strong>HoD/S 8b</strong></td>
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<td>Felt staff committed, industrious, but coping. Belief that some over-teaching occurring, and that staff needed to be reflective about their work choices. Own work considerably exceeded allocation, had found timetabling constraints difficult, so had had to reduce postgraduate contact. Enjoyed all the work, but frustration at the inadequate preparation for the role and belief that people felt the HoS should know all the policies and procedures. Saw his role in emphasising to staff University strategy and aligning School strategy to that, e.g. on recruitment. Also worked at looking at all aspects of the school, knew that some areas of research not really profitable, but that it was politically impossible to withdraw from due to University stance.</td>
<td>Had a few staff that always complained about the WLA, comparing it to other models, other staff never did so. Had attempted to modify the model so that a bigger allowance was given to lecturing rather that tutorials, the overall effect for over 80% of the staff would have been zero, but unanimously voted down. Had problem in the past as large number of staff doing consultancy work, so University insisted that allocated hours were fulfilled before consultancy work would be paid. Felt that the University was very managerial, but believed academic leadership more vital. Felt that an open admissions policy had led to problems- failure rate for students, but this had to be balanced by the need to maintain standards to meet aspects such as professional accreditation requirements. Enjoyed the work very much,- given a 'free hand' by Deans.</td>
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<td><strong>Allocation Method 8a</strong></td>
<td><strong>Allocation Method 8b</strong></td>
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<td>Established model in operation worked out on hours basis. Subject Group Leaders responsible for WLA in their area. Teaching allocation driven by modules with account taken for student numbers, assessment, and preparation time- extra allowance made for new modules. Administration roles had been calibrated and were reviewed, e.g. allowance for Subject group leaders would be determined by the number of staff in the group, the number of students and the number of programmes offered. Research - (capped for unfunded) allowances worked out retrospectively on aspects such as publications. All these areas then passed to HoS to 'smooth' out and identify areas where redistribution was needed.</td>
<td>Established model that had been tweaked over the years. Worked on a semester basis. In December HoS asked staff for an update on all their non-teaching activities. These were then entered on to a spreadsheet with the weighting allowances for the various activities (these allowances had been gradually reduced over the years). The model then calculated the target teaching hours based on the maximum contact hours- these followed old contract, FE64, of about 1280 hrs a year. With for each hours contact (lecture or tutorial) one hour was allowed for prep and marking time- extra allowance for large classes. Teaching Subject...</td>
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needed. Out puts transparent and available on line. Care taken over hours so that contact time of especially the FE64 contract (1280 hrs a year = 40 weeks x 32 hours) were not exceeded. (new contract, HE 2000, pro rata at 1390 a year = 40 weeks at 35 hours)

One day a week with no student contact hours, and for half of this time research and scholarship activities could be engaged in.

Fixed 3 hr block timetabling, for lectures or tutorials, plus an extra hour with staff available for student consultation.

Group Leaders allocated modules, with generic teaching elements sorted out early on. Few evening sessions now, as reduced resources had led to common timetabling between part time and full time students.

Allocation based on 40 working weeks, but the teaching time was actually 26 weeks, so it was felt that staff with a larger research element could spread their work more easily across the year including the holiday period, whereas staff with a higher teaching element could be more overloaded in certain periods. Standard timetabling package allowed them to block out days of non-contact time, for research etc, but under half of staff requested this. Extra allowance given to new staff.

Research was allocated retrospectively in terms of outputs-funding and papers. The allowance for unfunded research had been reduced sharply. Administration roles tended to be stable, with a variable aspect of their weighting e.g student numbers in Programme Leader role. Once this stage completed a draft document was then distributed for comments. System transparent and published.

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**Staff 8a**

Felt the WLA system was fair and transparent, but the problem with it was that the times allocated towards roles did not reflect the amount of work involved. Had expressed anxieties, that because of universally high workloads that the students would suffer, saw them as the main consideration, but also saw that the University was prioritising research. Felt own workloads had spiralled with lots of administration.

Had instigated successful teaching initiatives, and got recognition for this in terms of promotion, - keenly contested. Felt that ultimately research was the key to promotion and that worryingly, because of work volumes, his research was suffering.

Believed that the new University structure would improve management systems in the University. Felt that the new system of career review had worked well for him, but was 'not that simple ' for others.

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**Staff 8b**

Enjoyed the autonomy the School offered, as once the basics were covered there was 'relative freedom' to work as hard as you wanted, on what you wanted. Acknowledged that whilst there was pressure on the School to perform in certain areas, such as research, this was not a pressure on the individual. However did feel that research was the most vital aspect for promotion. Enjoyed the variety of work. Contact time varied at present about 10 hrs a week, but on average around 16 hours. Exam scheduling could make marking workloads difficult when large classes involved.

Not happy with the present review system, as felt that only the Head of School could make decisions.

Felt that the University management were 'working quite independently from us' and that the strategic work 'sometimes bears no relation to what is going on'. He also felt that management was not giving sufficient advice in certain areas. Had experienced various initiatives over the years, and felt that the best approach was to 'keep my head down' and just do the work.
6.9 Mini Case Study 9 (Non-HE Organisation)

Organisation
A large, multinational, professional service company with a range of disciplines operating within each office. Within the organisation as a whole a lot of benefits had been gained through flexible use of staff and knowledge sharing procedures. For example in relation to the latter the company had an Intranet Skills Network, where a key word search would reveal specialist staff with expertise in given areas. Also staff could ask for technical advice on the Intranet, so that ‘we don’t reinvent the wheel’. This was also a forum for discussing areas of common interest, linking staff in the company across the world.

Each office had its own five-year business plan, with target areas for work. There was a big emphasis on the importance of technical expertise at all levels, so that staff dealing with clients and competing for work were aware of the resource and workload implications in their area. New graduate staff were seen as an investment and an extensive training schemes operated to meet the needs of work and professional bodies. The graduate cohort from each year were an unofficial mechanism of support and contact within the larger organisation structure.

Policy
The company set the working week at 37 hours, allowing up to a maximum of 48 hours to cover periods of extra or unusual load. The general feeling was that working long hours regularly was counterproductive with ‘productivity drops’ as there was loss of the ‘concentrated eye’. Managers wished to know where workloads were routinely becoming high, so that they could manage them by sharing work out more evenly and investigating the nature of the problem to ensure that unnecessary or inefficient work was not being done.

Allocation methods
Work usually arrived through either repeat work from clients or from a successful bid for a project. After this a cross discipline meeting would then work out in a more detailed way the size of the job and the profile of the team required to deliver it. Discipline leaders would take care of the technical side of the project and the overall
Project Manager would coordinate across all the disciplines to ensure smooth and efficient coordination of the project. A Manpower Forecast, on a spreadsheet, would be created to reflect how many days each discipline would be involved in the project and a formula would then calculate the fees based on this. Staff filled in a weekly timesheet against each job and the Project manager then kept track of how the costs were building up. Meetings within the teams were held regularly, weekly or fortnightly, to gauge progress and ‘see how the ship is steering’ and to plan further. The nature of the work meant that initial estimates were often ‘educated guesses’ and as more information became available the team had to be ready to adjust planning. Clients also often changed their brief, which also created difficulties in workload planning. Allocating work and planning relied on both formal and more informal channels and managers having a good level of awareness of the workloads within the group, so that they could adjust it accordingly.

**Flexibility**

The nature of the work required all the teams to be very flexible in their approach. Changes in the scope could alter the workload and timescales dramatically. Further, projects could often be placed on hold whilst technical issues were sorted out. This created problems in dovetailing projects and caused problems of ‘peaks and troughs’. Various mechanisms were used to smooth these problems. The company ethos of all offices operating as one without division, meant that staff could move to other offices to provide the expertise needed in any given field, fees were then charged to that office against the relevant job number. Less radically staff could also move between teams within the same office. This process not only smoothed workloads, ensuring that staff were neither unoccupied nor overloaded, but it also widened their experience in their field. However more experienced staff could be used most flexibly. This was evident in the Discipline Leader level were these staff, because of their wide knowledge of many projects, could act as a ‘buffer’, soaking up certain aspects of work when deadlines approached.

**Transparency, Equity and Consultation Process**

The whole process was transparent with ‘nothing to hide’. All the information on times and finances, even the invoices against hours worked were available for staff to see. Team Leaders ensured that jobs that were seen as less enjoyable than others were
moved around. Further managers had to ensure that graduates working towards professional qualifications gained the appropriate range of experience. Staff felt that in the small groups it was easier to know what was going on, but the regular meetings within the teams ensured that staff were aware of any pressures or issues occurring. Within the organisation regular emails, bulletins and journals ensured that staff were kept up to date with developments and a new initiative had been developed to provide a direct link with leaders and the Board so that decisions and issues could be mooted to representatives throughout all the UK offices. On a more technical plane video conferencing and ‘see and share’ software allowed staff in different locations to consult and work interactively.

Workloads
Managers felt that they probably worked up to the 48 hour limit, but staff felt that usually they could keep within a 9-5 day with just occasional weekend work when things got busy. They felt that a lot of responsibility was placed on the individual, but no ‘cracking the whip’. Managers did emphasise that, because at times there was a heavy workload, staff needed to ensure that when things eased they responded by leaving work on time in order to recuperate. Some felt that priorities were managed well, looking at the ‘costs to the client’ and ‘costs to us’. The intra and inter office resource management had kept work levels fairly stable, but if there was a persistent problem then new staff would be recruited. The problem facing the company at that time was that all of the offices were experiencing heavy workloads, so some of the usual flexibility had been lost.

Systems
There was a yearly appraisal process where a development plan was agreed, with the individual responsible to realise objectives and get the relevant experience. This appraisal covered aspects from ‘personal effectiveness, to team working and delivering projects through to business management’. The emphasis was on openness, with both sides looking at questions around any problem areas. However managers stressed that if any problems were occurring they would be actively addressed immediately. Further, as most of the more inexperienced staff were trying to gain professional qualifications managers had to ensure that these staff got appropriate experience and so they were active in ‘monitoring training and training objectives’.
Promotion would be viewed from many angles, technical excellence as well as business aptitude. Staff could become a specialist in their field, with the category of 'Fellow' being given to the most illustrious, or they could be a 'generalist', technically expert, but also with responsibilities for managing a group and developing the business.

6.10 Mini Case Study 10 (Non-HE Organisation)

Organisation
The department involved was part of a large multinational professional service organisation with specialist services in the different offices. The case study office dealt with Public Sector part of the organisation in the North of England. The department, spread over two offices, employed eighty staff, of whom six were support staff.

Policy
Broad principles were set around workload allocation, so that for example Partner/Directors looked after a range of fee income streams, the volume of which was dependent on the 'balance of client-facing work and going out into the markets'. At the level below this staff were matched to the work depending on their skills and experience. More detailed policies then worked to dictate on work practices, aspects such as Risk Management, and audit procedures. The organisation had two sets of objectives that managers worked to perform against. The first were performance objectives, to do with 'client service utilisation' and profitable growth, and the second were 'values' objectives that related to aspects such as ethics, behaviour and team working issues. These aspects were condensed into nine business principles, statements of the organisation's ethos that were displayed on office walls. At one level these values were felt to act as a counterbalance to individual competitiveness.

Allocation Methods
The staff were divided into two pools dependent on their specialisms. Each had a senior manager to do the logistics planning and where possible to accommodate the
objectives and interests of staff. A consultation process at the start of the year provided a framework for this, for example in relation to training needs. As a practical example, at the level of assistant manager, the senior management team allocated specific clients and then they would then manage their work, allocating elements to their team depending upon their skills and experience. A bottom up time plan was then developed for each individual audit, then against this the staff skill mix of the team, managers, assistant managers, juniors and trainees was matched. It was felt that some staff enjoyed routine work whilst others enjoyed ‘going offline’ on ‘one-off stuff’. This information was then entered into a 3D operational diary, a specialist piece of software. This could then give ideas on resources for the next three to six months. This facility required a huge amount of maintenance time, because of the constant changes in the day to day running of the work. Broadly for planning purposes 200 days client contact time a year was assumed, with staff working theoretically thirty five hours a week. Staff filled in weekly time sheets and this enabled managers to monitor time and costs, especially in relation to future pricing of work. The audit approach was dictated to by company policy that was maintained in compliance with professional body guidelines.

**Flexibility**

Much of the work was recurrent, allowing for forward planning, but the ‘wildcard’ was the ‘one off’ assignment, that caused variations in workflow, which were smoothed by two mechanisms. Firstly by building in some spare resource and secondly by ‘borrowing and lending’ of staff within the organisation. Very occasionally self-employed contract staff were used for simple work in real peak periods. The work pattern of the recurrent work was eased by the different year-end periods and the subsequent phasing of audits of the various organisations. However the patterns of work varied between the various sectors, for example some of the commercial departments had more widely differing loads through the year. Contracts within the organisation were drawn up on an individual basis and it was felt that the firm was able to be flexible in working patterns for staff. For example one individual did not work in the school holidays, but worked more than full time the rest of the year to compensate.
Transparency, Equity and Consultation Process

Staff interviewed felt that they became aware of how the workloads of others shaped compared to their own through informal mechanisms. One said that he felt it to be ‘very open’ and a situation were any issues could be discussed. Further they believed that the company made efforts to ensure that work was spread out equally amongst staff of a similar grade. Also there were opportunities for feedback to senior management. One felt that this feedback was acted upon and that what made the company good to work for was this ‘cumulative knowledge’ and the ‘continuous learning process’.

It was felt that typically staff spent around sixty five percent of their time doing work that they wanted to do, that fitted in with their interests or training objectives. However trainees first had to work as directed, but they could progress to more interesting work later in line with their level of training. Staff acknowledged the need to provide stimulating work for these trainees in order to retain them. Retention in this area was given a great deal of consideration in the organisation.

Another piece of software was used to record the objectives of each member of staff, so that this could be reviewed at the end of an assignment. Staff felt at ease with mentioning their interests and felt that the managers facilitated the move to other sectors when possible.

Workloads

Staff felt that workloads were quite high, with a lot of staff working beyond the thirty five hour contract especially at peak times, as one manager noted ‘people rarely work less than forty, and in peaks significantly more than that’. However it was not felt to be at an unmanageable level. Also it was suggested that there was a lot of staff commitment and this came down to the ‘type of people that we recruit’. Pressures could mean that staff became so involved with their work that they did not realise that they had done a good job, however senior managers made the effort to provide feedback from clients about this. One manager suggested that managing the work-life balance was ‘very much an individual responsibility’, so that for example staff planned their annual leave well in advance and did not carry forward more than five days leave a year. The pattern of work in this department was described by one as,
'medium intensity continuous peak', with little let up in the loads compared to areas with a more differentiated pattern. One manager spoke of the frustration of constantly having to respond to other people's immediate priorities, which meant that it was hard to manage individual longer-term objectives. As well as client-facing work senior managers had work in relation to the internal management of the department.

To help staff cope with these pressures emphasis was placed on team building and working. It was felt that there were a lot of 'very real' support mechanisms in place to prevent staff from becoming overloaded and pressured. The organisation also allowed staff, were appropriate, to work from home.

An issue that did emerge was that some staff did not put the extra time they had worked on to their ledgers, because of the profitability targets of a job. However staff were encouraged to record the genuine figures, so that the next round of fixed fee contracts could more accurately reflect the work involved. Travel time between jobs was mentioned as an additional time factor in relation to workload, although if staff were working more than an hour away from their home office then they were supposed to stay at a hotel.

**Systems**

Senior managers put a lot of effort into matching skills and experience and training needs. Within the appraisal process objectives were set at the start of the year, reviewed at midyear, and signed off at the end of the period. The appraisal process was based on the appraiser's perspective, so to widen this there was a 360-degree feedback process running every two years. Although responsibility for meeting these targets was placed firmly with the individual, staff felt well supported in meeting these objectives, be they in relation to training, international secondment or work sectors. Specialist software provided feedback on assignments and this was then discussed, looking at performance and values criteria. To facilitate this area and career planning and mapping, there was an online record of all personal data, training and career choices. The emphasis on team values and the buddying and mentoring schemes were felt to help staff in the 'very competitive, dynamic environment' so that issues of stress, burnout and retention were actively managed. This latter aspect was
seen as especially vital in relation to retention of trainees, and for the period immediately following qualification.

The organisation also ran a leadership programme, identifying staff with potential early on and offering them more extensive training. Some staff within the department had expressed some unease about this selective approach. Managers felt that this might be explained by the fact that this group was part of the 'not for profit' sector, where values were "a little away from quite a lot of the rest of the firm". In relation to promotion, it was felt that it helped if, along with having the personal and business case, you were a specialist in area for which there was a rising level of demand. There was also a belief that just because of the huge workflow there were more opportunities in the London office rather than in regional centres.

The organisation had an annual staff survey and the department also held its own more focused survey. In the past questions about communication and on their knowledge of internal business management had revealed that staff did not know much about the latter and that 'actually they weren't too bothered that they didn't'. In order to assess performance the organisation had an external website for clients' comments as well as running formal client service reviews run by someone independent of the team concerned.

In summary to this section then the ten descriptions of the case studies provide a narrative on each institution looking across and discussing all the main categories, and allowing for initial comparisons to be made. The next stage on from this in the process is the cross case analysis which collects together all the information from the cases about each category. This allows even more comparisons to be made and is another step on the way to an understanding of the set of relationships involved around the main issue of workload allocation (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990) (p74).
7 Cross-case Analysis

A cross case analysis was carried out using NVivo to select all the material in each individual category, such as policy, in all the cases. This continued the open coding process of comparisons that are used to help define a node phenomenon, but widened the comparisons across all the cases. Through this the frequency of occurrence and the different factors that related to a category, (its context and the actions and consequences associated with it) could also be gleaned and used in the next stage of axial coding (chapter 8), which builds up a broader picture of the mechanisms and relationships at play.

Note: In the following sections Cases 4 and 5 are Australian universities. Lower case letters relate to specific departments or schools within a major university case study. Where a number alone is given this refers to a university as a whole or to a response from outside of the in-depth departmental studies e.g. from Human Resources. The non-HE cases are included in a separate section at the end in section 7.14.

7.1 Policy

Nearly all of the universities interviewed had some set of principles or guidelines about workload allocation models, however they did vary in the level of detail involved and nearly all of them were under review by working parties and review groups. For all that staff themselves (including HOD/S) very rarely knew about either the policy or any of its details. The Australian case 4 was an exception to this with staff being quite well informed on policy. Generally explicit policy guidelines related to aspects such as fairness and transparency in the process (case studies 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7), although as Case Study 6 noted, transparency levels could vary in degree. A view frequently expressed was that it would be impossible for one university-wide model to accommodate all the different needs of the departments and schools (cases 2, 3, and 8). As a consequence the development of the actual model was usually left to the discretion of the Head of Department/School (HoD/S). Whilst most universities were happy to leave the head to develop and implement systems there was recognition that such discretion also had costs. Some felt it was too vague, with not enough training and direction given to HoD/S to accomplish such a task, and that it resulted in a ‘mish, mash’ of systems (cases 2, 3, 4, 6,). To compensate for this one university
had introduced more training (case 5), another had a committee to monitor implementation (case 4), some included recommendations to HoD/S about models to ensure that the system was ‘defensible’ and to avoid interpretation issues leading to disputes (cases 1, 4, 5, 6). The expectations on levels of agreement in relation to the models varied. In one there was a feeling that the model should be agreed between all the parties concerned (case 6), others related to compliance with employment contracts, especially in relation to teaching hours (cases 3, 4, 5).

Many of the universities commented on the time-consuming nature of sorting out the issue of workload allocation, especially when burdened with other higher priority administrative tasks. However, some described the need for input from high-level leaders to address the problem systematically (cases 2 and 8). Another issue that arose both explicitly (cases 1 and 6) and implicitly (case 8) was the problem of managing workloads as a faculty-wide issue. Case 1 stipulated in its code of practice that departments’ workload assessments should be mapped onto student FTEs, both to assess the funding resource balance and to allow for interdepartmental comparisons. In Case 6 the University had decided that schools within a faculty might have different balances of activities, but that they should reflect the strategic plan of the faculty as whole. Further, the units used should be able to be converted to notional hours in order that comparisons might be made. This idea of balancing staff and resources at faculty level, rather than just within schools or departments, cropped up again in Case 8, where it was apparent resources were balanced or averaged out across the faculty as a whole, leading to problematic differentials in resources between schools.

Some universities (cases 3, 4, and 5) seemed to have had a greater degree of involvement from union representatives in the formation of workload allocation guidelines. One (case 3) used as a basis their employment contract agreement of a maximum of eighteen hours contact time a week. Australian case studies (cases 4 and 5) used Enterprise Bargaining agreements to inform their policies on workload allocation. Whilst actual working hours were not set, there were guideline recommendations of thirty-seven hours a week. Further, work types were specified and in case 4 there was a proportioning of time between the main areas of teaching, research and administration at 40:40:20 respectively. Unions had also expressed
concerns about systems that required a form of precision accounting, and also systems that required staff to total their hours in relation to different duties over a year. The latter was seen as being potentially undermining of the professional decision making of staff about their work. In universities without forms of contract stipulating work hours there was an often-expressed belief that capping of hours would be destructive in relation to working practices. However the issue of reasonable workloads was often discussed and some had this built into their principles (cases 5 and 7), with a system of checks being initiated if levels consistently exceeded notional guidelines.

Some case studies expressed a policy level interest in using the allocation models to look beyond workloads to issues of service quality and an understanding of funding that could feed into Activity Costing and Full Economic Costing.

7.2 Allocation Methods

A wide variety of models existed, even within individual universities. This was often a result of an evolutionary process, however approximately half the sample were experimenting with their model or aspects of it. The systems seen fell into three main approaches: those that collected background information, consulted and then divided the work informally, and then the sort of model that actually combined a limited range of activities formally or numerically to give an output in terms of points or hours and lastly those that had a more comprehensive scope. However within and across these broad categories there was a continuum of approaches. As a starting point the taught element obviously had to be timetabled and so the contact hours were fairly easily defined. The research aspect on the other hand was not always included in models, partly because it was felt that it was harder to quantify, but also there was a sense that academics were motivated to do this work anyway, so the need to include it in the model was reduced. Administrative work was sometimes just divided up equally and in other cases some rough weighting was used, employing a teaching hours or points equivalence.

The allocation model actually adopted was a reflection of factors such as the culture/history of the department, the leadership style of the Head, the size of department, the complexity of the allocation, and the employment contracts in use. Sometimes the Head delegated responsibility for the model to another member of staff, whilst
ultimately making final decisions and fine adjustments. The following is a broad summary of the methods used to allocate work and a discussion of some of the advantages and disadvantages encountered in each. Although the discussion works from the more simple approaches through to the more complex systems this is not a reflection of any evaluative judgement on the methods, i.e. the more complex models might not be any better or appropriate to their given situation than the simpler systems. More specific discussion on this and issues such as transparency and consultation will follow in later sections. Figure 2 below summarises the approaches.

**Informal approaches**

At the most informal end of the spectrum the Head divided up work, based on consultations with staff, and taking into account preferences, specialisms and competence issues (cases 7a and 2a). Often this division was informed by basic rules such as; staff should deliver two modules (case 6b). Administrative work was similarly divided up, informed by a consultation process. Research was not allocated as such in any of these cases as such as staff were usually expected to work in this area, although a day free of contact teaching was often used to facilitate this work. At a more formal level another case study (case 7b) had a data base where module level, class size and assessment type was collected and used by the Head in judging the work allocation and the dividing up of teaching and administrative work. The last case (case 3b) that could be included in this group was one in which a comprehensive model had been introduced and had found disfavour with the Union. This was partly because of its attempt to collate all the different activities with an hourly rate and partly because the loads were seen to balance over a year rather than accommodating the weekly limit as set out in their contract of employment. As a result the Head concerned had had to revert to forming a judgment on duties and loads through negotiating with staff individually. The breakdown here seemed to be a result of misunderstandings of the nature of various agreements within the process.

As the last case illustrated the advantages of this informal mechanism might be an individualised system, which could accommodate complex information in a way that a more numerical model would find hard to deliver without over complicating matters. Further it could be used flexibly to accommodate change. However such a system would be harder to operate in larger departments, partly because of the time it
would take to operate and also because it relies on a Head being knowledgeable about all the staff and the intricacies of their work. However cases seen (2a, 7b) also indicated that there could be problems stemming from inadequate consultation and a lack of definition and norms for work, even in small departments. Another related disadvantage of the system is that the rather subjective basis of decisions makes HoD/S vulnerable to claims of favouritism and 'deals', it also provides them with little support against staff that complain routinely. Conversely for staff, where decision-making criteria are not transparent, there might be no effective mechanism of appeal against unfair allocations and the issue of 'workhorses', an aspect noted by Tann (1995). Further, it is does not necessarily readily accommodate employment contract specifications. Another problem noted with these systems was the problem of accommodating the potentially huge differences in the assessment task size. A variety of approaches were used: some used other teaching tasks and student projects to accommodate differences in class size and fine tune loads (cases 7a and 3b), others used second marking and weightings to balance things (cases 6b and 2a).

Partial approaches

The next group of departments put only some aspects of the work into a model. The models varied with regard to what they included and how they incorporated it into the allocation. For example some models included administration, but not research activities and visa versa, further, variations in student numbers and assessment work in some were balanced through informal mechanisms and in others through numerical weightings.

This aspect of weighting draws in another more general distinction between the various sorts of approaches on whether they used hours or points to describe allocations and the discussion here ranges over the various approaches. There was perhaps more inclination to use an hours model in departments of organisations that had employment contracts stipulating maximum contact hours (case 3a, and see also 'comprehensive' cases 5a, b and 8a, b). The 'experimenting' Case 3b, mentioned earlier was the only exception to this as it had stipulated hours, but used an informal model. Two cases (cases 1b and 2b) not within this 'contract' category still chose to use the hours units. In one case this was because the Head had made a definite choice to use hours to highlight high workload issues (case 1b) and in the other case (case
2b) the model used a thirty-seven hour week as its basis. However what staff often commented on was that although the system looked equitable both the weekly limit and allowances for each work type were unrealistically low and made to accommodate a set total. An indication of this was that for those models using hours, research was either not included (cases 3a, and 1b), or calculated retrospectively and capped (cases 2b, 8a and 8b). The Australian Cases 5a and 5b were an exception to this as they set standard loads in each area and varied the balance between them to match the individual staff member. However this seemed to fit within their contract hour limit through efficiencies on the teaching front, such as online provision.

Returning to partial approaches specifically, it was found that at its most simple the allocation could be based on solely teaching contact hours with marking equalised out and with administrative work shared out informally through the judgement of the Head in relation to equity (case 3a). More complex approaches accommodated this administrative work within the actual weightings of the model (cases 1a and 1b). These approaches used allowances for teaching and administrative work with assessment and preparation weighted within the model. However the mechanisms used to calibrate them varied, one used hours (case 1b) and another (case 1a) used a system of Full Time Equivalent units, as a means to match allocated time to resource inputs, an approach probably informed by their university policy, see above. So for example if second year students did four courses, then staff teaching one of them would get a quarter of an FTE per student. The advantage of this FTE model meant that the lecturer could teach the students in however big a group that they wished and the marking would also be reflected in the numbers. Administrative tasks were also given an agreed FTE tariff although this had to be tweaked frequently to try and more accurately reflect the work involved in these tasks. Loads were then weighted to reflect aspects like new appointments (50% load); HoD/S role (40%); leave (0%); however most people were on a 100% load. The disadvantage of this approach was that as the figures were expressed in percentage terms it was felt that the numbers could inflate over the years as student numbers rose. Another disadvantage was that research was not explicitly weighted within the model.
Comprehensive approaches

As the systems got more comprehensive the research element was incorporated into the models, although in many of the cases it was a capped element. For example cases 8a and 8b used research outputs, distinguishing between funded and unfunded research, to determine retrospectively this allocation. In both of these models target-teaching hours were determined by the maximum contact hours stipulated in the employment contract. The models had weightings in teaching for numbers, assessment and preparation, but interestingly these models had weightings also for administration work, reflecting for example such things as staff, student and programme numbers that a Subject Group Leader would have to coordinate in their job. Once the data had been entered HoD/S could then examine allocations to identify areas where some fine readjustments were needed. These models were felt to have the advantage of accommodating areas such as assessment and preparation times whilst at the same time allowing staff the flexibility to make choices over modes of delivery. However some staff felt contracted employment hours were accommodated in a way that obscured actual loads, further in both models the allocation spread over a forty week period, whereas the actual teaching was fitted into around twenty-six weeks. This meant that staff with a higher researching load had their work more evenly spread than staff predominantly teaching. Also some felt tariffs for certain administrative tasks, although carefully weighted, did not reflect the actual work involved and that their review had resulted in a gradual reduction of some of these allowances over the years. Retrospective inputs on the research side were also felt to be a little inflexible in that changes to work patterns took a while to be acted upon.

In Case 2b this practice of entering data retrospectively extended to all the work areas. Here the model allowed staff to constantly update the spreadsheet on their work. The model used had a system of weightings for the various areas (some of which were capped) and this would then determine the next year’s allocation based on the data entered. A problem with this model was that again it was based on a thirty-seven hour week. The whole idea of hours did create problems, often because amounts allocated to tasks were not felt to reflect the reality of the situation. Heads were faced with the problem of conditions within contracts of employment and just the unacceptable face of the actual loads. Staff too seemed resistant to having the
restraints of tight systems and accountability that might threaten their cherished autonomy. Systems using points to some extent obscured this issue and in some cases, such as 6a (and 4b), HoD/S were keen to ensure that their model would not be used to limit work, in the way that an hours model might. The Case 6a system used a database that collated information on teaching tariffs (comprised of fixed elements on credit rating and module level and a variable element on numbers) for each module that could then be divided amongst the staff teaching on it. This was especially important in this case as each module had inputs from a large number of staff, thus making the task of allocation very complex. Administration and research tariffs were determined through a consultation process and also fed into the database, further a ‘catch all’ category was included in the allocations to account for various and diverse work types. This had a purpose of reducing quibbles over minor allocations.

The approaches taken by the Australian departments will now be described separately. The approach in Case 4b was informed by the University Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EB) on the division between the work areas at 40:40:20 to teaching, research and administration activities respectively. Although it was not fully inclusive, in that administrative tasks were shared out equally, it was a very sophisticated approach that developed through high levels of consultation. Different models and weightings had been developed for the different modes of study (undergrad/PhD etc), and each divided into sections on coordination, facilitation and assessment. Credit rating and student numbers fed into the model, but also the dependence level of students in relation to the coordination and facilitation aspects. This refinement captured the fact that the marking element of a large class had greater work implications than the differential between lecturing small and large groups. Comparables between teaching and research were found by examining the workloads of staff employed 100% in teaching and 100% in research. Then a base line level for research was set and the weightings used to ‘reward’ or ‘punish’ variance from this. The advantage felt in this model was that the weightings allowed staff to move the balance of work between research and teaching.

Case 5b used a similar approach to the last model of determining a load for a given area by calculating the work involved at 100% loading. Staff had to rank themselves on a scale in the three main areas and then through negotiations HoD/S would work
out allocations by using staff self-assessments against these notional 100% loads. Similarly in Case 5a standard loads in each of the main areas were set as a benchmark to balance against. Care was taken to avoid the polarisation of staff, so teaching hours were not used as the balancing mechanism. This was a similar aim in Case 4a, where again with the EB agreement in the background, equal weightings of points were given for the three main areas. In general the teaching loads were given out equally, but not capped. Research on the other hand was capped, but those staff not gaining funding were not given extra teaching duties, as the aim was to maximise chances for them to succeed in research in the future.

Figure 2 summarises in a continuum the range of approaches discussed above. It also shows the disposition of the cases and summarises the broad advantages and disadvantages of all three of the main systems used.

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**Figure 2: Continuum of Workload Allocation Approaches**
7.3 Issues of Transparency and Equity

Whilst the majority of those interviewed saw the advantages of transparent systems there were a few areas that were seen as potentially problematic. The definition of a transparent system was also open to interpretation and there was a range between: systems that named individuals and listed all their duties (cases 1a, 1b, 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 7a, 8a, 8b) some even worked out roles in an open forum (cases 1b and 7a), to a publication of a summary document of the range of duties (cases 2a, 2b, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b), to the more confidential approach between HoD/S and staff member (case 7b). Another aspect that emerged was that, even where decisions were transparent, the criteria for arriving at them was less so, for example why particular individuals got certain roles and how weightings for tasks were decided upon (cases 3 and 6b). So some felt that openness needed to extend to an articulation of the decision-making criteria, as without this management weaknesses could be suspected (case 8).

The context was also felt to be pivotal in relation to transparency, not just the stance of the HoD/S, but also the physical environment, the size of department and other factors that affected perceptions of openness and trust in operations (cases 6 and 7). Further some felt that changes at a university-wide level, with guidelines and calls for numerical systems, would facilitate more transparent systems.

The perceived advantages of transparent operations in relation to workload were numerous. Many cited the reason that it would curtail issues of unfair treatment, discrimination, and favouritism (cases 2, 5, 6, and 8). It was also felt that a system that openly used a measure allowed for comparisons that helped to create a mutually agreed idea of a reasonable load. This might then facilitate a ‘moving towards the middle’ in the workload distribution as ‘outliers’ in this range became evident, allowing the HoD/S to manage the issue of underproductive and overstretched workers (cases 4 and 7). Other staff mentioned that it was an important way for staff with different roles to appreciate the contribution to the department or school from others. For example teachers might see the benefits that research funding brought in and researchers could see the loads of staff involved in teaching large classes. This had helped to reduce tensions and niggles that had grown up, and some staff also felt that it helped to promote diversity and for staff to find their niche when work was
balanced openly and flexibly (case 5 and 8). Others felt that the openness of systems was useful when it came to times such as appraisal and promotions, so that the importance of an individual's contribution was more easily judged (cases 1, 5).

As with many things these issues could be seen from other angles. Some saw a danger of transparency, particularly if the model was detailed, as it could encourage staff to bicker over the details through divisive comparisons (cases 2, 5 and 8). However, some felt that the model needed to be detailed in order to be fair and comprehensively cover work areas (cases 6 and 7). Still others felt that such openness was best only at identifying those lying outside the normal range.

In relation to equity there was generally a belief that things were mostly handled fairly within schools and departments, however this was somewhat hazier where systems were less transparent. The Head was pivotal to perceptions of trust and equity, rather than just the WLA model itself. Some departments used simple principles, along with the WLA models, to ensure equity. For example, some had an explicit expectation that all staff should do some teaching (cases 4a, 5a, 6a) and another that all staff should research (case 1a).

There was quite a lot of discussion about certain staff who tried to do the minimum and those efficient, amenable and diligent members that always picked up any extra tasks (cases 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7). Some HoD/S talked of the problems of managing equity where some staff seemed to 'thrive' on hard work and always worked beyond the allocation. Research was mentioned frequently as the aspect that accounted for the most diversity in loads, where staff routinely used their vacation periods to catch up on research work. Further it was felt to be relatively harder to quantify research activity time-wise. Administrative tasks were also a vexed issue. In some cases large roles were avoided, in other instances knowledge of the weightings or promotion prospects had made staff more willing to take them on. Certain administrative roles were felt to often fall to women, sometimes because of a belief in their superior communication skills (cases 1, 2, and 7), further these roles tended to be relatively more open-ended. Marking and assessment were also areas frequently highlighted as being potential problem areas in relation to equity because of differences in class sizes. Finally from a more general position there was some questioning of the time
allocated to given tasks within the various models where they were not a true reflection of the work involved, even though across a department they might appear to be equity between staff. Also looking at a wider picture some staff were starting to question equity levels across their faculty or even their university (cases 6 and 8).

7.4 Flexibility

One of the aspects that nearly all staff, both senior and more junior, appreciated was the relative flexibility and autonomy in the arranging of a lot of their work. Some woman academics appreciated how they could fit the time in with home demands (cases 5a, 6b, and 8b). Many staff used any days not allocated to teaching to work from home, which had advantages in terms of concentrated activity, but there were dangers felt in that the work-home divide was blurred. In another case the University had relocated and flexible-working practices had accommodated those staff unable to move within the given period. However one instance of inflexibility related to the way employment contracts that stipulated maximum weekly contact hours could undermine the innovation of new intensive courses that might run for say a week over the vacation period.

The availability of sabbaticals varied. Mostly staff could apply to the relevant committee after a certain number of years' service or at a points' threshold level (cases 2, 4, 5, 6,7). The proposed sabbatical project was then assessed to ensure suitability and outputs were checked at the end of the period. Smaller departments and schools had greater problems in accommodating sabbaticals, often because of problems covering teaching (cases 2, 4, 5, 7). Some Universities were rarely able to make provision for them (cases 3 and 8) and at the other end of the scale one successful, well resourced department found staff often unwilling to take them because of a reluctance to leave their research group (case 4). One department used sabbaticals to help staff reach target levels for the RAE (case 7) and another used them to help staff to regain ground in their research after a lengthy period in a heavy administrative role (case 6). Funding sources, such as from the AHRC, were also used to match university investment in sabbaticals and similarly teaching fellowships were used for scholarship activity.
In order to smooth workflows sometimes semester, rather than year, sabbaticals were given. This could be eased by generally giving staff one “light” and one “heavy” semester. In one case seen sabbaticals of a year were spread over two academic years, the last semester of one and the first of another (case 7). One problem encountered with them was that staff often worked so hard in the run up to their sabbatical that they were exhausted and less productive through it. Another issue was that it was difficult for staff to take sabbaticals if they had input into other courses or disciplines (case 5b).

7.5 Head of Department/School and Consultation Process

These aspects cover the relationships and work of the head of the academic unit themselves and their part in consulting in the development of an allocation model. The HoD/S seen often expressed their enjoyment of managing their unit, but many had also found it very challenging, especially at the start when they felt they were often expected to be aware of things of which they had no knowledge. When it came to actual staff management HoD/S generally acknowledged that as they became more experienced the task of managing staff became easier and less time-consuming. Yet some felt that the training given after taking up the role would have served them better if given prior to appointment (cases 1, 3, 4, 6, 8). However they felt that they were able to represent the views of staff to the university and also relay information back to staff. Involvement and information were seen as being key elements to build confidence and trust in organisational decisions. Some also noted the need to compete with other areas in the university in order to serve their department/school (cases 1 and 6). Size of unit was also noted as an issue when it came to actually knowing what was occurring (cases 4, 8). Juggling resources and balancing the needs of students, staff and RAE priorities were the biggest causes of tensions for HoD/S. Many of them had invested in more administrative support and were aware of the need to delegate and not micro-manage situations (cases 2, 3, 4).

Nearly all the HoD/S involved felt that staff were committed and industrious. Some felt that they had to ensure that staff did not over-teach, and were looking for efficiencies, consolidation and new modes of delivery in the teaching programme (cases 2, 4, 5, 8). They discussed their role in mentoring staff, encouraging and at times challenging those who were not fully engaged. Heads frequently discussed the
issue of personalities. Often this was in relation to staff who were motivated and almost overstretched themselves (cases 1a, 7b). They more rarely talked of difficulties, but had experienced passive resistance to change, such as in relation to a new WLA model (case 3), disruptive personalities, and problems over work paid as overtime (cases 8b and 3b). Some HoD/S expressed a belief that the problems were best acted upon quickly to avoid their escalation (cases 5, 6, 8), as these small grievances were generally felt to be very time-consuming.

Heads did feel workloads were high and felt that WLA models were needed to help achieve equity. Yet there was also a feeling that not only did HoD/S themselves need the discretion to make adjustments, but ultimately staff had to make their own assessment of work priorities. Most HoD/S felt that they had been consultative over the introduction of, or amendment to, WLA models, discussing aspects such as weightings for roles (cases 1a, 1b, 2b, 3b, 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 7a, 8), although this process was not always successful (case 3b). Even when there was consultation HoD/S noted how difficult it was to know all the issues and implications (cases 4, 5). However, although one case reported that staff were unwilling to engage in the consultation process (case 8), others found that where staff had become actively involved their awareness of the complexities of the problem of WLA had made them more supportive (cases 4 and 6). One school had invested in quite a lengthy process of consultation and pilot study implementation, followed by further review and consultation and implementation (case 4b), and this system seemed to have been introduced with little friction. Often HoD/S had inherited a model and continued to run it without too many problems (cases 1a, 2b, 3a, 8a, 8b), although there was often resistance to any changes to it. The introduction of new WLA models was more often greeted with suspicion, on one occasion this had meant the model was withdrawn altogether (case 3b).

Staff interviewed seemed to generally have good relations with their Head of Department /School and quite high levels of trust appeared to be operating (cases 1a, 2b, 4a, 4b, 6a, 6b, 7a, 8a), although for reasons of tact this question was not asked directly. Only on two occasions did staff show some nervousness about being interviewed and require reassurance on the confidentiality of the process. However perceptions on the allocation process itself were not always so positive. Honesty and
openness were appreciated, but there were a few instances of staff unsure of the plans of their Head (cases 1b, 2a, 3a), and others did suggest that communication of plans was sluggish (3a, 4a, 7b). Where staff had had anxieties and concerns over their work, the reassurance given by HoD/S had done a lot to mitigate the stress of the situation. There was, reportedly, a degree of conflict between a small minority of staff and their HoD/S in a few departments, this often focused on problems surrounding workload allocation, sometimes in relation to contracts of employment (cases 3b, 8b), in others this 'unhappiness' was more limited to the detail of the model (such as marking allocations) or temporary in nature due to staffing shortages (cases 4a, 6b, 7b).

Generally HoD/S found time a constraint when it came to fine tuning allocations to individuals, especially in the larger departments, this was an aspect that they sometimes delegated, such as to subject area leaders.

Some HoD/S noted how their own job could be isolating or lonely (cases 3 and 7). In certain cases HoD/S met up to share knowledge on things such as WLA models. A few departments /schools had also introduced Associate HoD/S to support the HoD/S and also to prevent any undue dominance. A few HoD/S still managed to teach a little and some still did research (cases 1a, 3a, 4a, 4b, 5a, 8b), however, others had difficulties maintaining their research (cases 1b, 3b, 6a, 7b) or felt it to be squeezed (cases 1a, 2a, 2b, 5b, 6b, 7a). Research was frequently cited as being pressing and the demands of the RAE seemed to be uppermost in the minds of many at the time of interview.

7.6 Workloads

Most Universities seen had done surveys that covered issues such as workloads and well-being. In some a union had tried to actually agree what a reasonable workload was, sometimes where there were contracts of employment specifying contract hours this had a sharper focus (cases 3,5,8), albeit the scope of discussion was partial. Workload levels were generally seen as high with many academics working in the evenings and weekends (all cases). How staff responded to this seemed to depend to a large extent on what the work involved. Increased bureaucracy and demands for external audit had been one of the most unwelcome aspects discussed in almost every case, especially mundane and repetitive tasks which were very unpopular (cases 3, 4). Where HoD/S had employed more administrative support this was widely felt to be
beneficial. Small sized departments also found problems in distributing certain tasks and roles (cases 3a and 7a). Those units that included research in their model had found research work to be the cause of the biggest inequalities in workload, however it was something that many staff seemed keen to do and to fit in, even if it meant working unsocial hours. The open-endedness of research was also cited as problematic in this regard (cases 1, 2, 7). Research caused most difficulty in departments where the discipline was new to research and so had no background of resource support, but where the organisation still had high expectations of research success.

Another aspect frequently discussed was the uneven flow of work through the year, mainly in relation to teaching aspects and assessment (cases 2, 3, 6, 7). Some HoD/S had tried hard to find ways of spreading the work, using part-time, sessional staff, and PhD students for some work and also using innovative ways to cope with large class sizes. Australian case studies especially showed an extensive use of ‘casual’ staff. Some HoD/S had also liaised with central administration departments in order to minimise extreme peaks of work caused by short periods between exams and expected completions for marking. High student: staff ratios were problematic in several cases (cases 1, 3, 6, 8), this was sometimes because of an extreme upturn in the popularity of a given subject, where there was a lag before new staff were employed, and at other times because of resource constraints, where staff losses were not replaced. Some cases, especially those in less densely populated locations, also spoke of problems recruiting suitably qualified staff. Importantly many staff, especially junior academics, expressed anxieties about the implications for students as a result of these high loads (cases 1a, 1b, 2b, 7a, 7b, 8b), feeling that lectures were not prepared as well as they hoped and time for student consultations limited.

The credit rating of modules was mentioned in two of the universities (cases 6, 7). In both, moves were being made to increase the minimum credit rating generally of modules. Although it was felt that this would be beneficial in the longer term through efficiencies, in the shorter term it had increased workloads as staff had to prepare new material. New work was also being created through the use of technology. Many staff complained of an influx of student emails and queries and other talked of organisational moves to put more work online and even to delivering lectures online.
Some felt happy to move in this direction, others worried about equity issues, where their load was compared with an individual, who admittedly had made a large investment to prepare online work, but thereafter did much less.

Personality issues were also seen as a big factor in relation to workloads. Sometimes this was felt to be due to enthusiasm, high standards and high levels of motivation, at other times staff felt it was because of inefficiency (cases 1, 2, 3, 5). Staff talked of having to have the discipline to limit the amount of time that they spent on tasks, however in other cases there was a sense of irritation with managers who glibly talked about the need for efficiency. Another frequently cited issue was that of efficient staff being loaded down because they could be relied upon to do the work well. There was felt to be dangers in being ‘a safe pair of hands’. However staff also recognised the problems of mismatching of staff to a role and acknowledged how often this limited the choices available to HoD/S (cases 1, 7). There was also a feeling that to progress you just had to work harder, and some believed that newer staff felt more comfortable in this climate than staff that had been longer in the profession (cases 2, 4). However from another angle some expressed a view that there were dangers in new staff being overloaded too early with large responsibilities, such as Admissions Officer (cases 1, 5). Many described how they felt new staff should be mentored and nurtured (cases 4, 5, 6). Yet there was also an issue, where new staff were protected and also supported through teaching certificate programmes, that there could be a knock-on of higher loads for more experienced staff. This could be problematic for example in relation to research when there was difficulty meeting output expectations.

Although staff felt comfortable discussing high workloads mostly they played down any suggestions of stress-related illness. Only one Head actually commented on staff with physical symptoms, although Human Resources and Union staff seemed to be more aware of cases and suggested that high workloads made staff feel more vulnerable (cases 3, 5, 6, 7, 8). A few universities had noted a large upturn in these cases. In two universities Human Resource staff felt that women workers were presenting with relatively more cases (cases 2 and 3) and they felt that these often related to poorly developed personal support structures. Continuing on the gender issue in one case some schools had used WLA models to assess the hours of fractional workers (case 4). Their findings were that these often far exceeding what they were
contracted and paid for. These sessional workers were mainly women with childcare responsibilities. Hakim (2005) on her study of women’s careers and work life preferences argues that unpredictable and stressful demands, and the need for trips away from home makes senior or demanding full time positions less attractive to women.

7.7 Teaching

The actual allocation of teaching has been described in the earlier section on “workload allocation”, but generally it was a result of consultations based on preferences, competencies and specialisms. Heads then, using their own discretion and / or a model, divided up work, usually taking account of factors such as class size, credit rating and module level.

Although many cases stressed the importance of teaching and had senior staff continuing to teach (cases 2, 4, 5, 6) it was felt by many that teaching was under pressure from many interconnected areas: from a resource angle, from research pressures, even from the students themselves. The resource issue and increases in staff student ratios had led to drives for efficiencies, for example by increasing lecture sizes (cases 2, 3, 6b), however room size was often a limiting factor here. In those cases with high undergraduate numbers, for example in Cases 4a and 5a, where the department was around the 2,500 student level overall, then lecture sizes could be about the two hundred mark. Some felt that capping class sizes was not an option (case 1), whilst others had considered it (case 8). The discipline involved was also seen as pivotal here, for example it was found to be harmful to try and increase class sizes in areas such as Modern Languages because of the highly interactive nature of the course delivery (case 7a). Recent popularity of some subjects, such as Psychology and Surveying, (cases 6b and 8a) had caused problems. However recruitment of new staff in one case (6) had eased the strain, although there was often felt to be a lag between staff leaving and their replacement with new academics. In other subjects such as Modern Languages and Engineering (cases 7a and 8b) poor recruitment levels had led to lower funding or recruitment of students with lower levels of attainment.

Differences in teaching loads within departments were being scrutinised and one was looking hard at the viability of poorly subscribed modules (case 7). In others, to
encourage efficiencies in the delivery of teaching, units, rather than hours, were used in the WLA model (case 4b). In this latter case staff who did not perform well in research were loaded with more teaching. Such a response contrasted with the views of other cases who were determined that teaching should not be seen as a form of 'punishment', with some providing teaching scholarship schemes to promote this activity (case 5b).

Commonality and synergies between courses was seen as another means to reduce the teaching load (cases 7a, 7b and 8). This was occurring in Case 8 as result of organisational restructuring, so that integration of some areas across the departments could occur within the first year of courses. Team teaching and strategic provision of teaching, for example through selecting to offer only certain portions of a wide subject area, were also used to help with teaching resources (cases 7b and 6a). However small departments and more specialist areas had the most problems in accommodating changes (cases 1, 3, 7). Different modes of delivery were being experimented with to optimise the teaching element (cases 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), for example in the Australian cases on-line teaching provision was much in evidence. Some HoD/S were also exhorting staff not to 'over teach' (cases 7, 8). In many cases staff were working just to keep courses stable with minor 'refreshing' only (cases 1a, 1b, 3a, 4a) although one was investing in new courses (case 3b). Distance learning packages were another means by which to help resources as they were popular with foreign students and the fees were good (cases 2a, 4, 5).

Another means that was used to stretch out teaching resources was the use of research students for certain elements of the work and part-time or sessional staff. Although this looked economical there were often further resource implications as these staff needed mentoring and some work, such as assessment, either could not be undertaken or needed moderating (cases 1, 4, 5, 8). On the positive side it was recognised that this was the means by which many new staff entered the profession and some cases felt the need for far more staff of this sort (cases 7, 8).

Although the input and support from professional institutions was welcomed some cases also felt that meeting their requirements for professional accreditation had also had resource implication (cases 3, 4, 6, 8). Time had to be taken to ensure that
teaching met requirements and students on placements had to be supervised. Teaching programmes for staff themselves were felt to be helpful, but had implications for workloads, further some staff felt frustrated that they had not the time to try out the new ideas that they had learnt about (case 2b).

Resource issues were often discussed in relation to student recruitment and often beyond just simple numerical relationships. For example a broader intake had meant greater disparity between students and this had meant that for certain subjects, such as engineering, sound mathematical ability could not be taken for granted and extra provision had to be made (cases 1b and 8b). So where recruitment levels were low performance had become a resource issue (case 8b), but also there were problems when the course was popular and resources did not follow (case 8a). In the Australian cases (4 and 5) there was a greater awareness of the student as customer and there was a conscious effort to improve the learning experience, for example in one case streaming the year’s intake to ensure the appropriate level of provision (case 4a). However many Australian staff felt that students had become more demanding about the teaching provision, wanting comprehensive notes, on-line provision, lectures in the evening to suit their working arrangements, and numerous email queries (cases 4, 5). Although staff stressed that personal interaction with students was vital and beneficial some of the UK cases also felt that the increase in their student numbers and demands had led to the ‘open door’ policy being replaced by one of consultation hours (cases 1a, 7a). Some staff also acknowledged that the quality of their teaching work had slipped a bit over the years (cases 1a, 1b, 7a, 8a) in areas such as refreshing material, and speedy responses for assessment (cases 1a, 1b, 2b, 7b), in some instances this was blamed on the pressures that had come from research and the RAE (cases 2b, 5, 7a, 7b, 8). However many felt that pressures of examination marking were often exacerbated by organisational demands on timings, with often insufficient gap between Semesters One and Two, to allow for the assessment (cases 3a, 5a, 6, 8). In those cases that did not weight marking or student numbers in the model there was felt to be reluctance by staff to take on modules with high marking loads (case 5a).

7.8 Research

The tradition in research varied greatly between the cases seen. However, even those where it had not been strong in the past, had recently started to change their
expectations in this area and use strategies to promote research (cases 3, 8), for example giving support through research committees to non-researchers. This cultural change in post 1922 universities was something also found by Yokoyama (2006). Having said that, within this study approaches within individual departments and schools varied considerably by discipline, with some working more at the ‘knowledge transfer’ end of the spectrum (case 8). Some in the Australian universities suggested that research was increasingly managed through centres and that these were forging closer links to businesses and their needs. Those UK universities that had a long experience of working in research were also actually increasing their commitment to it (cases 2, 4, 6). In these cases ‘top down’ strategies set out to improve investment in research. In many of their schools this meant providing up to 40 % of academic time for research, however in practice many academics disputed the figures, suggesting that research was usually done in the time left at the end of the day. Mock RAE type exercises had been carried out to assess the performance of staff and to ensure their awareness of research objectives. The last group of cases in the middle of the continuum (cases 1, 5, 7) were all successful in their research and increasing their investment, but perhaps without the same impetus as the first group. Of this group Case 7 was making the most radical initiatives, although some staff felt that the response from new leadership had left it rather late to meet research objectives. Tactical judgements had been made to release staff from other commitments in order that work for RAE submission could be completed. Also in this case, in order to generate surpluses and to focus reinvestment, departments had been scrutinised to find non-researching staff willing to take voluntary severance. A similar approach had been taken in Case 2. Staff commented that this approach could destabilise the teaching provision and further could be counter-productive in the research area by actually reducing the time available for research for the remaining staff.

All the staff seen felt conscious of this strong leadership stance towards research. Many noted how important a research profile was in relation to promotion, this seemed to be despite university policies that often stressed the contribution of staff in say two out of the three main work areas (cases 2, 3, 5). Some staff felt happy with the approach. Others wondered about the impact on their department’s culture through the recruiting of research-only staff and creating elite research groups (cases 3, 5, 6, 7, 8). Others discussed the hurt of staff who through RAE negotiations had found that
their work would not be submissable for the exercise (cases 6, 7). Generally it was felt that the context of the department was usually a strong decider in how much of a driver research was, but many felt that the RAE exercise had caused lots of pressures (cases 2, 6, 7), whilst in only one case was it felt that few staff would feel much impact from the exercise (case 8). Excluding those on teaching-only or research-only type contracts, the time allocated to research in the cases seen varied between half a day to two days a week. Some gave differentiated allowances dependent on outputs (case 6), or distinguished between funded and non-funded research (case 8). However in the latter case, because of resource issues, the amount of time allowance given to established researchers had had to be reduced (case 8). Some universities seemed very aware of the risks of this investment on teaching quality and were actively using measures, described below, to ensure that this did not suffer (cases 4, 5).

Another response made was to group researchers into centres (case 5) or teams each with a shared focus (cases 4, 5, 6). There were felt to be advantages to this in that it allowed busy senior academics to keep going on the research through directing a group and on the other hand it helped new researchers to start work in a supportive, mentored environment. However a criticism of this policy was that it could separate the unit from the main area and exclude those whose area of interest was outside the main focus and in some cases this had resource implications too (case 5). Academic staff and their recruitment were also pivotal to a lot of the discussions. Some universities saw the recruitment of research-only staff as a good way of investing in research (case 5). Others believed that investment in good staff would improve staff: student ratios, decrease teaching time and this would shift into research (case 6). Another approach had been to ‘grow your own’ researchers, using a policy of recruiting young academics keen to research. This approach was seen as a long-term commitment and a way of stabilising the age profile of the university (cases 2, 5, 6). Another strategy with long-term implications was to use the best researchers for teaching as well; this was felt to be a way to enthuse students with the subject and to later recruit them as researchers (case 4). Where research had created problems in meeting teaching commitments then funding had also been pooled to buy in new permanent, rather than temporary, staff (case 4). However one problem encountered with these sorts of approaches was that of retention and so gaining a return on the investment, as these staff were approached for recruitment by rival universities.
A problem that was also mentioned by staff was the growth in postgraduate student numbers who, because of their year round work, had eaten into the Summer vacation period that staff had often used to catch up on their own research work. Others noted how within a given university the patchy incidence of summer working revealed big inequalities between staff workloads (case 3). Another issue related to differences between the disciplines. Some staff in Arts departments found in hard to justify large bids, as for many of these subjects time was what was needed rather than expensive equipment or resources and this had implications if comparisons were made. Other researchers talked of the problems of getting funding and being published in top-level journals, for applied research and felt this was also an issue in relation to the RAE (case 6b). In some universities there were individual departments or schools that were relatively new disciplines that had no long tradition of research funding to provide resources for a rolling programme of work. Further the newness of the discipline meant a paucity of staff with PhD qualifications who could supervise students doing a doctorate. To overcome this a strategy had been introduced in one so that staff with doctorates applied for research funding with resources built in to buy out another member of staff, part-time, as a researcher who could then use the research to gain this qualification (case 4b).

7.9 Administration

Most staff interviewed felt that there had been an unwelcome rise in the amount of administrative work that they had, and some cases expressed this view more strongly (cases 2, 4, 5, 8). To help with this, extra administrative support had been bought in (cases 1, 2a, 4, 5, 6, 8b), but HoD/S often had to weigh this against the costs of academic posts. In one case the administrator employed was highly qualified in the discipline itself, and this had allowed the head to extend the scope of his work beyond the usual duties (case 4a). Some HoD/S did comment though that overlap between academic and administrative staff, in the ‘grey areas’, had caused a few minor problems and confusions.

Administrative work was often shared out equally between staff by HoD/S (cases 3a, 4b, 7a), sometimes standard loads were set for the whole department (case 5a), in other places the amount of administrative work allocated would depend upon the
overall balance of activities engaged in (case 5b). Heads in many departments worked out the weightings of the roles involved through consultations with staff on comparables (cases 1a, 1b, 6a, 6b), others used a calculation to gain the weighting, for example the weighting for Subject Group Leaders would be determined by the number of students, staff and programmes involved (cases 8a, 8b). In distributing the work many mentioned the importance of personality fitting the role. One member of staff commented on how if the wrong person was allocated to certain pivotal roles the implications could be profound, for students and other members of staff who might have to try to sort out problems that had been created (case 1a). One Head mentioned that they considered factors such as the individual’s workload, but also how the administrative role would fit in with their academic profile in relation to promotion aspirations. Further their ability to do the job and to bring energy, impetus and enthusiasm would be considered (case 7b). Some roles were felt to be generally unpopular, so various strategies were deployed to help this: some large roles such as Admissions Officer were broken down into smaller areas and sections delegated to administrative staff, or terms for the role were strictly time limited. Some HoD/S also used certain roles as a promotion gambit (cases 4a, 6b), however staff in one case talked of how these large roles were often seen as being detrimental to promotion, as they prevented staff doing the research that helped their case (case 8). How this worked would seem to depend on the profile of the department. In those cases where nearly all the staff were working successfully in research, an administrative role, with many responsibilities, was a way that the individuals could distinguish themselves (cases 4a, 6b).

Both HoD/S and staff talked of the reasons for the rise in administrative work, for example for external audit requirements, Government directives and the need for greater accountability and recording (cases 1, 5, 7, 8). Some talked of the need for self-discipline when it came to this type of work that could be open-ended. Some Senior staff had made the move to limit the number of committees in operation to try to cut down the workloads involved (case 4a), although in another case the work staff put into these university areas was felt not to be given sufficient recognition (case 6). In certain cases staff felt that changes to their university’s structure and the creation of ‘strong’ faculties would take away some of this work, however there was some uncertainty as to what aspects would remain with the departments (case 7). Yet other
cases felt that they were facing more devolved responsibilities, especially in relation to finances.

Some Universities, in their staff surveys, had touched on areas such as administration. In one case Human Resources staff felt that the findings showed that a lot of what was conceived of as administrative work was in fact teaching-related work (case 1). Certain tasks of this type were indeed felt to be time-consuming, for example sorting out clinical placements (cases 4b, 6), and placements abroad for Modern Language students (case 7a).

7.10 Problems

Generally there were few severe problems seen outside the issue of high workloads, where as one noted, the WLA models could expose problems, but not necessarily remedy them. Further, where there were problems, as HoD/S observed, these seemed to be limited to a few people in any one school or department. Of those other remaining issues, many centred around the communication and consultation processes. Across the universities some staff felt uncertainties about the future direction of the organisation and talked of the need often to gain information through informal channels (cases 1b, 3, 7). Where working parties had been set up it was felt that they were slow to make impacts, yet HoD/S and senior staff did feel that they circulated a lot of informative material. Sometimes the problem was more about the consultation process where staff felt unsure about the plans of their Head or did not feel that the workload model had been fully discussed through, often this concerned the reasoning behind decisions, rather than the decisions themselves (cases 2a, 3b, 6).

The growth of organisations was felt to be problematic, especially when there had been mergers with other colleges (case 6), and this was exacerbated by changes in the mission of the university, for example where research was given a higher priority than previously (cases 3, 7, 8). Union representatives reported that these changes had caused tensions, for example in staff who felt that they had a high workload on the teaching and administration front and who felt that they were being disadvantaged under this new ethos (case 7). Comparisons were often at the foundation of the problems seen and this occurred either where there was no actual workload allocation model in place, thus allowing staff to negotiate directly with their Head, or where staff
took their own model and used it to compare with other departments in relation to weightings and so on (cases 3, 8). Departments with employment contracts, stipulating contact hours, seemed more predisposed to this sort of conflict (cases 3, 8). However other academics in these cases were aware of the need to be flexible in their working practices in order to compete in their provision with other institutions. Consultancy work and paid overtime in these cases had also caused a few tensions and HoD/S had brought in measures to limit this and encourage efficient teaching practices.

Some staff felt faculties should be able to look across their schools and departments to ensure that resources and funding were being distributed equitably at this level too (cases 2, 6, 8). Heads dealing with many professional disciplines in one school felt the need to work hard to prevent divisions between the groups (case 6), and there was an awareness of the dangers of escalation from small gripes (cases 5, 6). Further HoD/S were watchful of these sorts of frictions developing where a group became ‘precious’ and tensions grew between groups of staff who saw themselves as predominantly teachers or researchers.

Retirements had caused problems in some departments, especially in small units, (cases 1, 7b), where staff: student ratios had worsened. When replaced these new academics often took some time before they were working at full efficiency because they needed to be trained and mentored (cases 2b, 4a, 5b, 6a). Some new staff talked of the extra work pressures of taking teaching qualifications (cases 2a, 2b). At the other end of the scale was the lack of senior staff to take on management roles because of them taking up Research Fellowships.

There were also a few frequently raised more practical issues, discussed above, such as the small gap between the first and second semester, that did not allow much time for exam or assignment marking (cases 3, 5, 8b). On-line provision and higher demands from students were also cited as causing problems for academic staff.

**7.11 Individual Response**

This links to the above ‘Workloads’ section. In brief then, high workloads and the open-endedness of much of the work involved had meant that staff in all the cases
seen reported often working long hours into the evening and weekends. Some felt that they had compromised a little on the quality of their teaching, but generally this commitment was their first priority. Research was felt by many to be the element that differentiated loads, and was the area that suffered most when loads rose, as further creative thinking time was lost (cases 1a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 6, 8). The factors that were mentioned about responses to this work situation were: personal efficiency, motivation and the compromises that staff were willing to make. Reference was made in all of the cases to the personal qualities that made some staff willing to pick up extra duties. Efficiency was often cited as pivotal and the need for staff to actively place a limit on some of their work activities, especially in relation to administrative work (cases 2a, 2b, 4a, 4b, 5b, 6). The disadvantage for these willing staff was felt to be that they could prejudice their chances of promotion if they burdened themselves with 'mundane' tasks. So the balance between efficiency, through role stability, and promotion was being implicitly weighed. Some were felt to thrive on the work and interviewees expressed a belief that to get promotion staff needed to put in some long hours (cases 2b, 5b). Others commented that families and the work life balance were upset by such an attitude, trips away abroad to conferences were also problematic for family life (cases 1b, 3b, 4a, 5, 7).

One of the factors that academics seemed to enjoy was their autonomy at work, and this in many cases was felt to mitigate the strain caused by high workloads (cases 3, 5, 6, 7, 8). Women staff also said that this autonomy was helpful in juggling family and work commitments (cases 5a, 6b). Quite a few of the universities had undertaken surveys around the issues of workload, stress and satisfaction (cases 5, 6, 7, 8). One survey had found academics to have much higher stress levels than any other workers within the university, but that these levels within academics varied enormously between faculties. It also revealed that academics did not feel particularly supported by colleagues (case 6). In the interviews quite a few of the staff expressed some anxieties about their own performance, efficiency, and adequacy (cases 1a, 1b, 2a, 3a, 7b,). In cases where this issue had been confronted the reassurance given by the Head had relieved the feelings of guilt and strain. Some staff did talk of their 'tetchiness' especially at peak periods, and reported some minor health problems (cases 1a, 2a). About their own workloads heads often noted how, as they became more experienced, they had improved in areas such as making decisions under pressure. Another survey
that had looked directly into the question of correlations between these areas had found no negative correlation between high loads and satisfaction levels (case 5). Interestingly the variety of the work involved, the teaching, research and general interaction between students and staff was often cited as being one of the most satisfying aspects of the work (cases 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). Staff and HoD/S both seemed to find 'the buzz' of their work environment stimulating (case 4, 6, 7). These findings have parallels with the large Kinman Jones survey (2004) that also showed that psychological well being measures had surprisingly low correlations to hours worked.

7.12 Organisation

Nearly all of the universities seen seemed to be experiencing some form of change. Many were undergoing a restructuring of their faculties (cases 1, 6, 7, 8), others were streamlining their committees (cases 3, 6, 7) or reducing the size of Council membership (cases 1, 6). These changes to committees and Council were aimed at making decision-making structures more efficient, and some of these committees were felt to be powerful structures that were in danger of eroding a lot of the powers of HoD/S (cases 1, 2, 4). Some universities were looking hard at their course provision with an aim to 'rationalise' some of their less viable courses (cases 4, 7, 8). A stronger emphasis on budgets and efficiencies was noted (cases 4, 5, 6, 7). In one this took a business-like perspective on the ‘student market’ (case 4). Often effort was placed in providing information on income and charges, so that staff were more aware of where to place their efforts (cases 4, 5, 6, 7). Another case welcomed the prospect of economic costing systems that would provide information on where cross-subsidies were being made (case 8).

In all the cases seen staff felt that the management had become more centralised and there was a wide variety of responses to these changes. In some mistrust was expressed (case 3), but often there was some sympathy with the strategic plans. What had caused problems was the manner in which these plans were put in to effect. There was some feeling that the communications and consultation processes had been rather quick and rather general in approach (cases 2, 3, 4, 7). Large groups were felt in a few cases to make this process more difficult, so that staff could not ask questions (cases 4, 5). In other places the staff felt that consultation did not really occur, rather the process was limited to telling sessions (cases 3, 7, 8). However in one case staff felt
that this was almost what the staff expected, as they were often cautious about engaging in consultative processes (case 8). Yet the importance of staff 'buying in' and having 'ownership' of these decisions was seen as crucial, and there were reports of how departments that fell in line with these central plans benefited (cases 2, 8). Other universities reported a better dialogue, however there was, even within this, disagreement about how much staff views were actively listened to and acted upon (cases 4, 6). A few cases expressed a view that these changes to universities needed to be balanced by informal meetings and mentioned that Senate became more pivotal when other committees had been scrapped (cases 5, 6). Although management was felt to have become more centralised some cases still felt that the managerialist aspects were balanced by the collegial influence and allegiance to the departments or schools (cases 1, 4, 6).

Staff seemed very aware of the pressures facing their university. Some were concerned about the issue of student fee income and the impact that this had on their university (cases 1, 4). Some staff knew that changes in their institution were a response to financial pressures (case 7), others felt that their university was in fairly healthy state financially, often because of restraint with resources (cases 5, 6, 8). Many felt positive about their Vice Chancellor or Principal. Most felt that their VC had responded to the challenges placed on them from external sources, whilst not neglecting the core focus of intellectual discovery (cases 1, 4). Vice Chancellors were often felt to make efforts to maintain their visibility with staff, for example informing them of strategic plans (cases 2, 3, 4, 6, 7). In one case alone they were described as 'invisible' (case 8). In relation to these plans, although all of the universities seen described their research commitment some had only recently strengthened this stance in their strategy documents. Staff seemed well informed about this aspect of their university strategy (cases 3, 4, 5, 7). In some this was felt to be a slight, and possibly unrealistic, change of focus (cases 3, 5), in others a reaffirmation of priorities (cases 4, 7).

As well as reshaping the organisations through restructuring and strategies, investment was also made in the staff. Training programmes for new heads of department were fairly generally provided and some were also offering leadership programmes to help maintain succession of staff at higher levels (cases 1, 2, 6). The
profile of staff within departments was also discussed. There was some talk of aging profiles and the need to recruit young lecturers. Some departments had experienced quite a lot of early retirements (cases 1b, 2b, 7b, 8b). In some these had not been replaced (cases 7b, 8b), but quite a number of departments had replaced or created new posts (cases 1b, 2b, 3b, 6b).

7.13 University Systems

Most universities operated some form of staff review (appraisal) procedure, but in some there was a wide range of practices occurring across the institution, with some departments/schools not actively engaging in the process (cases 1, 3, 8). There did seem to be more disenchantment with the process in those cases where the HoD/S shared the responsibilities of this task with his other Senior Lecturer colleagues, as there was a feeling that the latter had no decision making powers (cases 2, 8). Many of the universities were in the process of developing new procedures for the review system (cases 3, 6, 7), and one was still in negotiation with the unions regarding the scope and aim of the process (case 3), the union preferring the process to centre on development rather than evaluation. The other universities were looking at training their reviewers, so that they had clear objectives and were more able to identify staff over or under-burdened (cases 6, 7). Human resources staff in one case did note that better managed reviews linked to workload issues. The Australian universities looked at performance and development issues at review (cases 4, 5). Especial care was taken of staff on probation and before tenure was confirmed. Guidelines for HoD/S were set out so that workloads could be monitored and pressure points identified, with the aim of helping staff to clarify issues and prioritise their work; training needs were also discussed.

On promotions policies most staff had a clear idea of the criteria involved in judgement, only one case had yet to develop a clear policy (case 3). Mostly staff were assessed on performance in the three areas: teaching, research and administration (or service as it was described in the Australian cases – a term that covered both the community and the university itself). Usually staff had to perform at a given level in two out of the three of these areas (cases 2, 6, 7, 8), in one case staff could choose the weightings and balance between the three areas (case 5). Some cases talked about alternative routes for promotion, with just teaching and administration assessed, to
accommodate clinical staff or those on contracts without a research element (cases 6, 7). However there were concerns from unions that teaching-only type contracts could be ultimately limiting for staff in relation to higher-level promotions or even moving to other establishments. Similar concerns were expressed over the classifying of staff roles under the Framework Agreement. Generally staff suggested that in practice it was hard to show excellence in areas like administration and teaching, and research often held the bigger sway (cases 2, 5, 6, 7, 8). In fact in one case the union representative declared that the criteria had been changed to research and one other area (case 2).

There were a variety of other disparate concerns discussed too. For example the surveys done that looked at issues such as workload, stress, and communication (cases 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8). The latter was an area that was causing many problems, with staff sometimes reporting problems coming from central strategies and at others owing to the style of their line manager (cases 1, 2, 7). To answer these problems some universities were looking at ways of diversifying their communication channels and develop new training for managers (cases 2, 7). Many of the universities were running these surveys every year, but in one case, although informal work had been done on communications, no actual survey had been run. This was partly because the university was in a period of great change and disruption; they had many focus groups working and were aware that there were problems coordinating information between these groups (case 3). Other results of these surveys showed also that workloads were problematic and this had made organisations look at workload and allocation issues (cases 1, 5, 8), however in some instances other matters had prevented development of these aspects (cases 3, 7, 8). In one case Human Resource staff targeted their stress and workload surveys and audits on issues that could realistically be tackled (case 8).

Training was another issue that had been looked at, with some universities updating their provision for staff, HoD/S and future leaders (cases 1, 2, 6). Timetabling was also mentioned, and many disliked the way that when done centrally the process started from scratch each semester, causing lots of disruption to both students and staff. Loss of personal room space for teaching was also felt to be a loss through this timetabling system. The last issue that was discussed, especially by HR staff, was that
of the implementation of the Framework Agreement. This was felt to very time-
consuming and had for many taken priority over other matters (cases 3, 7, 8).

7.14 Non-Educational Organisations

These organisations had some practices and responses that could be usefully reviewed in relation to approaches to workload balancing in universities. Also through comparisons with them a deeper understanding of the higher education could be gained. Firstly, in these non-educational organisations time was invested early on, planning work out, forecasting, and organising the mix of teams to work on it. A three dimensional operational diary, with time, staff, and projects dimensions, was used in one case to assist with this. Team building was seen as an essential part of the process, so that staff felt supported and to ensure that newer staff got the relevant experience. This approach might help to mitigate some of the problems uncovered by the staff survey in Case 6, where staff reported feeling unsupported by their colleagues in relation to maintaining a work-life balance. Another approach these organisations used was to borrow or loan staff within the organisation to cover peak periods of demand and with the aim of maintaining flexibility. Technical expertise and problem sharing was also encouraged in one case through web networks. These responses have some resonance with the hopes of staff in Case 7 for synergies to be found in academics’ work areas through amalgamations of departments, although the degree of specialisation involved in the academic work often made this impractical. Another method that was used to help at peak periods was the use of the head to step in on projects. This obviously required the individual to be both informed and competent in the given area. Lastly organisations tried to operate with some spare resource, obviously this is not likely to be seen as possible in many departments that feel very stretched financially, but one university case was seen (case 8b) that was operating with 10% slack to help manage workloads more evenly.

Having built in as much flexibility as possible these organisations spent time monitoring both the workloads and the staff. Regular meetings were held to track the progress of work and to ensure that it matched resources. In one, staff were also interviewed at the start of the year to set objectives and again mid-year to ensure that these were being met, for example in relation to staff training or experience needs. Heads used this time where necessary to reassure, support and to provide feedback on
work, for example, from clients. This has parallels with those staff in university cases who expressed anxiety about the quality of their work, especially the teaching aspects. Those academic staff that had discussed the problem with their heads of department felt that the reassurance provided had helped a lot with the strain (case 3a). One non-HE organisation also ran departmental surveys, as well as organisational ones, in order to be aware of any problems. Many of the university staff seen were dismissive of these organisational surveys, feeling that they were quite detached from them, but an initiative at department level such as these might overcome this cynicism.

HoD/S in these non-HE establishments were also very focused on efficiencies, ensuring that there was no unnecessary work done. They focused on ensuring that work was done to the right standard and organisational procedures followed. Such an approach would probably be felt to run counter to the academic belief in autonomy. However it does resonate with the response of many HoD/S to their staff about the risk of over-teaching. Such structuring also addresses, and could perhaps mitigate, the issue of personal response to work being one of the biggest perceived factors in relation to workload quantity and quality. Efficiency was talked of a lot in the university interviews too. For example many HoD/S described how much more efficient they got after a few years experience in the role. This seems to confirm Gmelch and Burn’s (1994) view about stress levels for HoD/S being more related to factors such as experience, rather than age or gender.

The last aspect that was interesting from these cases was that the departments within these organisations were more aware of the profile of their workloads. For example one described their work as ‘medium intensity, continuous peak’ and contrasted it with other areas that had bigger peaks and troughs. Such a view has resonance with reports that teaching and research profiles differ over the course of the year. Some staff noted how in workload models the teaching allocation had to fit in over the shorter teaching period, whilst research loads could be spread more evenly throughout the year. How this is perceived will obviously depend upon the individual’s perspective. Those with a higher teaching load will suffer peak periods of work around exam time, but might be able to relax more over the vacation, whereas a researching colleague may feel that they are working pretty steadily all through the year. As so much of the research on workloads and stress relates to individual
response (French J et al. 1982), then this would appear to be a factor that ought to be considered when workloads and staff resources are reviewed. Interestingly in one of the non-HE cases there was frequent reference to being a "company" person, in other words the fit between the individual and the organisational profile was recognised and apparent. The nature of academia involves a very diverse grouping of ‘types’ making this notion of fit fundamentally more challenging.

7.15 Summary / Link

The cross case analyses given above provide a narrative view of each phenomenon, however to get some idea of the relationships and an understanding of how they operate in relation to the main issue of workload allocation the next stage in the research process takes this information to build up a broad picture of the type of connections between the parts.
8 Axial Coding

Following Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) ideas on axial coding, where the context, actions / strategies and consequences of each phenomenon (node) are explicated, a framework was developed using the cross case analyses set out above. Using the interview data each selected node phenomenon was analysed through looking at its relationship with other nodes as discussed by interviewees. Usually this was an explicit mention, but very occasionally it could be implied from the context of the conversation, for example indications for the trust and problem nodes when an interviewee showed marked concerns over confidentiality. The other nodes mentioned were designated as either part of the selected phenomenon node’s context, or the strategy/actions that would handle or manage the phenomenon or the consequences/outcomes of these actions. The results were then tabulated (Table 14). Through this a deeper understanding of the connections between node categories was gained. The order within the lists was as presented through the interview data.

The table only shows relationships, that is the nodes carry no values/dimensions, either positive or negative, this aspect is covered in the discussion (chapter 10) which compares and reviews the differences between their associated contexts and consequences (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990)(p185). The links in this table are mapped diagrammatically in the next chapter (9) that provides a clearer picture of the relationships.

Note ← symbol in table indicates a reciprocal relationship.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phenomenon</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Actions/strategies</th>
<th>Consequences (can be negative or positive change)</th>
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<td>Allocation processes that are Transparent, Equitable and Defensible.</td>
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<td>WLA Process &lt;&gt; HoD/S -consultation</td>
<td>Quantity Fit Distribution Patterns.</td>
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<td>Gender Individual Resp. &lt;&gt; -coping -performance -behaviour -autonomy Teaching -students -courses Administration Research Dept Env. &lt;&gt; Systems -promotion -surveys</td>
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|                       |                         |                 | -staffing    |
|                       |                         |                 | Individual Resp. <> |
|                       |                         |                 | Communication <> |

|                       | -unions                | -promotion      | -performance    |
|                       | E Contracts.           | -appraisal      | -satisfaction   |
|                       | Individual Resp. <>    | -training.      | -coping         |
|                       | -age profiles/new staff.| -surveys.       | Workloads       |
|                       |                         | -timetabling.   | -fit            |
|                       |                         | -framework-agreement Communication | -quantity |
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|                       |                         |                 | HoD/S <>        |

This table is a stepping stone to insights on the relationships working within workload allocation, however the information is hard to appreciate in this form, so the next chapter (9) addresses this showing the flow of links diagrammatically through cognitive mapping which is discussed further in Chapter 10.
9 Cognitive Mapping

From the above axial coding it can be seen that complex relationships are at play within departments and institutions which deserve further analysis. So the data from the tables was extracted and plotted using Cognitive Mapping (Ackermann F et al. 1996). Thus, for each node (phenomenon) connections were drawn in from its related main ‘context’ nodes and out to its ‘consequences’ nodes, with the result as shown in Figure 3.

![Cognitive Mapping Diagram](image)

**Figure 3: Cognitive Mapping of Overall Relationships**

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The contents of Table 14 were used, but only the context and consequences columns leading in and out from phenomena respectively. The table also provides the details of actions and strategies and this information will be used in the “discussion” chapter 10 later. Also to avoid over complication of the diagrams the properties were not generally mapped, with the exception of those associated with Systems such Appraisal, Training and Promotion and the properties of Organisation, Trust and Unions. In the case Teaching, Administration and Research (T.A.R.) these are major categories in themselves, but are also the sub-categories of Workload, with which they shared many of the contexts and consequences. To avoid over complication of the diagram then only the factors that were particular to T.A.R. were shown. However the “discussion” chapter also covers this detail. As the WLA Process node in the mapping centres on the technical aspects other issues are covered in the ‘discussion’ chapter 10.
In this way the links between contextual factors, and consequences or outcomes could be considered. Sometimes this relationship was reciprocal, so that, for example, the ‘HoD/S’ category might have ‘departmental environment’ as both the context and the consequence for their activities, in this case arrows would be shown in both directions. Decision Explorer software was then used to model various situations and structure the findings. The related groups of concepts were colour-coded for clarity. So organisational nodes were blue, those for people green, workload yellow and general characteristics orange. The colours are also used in Figures 3-8 later in this section.

Whilst the whole map shows the complexity of the issue the sheer number of nodes present obscures the main or pivotal factors at work. So to overcome this problem the Domain and Centrality commands in the software were used, as these list the links between nodes in rank order of their density. Domain commands show just direct links to other nodes, whereas Centrality commands shows chains of influence extending across up to seven links so beyond just its immediate vicinity. For both commands results were listed in rank order from those with the greatest density of connections to the least. The results of these two commands gave the same top ten nodes with just the order varying slightly between the two lists. These were: Individual response, Organisation, Workloads, Problems, WLA processes, HoD/S, Equity, Systems, Transparency, Departmental Environment. These would then appear to be the pivotal elements that make up the core dynamics of the process.

Before getting in to the individual analysis the other options to manipulate data will be mentioned. For example once all the nodes were mapped then the tools within the software allowed any given node, such as HoD, to be extracted with all its direct connections. This was a useful means to understand in depth the relationships at work from a particular perspective. In any of the mapping diagrams nodes could be hidden from view. This was especially useful for those nodes that seemed to impact or have systemic connections with every other node, for example the major node University Systems. So, whilst this still had to be borne in mind, for clarity it could be temporarily removed. Further, as the table shows, these main nodes have properties that are also involved in the relationships, and a judgement was made, with reference
to the data, as to their importance to the issue in practice. For example, in relation to University Systems, Appraisal and Promotion systems have been explicitly mapped, whilst Framework Agreement has not.

So, from this main map a series of maps were captured and experimented with. However, the most insightful were those that showed: the relationship of the top ten factors from the domain and centrality selections; and then maps of particular perspectives on the issue, namely, Head of Department/School and also Individual Response.

Note: In the discussion below, “bold” type indicates a node working within a map

9.1 Top Ten Factors Map

Figure 4 shows a map of the ‘top ten’ nodes. It can be seen that nodes such as the Organisation, Departmental Environment, HoD/S, and Individual Response directly inform the WLA Process as contextual elements. Looking at each of these in turn, informed by the source data, it was seen that for the Organisation node that the actual environment of the university concerned, such as its level of resources, had impacts on issues such as staffing and recruitment. The strategy that it adopted, such as the
degree of focus on research, affected how at departmental level these strategies were implemented within WLA, as did the communication of these strategies. The management style operating was also influential, for example more managerialist approaches looked for some conformity of approaches within faculties to facilitate their resource allocation systems. There was also a wide range of other organisational factors that were influential on WLA, such as geographical location that affected recruitment for both staff and students and mergers with other institutions with staff on different employment contracts that resulted in HoD/S having to have models that could accommodate such variety. Looking at the next node of the Departmental Environment, it was seen that its size, in terms both of staff and students, influenced how formal the model needed to be and the discipline too had implications for aspects such as teaching modes, such as laboratory work delivery. Research profile was also an aspect of the departmental environment that affected the model, for example determining whether research was included, what weightings were given, whether they were capped, given retrospectively and how they were decided upon.

The Head of Department/School (HoD) also had an impact on the WLA process. This was partly a function of their own management style and character, how much they liked to control their staff, how much they delegated responsibilities, and how detailed they made the model. Also some HoD/S were happy to adopt an old model and just adapt it to fit changes in circumstance, whilst others felt happier experimenting to try out new methods of allocation. Experience and training had an impact too on their responses. However the Individual Responses of staff, working collectively, or in some cases in isolation, also had an effect on the WLA model adopted. For example some staff constructively engaged with consultation processes surrounding aspects such as determining weightings for certain work, whilst others seemed more passive, yet critical of the process. In developing and implementing a model HoD/S seemed very aware of the potential reactions of staff. These seemed to be a function of both intrinsic character factors, such as efficiency and performance aspects, and also extrinsic factors such as particular employment contracts and role profiles that affected individual responses. These factors had some influence on what was identified to be shared out and also on the manner of that sharing.
Coming out from the WLA process node it was seen that there were consequences from it in the form of Workloads, Equity, Transparency, Problems, and reciprocal relationships with Individual Response. The way work was distributed had an effect on workloads, with many seeing a move of the distribution towards the middle as outliers were identified and rectified. The link from Workloads to Problems reflects the issues resulting often from sheer quantity aspects, but also other qualitative factors such as roles undertaken and the impact on issues such as promotion. The model used also affected Equity in workloads as a result of the number of factors considered within the system and how calculations were made on the work involved. For example many systems did not include research within the model, which did not seem fair for those staff spending large amounts of time in this area. For teaching there were also inequities felt in relation to on-line teaching and models where no account was taken of differences between class, and hence assessment, size. Transparency was seen to connect up again to issues of equity as staff awareness of others' loads became a force for more equitable distributions. However Transparency and Equity nodes connect also to Problems, because this very awareness often either caused or alleviated problems when staff were able to make direct comparisons with others. Individual Response connects in a reciprocal relationship with WLA Process as perceptions of the model influenced aspects such as motivation and behaviour. Further the actual equity of the system had impacts in relation to coping and performance. A reciprocal relationship also operated in relation to Workloads and Individual Response where aspects such as efficiency and coping styles had an effect on how workloads were dealt with and this in turn influenced staff causing emotions such as satisfaction and frustration.

Going one step back from these more direct relationships about WLA process it can be seen from Figure 4 that a number of other nodes have a network of relationships that are influencing the process indirectly. For example many of the organisational and systems influences described above are mediated through Departmental Environment and HoD/S nodes initially. So for example University Systems, that produced much in the way of administrative work, and organisational aspects such as resources, had impacts at department level both in the work needing doing and the ease with which that work could be done, such as help from support staff. Looking at the HOD node again these Organisation and University System categories had an
influence through aspects such as policy, employment contracts and even the training programmes offered to new HoD/S. These aspects affected the decisions and choices that HoD/S made about allocation methods, their strategies, and aspects such as transparency. This in turn affected perceptions on issues such as trust and autonomy that could be seen to affect the Individual Response node, in terms of behaviour and satisfaction.

Figure 5 shows more clearly the direct relationships operating as Organisation, University Systems and Departmental Environment are hidden. From this a clearer view can be gained of the mainly reciprocal relationships operating between the people aspects HoD and Individual Response, the work nodes (Workloads and WLA Process) and the characteristics nodes (Equity, Transparency and Problems).

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 5: ‘Top Ten’ most central factors (but, with university systems, dept. environment, and organisation hidden)*

It can be seen that the WLA process is informed by both the HoD/S, for example in their development or adoption of the models and by individuals, the staff within the department/school. However these ‘people’ nodes also have impact on the ‘characteristic’ aspects of the process in terms of equity, transparency and problems, that are not easily defined or quantified yet have major impacts on all involved in the
process. It can also be seen that there are interactions between both characteristics and work factors, such as Transparency to Equity and Problems and Workloads to Problems.

9.2 Head of Department / School Map

Another method of analysing described above, rather than to select the most densely linked nodes, was to select an individual node and to see all of the connections made to it. Such an approach works well with the soft systems approach of naming the main perspective or Weltanschauung of the analysis (Checkland P 1993). In this case the HoD/S was chosen as discussed in section 3.1. Figure 6 shows the additional factors that are picked up, such as Trust, Flexibility, Consultation and Staffing, as a result of including all the nodes. However the organisational and Systems nodes that connect to just about everything have been hidden from these views in order to see the more direct influences more clearly. Staffing is a contextual factor for the HoD/S, but the node Consultation, driven by the HoD/S can be seen to impact on many of the other nodes: WLA Process, Trust, Equity, Transparency, Flexibility and Problems. However the Trust node also follows as a consequence from HoD/S, Equity and Transparency nodes, but without a direct connection from WLA process itself, suggesting the importance of these ‘soft’ elements within the process.

Figure 6: “HoD/S” View (excluding organisational factors and individual response)
Individual Response had been hidden from this HoD/S Weltanschauung for ease of analysis, but when it is introduced again in Figure 7 its highly influential nature can be seen. Once again it needs to be stressed that the maps cannot show all the subcategories revealed within the case study interviews, for example for Individual Response this would include behaviour, coping, and satisfaction nodes. This detail is supplied by Table 14 above.

Figure 7: “HoD/S” View, (as Fig 6, but including individual response)

9.3 Individual Response map
Creating a map of the nodes connected to the Individual Response node, as shown below in Figure 8, shows similar relationships, but with the extra dimensions of Workloads and their Fit to the individual as added consequences. This aspect highlights that the HoD/S achieves fit through a combination of the WLA system and the Consultation process. In addition to all the other reciprocal relationships at work this diagram also shows the reciprocal effect of individuals in relation to workload itself for example in relation to their performance and efficiency levels.
9.4 Mapping Summary

The cognitive mapping has provided some different perspectives on the interview data and highlighted various dynamic relationships. In summary:

- The main map (Fig 3) shows a very complex system of relationships at work. This appears to move from the general and pervasive influence of university-level organisational factors on the left-hand side, through a complex web of interactions to outcomes, such as “Problems” on the right-hand side.
- However, this apparent linearity belies the dynamic nature of the situation, which has to accommodate past actions and their consequences and creates the conditions for future exercises.
- The coloured boxes help to show that quite different sorts of factors are involved, such as people-related, organisational, workload-specific elements and general characteristics. The broad split is between ‘technical’ factors, such as the calculation and allocation of workloads, and ‘social’ factors, such as trust and equity.
- The maps of the top ten major factors (Figs 4 and 5) highlight the key relationships and reinforce, first, that the various categories of factors are all involved and, second, the frequency with which these are connected with reciprocal links, so stressing how dynamic the interrelationships are.
The analyses taking the perspective of the HoD/S (Figs 6 and 7) reveal consultation to be pivotal, with consequences to both the WLA process and factors such as trust and equity. This is reinforced by the perspective given by taking the view of “Individual response” (Fig 8), together with the notion of the “fit” between individuals and their work.

The next chapter discusses these issues more fully looking back into the case study data.
10 Discussion of Context and Workload Models: Preliminary Findings

The cognitive mapping phase was the culmination of much of the previous analysis and provides a good pictorial representation of the main relationships. However, its stress on the central processes does leave some aspects that would benefit from further discussion, reaching back into the interview data, in an iterative approach advocated as the building of an analytic story in Grounded Theory (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990)(p140-141). Further, to avoid impossible levels of diagrammatic detail the cognitive mapping could not distinguish the model types used under the general node of WLA process or the sub-categories of workload activity, namely: teaching, research and administration, nor include the action/strategies section of table 14 (see chapter 9 foot note 6). Further the organisation/systems nodes were intrinsically linked to just about every node, so a textual explanation is more appropriate to their pervasive influence. Issues around the interplay of these activities also deserve some additional discussion, comparing the contexts in which workload allocation occurs, such as university context, and the discipline and size of department/school, and consequences for allocation processes. This discussion, draws from both the findings from the cross case analysis, and the relationships shown through the cognitive maps.

10.1 University Context

The methodology used in the sample selected had attempted to get a diverse array of university contexts in order to broaden understanding of the issue. It might be expected to be hard to make generalisations as a result, in practice there were only a few overriding factors that had some influence on the approaches taken, these were that: some of the universities had departments/schools with staff on different form of contract within them, one of which set hours limits and that this meant that allocation models were developed to accommodate this restriction. Another generalisation that could be made was that larger academic units seemed to turn to more comprehensive models and lastly that in the Australian studies, where a student fee paying context has become more established (Australian Government. Department of Education Science and Training 2007), the WLA process was more influenced by student wants and needs. Having said that there were a very wide variety of approaches by
departments/schools to workload allocation within each university, with as much internal variety as there was across universities. So, except for the employment contract issue discussed above, the contextual factors of universities within the sample, their size, geographical location, and grouping were not found to have a relationship with the practices used to allocate work. The issue of internal variation would seem to be, in part, a direct consequence of a weak strategic stance in relation to workload allocation systems in most universities, in practice. This was often because despite good intentions other priorities, such as HERA, took over. However there are complex organisational issues that do have an influence on workload modelling.

The relationship between the individual and their university is highlighted by the approach taken to promotion. In most universities policies have been pursued that widen the criteria for selection to include teaching and administration more strongly. But, as Kinman and Jones' (2004) survey showed, over 80% of staff had felt a significant increase in pressure over the last five years to get research funding and to publish work. So, despite this apparent equality in university systems staff still felt that research was more highly valued. This appears to be an engrained ideology amongst staff and at a senior level, reinforced by the culture of HE that values the creation of knowledge highly, compounded by an increasing tendency to rate students, staff and universities, with naturalized criteria for the 'identification of excellence' and with 'grading being endemic' (Becher T 1989)p160). Further as Coaldrake and Stedman (1999) point out success in research may be easier to measure as it can rely on the existing peer review and competitive grant funding processes (p24).

In a rather counter-intuitive way this background appears to have led to many of the WLA methods omitting research from their calculations. These systems rely on self-motivated staff often tackling work outside of normal working hours. Conversely, where research is used in the model it can be perceived as a measure to 'punish' some staff with more teaching. However some approaches aimed to promote synergies between the two areas with active researchers continuing to teach and enthuse students with their subject, some of whom in turn embarked on postgraduate research studies.
Many described the competitive nature of gaining promotion in HE organisations. This aspect emphasises the need for leaders and managers to consider the personal qualities of staff and to ensure that they feel motivated and rewarded through the valuing of the inherent qualities of their work. It might be argued that with resources being pressed, what actually distinguishes a school is how many of the staff are prepared to work over the WLA or how many do not actually fully meet it. This might be especially relevant to research, as although highly defined teaching commitments were always met, research was the area commonly cited as that which had to ‘give’, again in contradiction to the value system described above. But staff also suggested that this was the area that they mainly worked on after office hours. So success in research could be seen to depend, in part, on how many people work over and above their “normal” hours. This practice of working long hours has been seen in studies in the Ireland to be exacerbated by the use of information and communication technology (National Framework Committee for Work/Life Balance Policies 2005).

This self-directed work at home may have benefits for the organisation, but in breaking down the home-work divide there are potential dangers for the individual and their families. However staff as professionals have some responsibility to balance their own workloads. They clearly enjoy their autonomy and there is much evidence that stress responses are in part a function of individual styles of coping, enabled by the existence of a degree of autonomy (Karasek R 1979). WLA systems may seem like an attack on autonomy, yet the other side of this autonomy and individual responsibility is a context that might offer less support from colleagues than other work environments (Gillespie N et al. 2001)(p65 and 69). Organisational hierarchies are flatter and more fluid when compared to professional non-HE organisations, such as those seen in case studies 9 and 10, for example a HoD/S might be elected, a colleague turned temporary line manager.

The case studies revealed that the notion of autonomy is still held dear and as a result universities gain much self-motivation from staff. This latter appears to impact particularly on research with consequences for possible individual overload, especially in a context where collegiality is under pressure. These are all factors that
operate as part of the complex series of relationships between individuals, organisations, the various work types and the models that are used to organise them.

10.2 The Allocation Process
In many situations people were fairly happy with the status quo in the allocation process, it was when change was occurring that staff got anxious, even when the new system offered greater prospects of equity and efficiency. Further about half the sample were experimenting with their model or aspects of it. Generally though there was a feeling that the models could be used positively to match staff and resources and to identify uneconomic activities and help provide fairer systems. Although many also commented that despite some sophisticated models the process was not an exact science, and relied on ‘gut feeling’ and the HoD/S’s judgment to a large extent also. A quite strongly held general view was a belief that no one model could cope with the diversity of subjects and the different modes of delivery, etc. This was particularly raised about science subjects versus the Arts. However, the results challenge this by showing that the different types of models were in fact used across all the disciplines. Within the limited sample the science area displayed a slightly greater tendency to adopt Comprehensive models (see Fig 9). See section 7.2 for fuller discussion for the model types.

![Figure 9: Approaches Used Against Discipline](image-url)
There were also beliefs that a model, to accommodate such diversity, would be either too complex to operate or insufficient to cope. Some believed that too much detail would allow staff room to ‘bicker’, opening up various antagonisms. Generally though the more comprehensive systems did seem capable of accommodating the intricacies of workloads such as marking, small inputs into modules from a large number of staff, weightings for research and administration work, and different modes of delivery. The informal systems seen were often more flexible, but also more precarious, being more dependent on the skills of the Head. This raises the issue of whether large departments tend to use more formal models and smaller departments use informal methods. Table 15 below that shows that in units where staff numbers are up to thirty a mixture of informal and partial approaches can be seen, but where numbers rise above this the strong tendency is to use comprehensive models.

Table 15: Size of Academic Units Against Approaches

Size of department or school was also an issue as high staff numbers helped to spread the load and create flexibility for delivery and for areas such as sabbaticals. Yet it made it harder for HoD/S to know their staff and to have a sense of who was more lightly loaded and who overburdened. This might not seem to matter if there was a good WLA model, but in fact through the year the HoD/S had to make informal adjustments to the model, using their discretion and judgement to accommodate variations in work and resources. Flexibility could also be problematic in small
departments, making it harder to cover sickness, maternity leave, fluctuations in student numbers and 'pinch points' of peak activity. To accommodate this some used longer periods for balancing loads, in some cases up to three years. Generally though academic units, large and small, used their models to give lighter loads to new staff to allow time to accommodate the acquisition of teaching qualifications.

The unit of currency in the model was also problematic for some. Academics at all levels expressed their dislike of the notion of timesheets. Explicit reasons given ranged from: a dislike of having to fill in another form, suspicion of how the information could be used and concerns about what is perceived as an attack on academic autonomy. Further, some HoD/S expressed a belief that if hours were used as the unit, then staff would work to them and not beyond. Yet the recurrent problem was that working hours seemed insufficient to cover the range of tasks to be done, this, as discussed in section 7.6, was due to a range of factors such as rises in bureaucracy and student numbers. Also as staff got more used to the models in some cases there was a dialogue about what was included within a given role, for example sitting on its related university committees. If this was accounted for separately it could cause an apparent inflation in the workload. Another issue occurred in models that used hours as a measure and excluded certain work types, so that actual hours were not apparent. However there was potential for problems too under the points system where, as loads increased, some allocations could become devalued as discussed above.

Even in those areas with a WLA model there was often resistance to the introduction of change or minor refinement, a basic conservatism. A WLA system might highlight areas that required change, and this could be difficult for staff working hard to run the unit smoothly. However where the system was not well managed the implications for staff were great, for example a case was reported where a member of staff had been given two 'full' workloads from two different departments, and another was seen where the workload was four times what was described at initial interview. Further if there was no WLA model in place staff seemed to be less aware of the actual hours that they were working. Often this was because of quite complicated inputs of varying amounts in any given semester. In some cases staff seemed to obfuscate on the details, and this might have been because they were really hazy on them and
genuinely believed themselves to be overloaded, but without any objective reference point. So in this way the lack of transparency in the allocation from HoD/S seemed to spread through the department. At times there was also a feeling that without a transparent system there was a need for everyone to give an account of being busy to prevent further loading. One Head described how she always had a spare job ready to give to anyone who entered into workload negotiations with her. A transparent model with quantifiable allocations might lead some staff to be more open to taking on extra work, however it could potentially make those with full loads more resistant, thus creating some conflict.

Through the discussions it was apparent that introducing a WLA model was a time consuming, resource-intensive process. Further, the introduction of a new WLA system could initially create more managerialism and administrative work in a sector already suffering from high loads. Perhaps because of this few managers saw the need to connect WLA to a wider web of activities such as appraisal, activity costing and strategic planning. However there was pressure in some quarters for some sort of comparability between schools of a faculty (cases 1, 6a, 7a). This was because within a school WLA models might balance, but if the faculty held the budgets then it needed to ensure that schools’ resource levels balanced between, rather than averaged across, the faculty. In Case 8 there was some evidence of this disparity occurring, where one school was hard pressed compared to another, even though within the schools loads were balanced. Contracts of employment could also create complications beyond just the hours limits. For example in some cases (cases 6 and 8) HoD/S had to create models and systems that could accommodate staff with different contracts. Although this was felt to be potentially problematic in relation to equity staff had been reasonable in their response to the issue.

Looking at the non-educational and comparing to the academic case studies it would appear that some of the practices that they use would be unsuitable to many academic units, where, for example, the sharing out of work would not be possible because staff specialise extensively, often from early in their career. However some of the case studies did engage in teamwork thus making this a potential area for development. Other aspects that provided some useful contribution was the team building engaged in and the general awareness, planning and the monitoring about work profiles and...
staff workloads. Although academic staff were generally reluctant to have detailed monitoring of their loads, through practices such as time sheets, a more informal approach by the Head might help reduce problems at peak periods.

Finally on this issue it needs mentioning that the Australian cases, 4 and 5, looked at WLA more from a position of trying to enhance the student experience, whereas the UK cases seemed more grounded in the staff perspective. This would appear to be a reflection of the different funding sources, with home students in Australia apparently contributing between 25 and 33% of the course income in fees (depending on the course), with uncapped numbers of foreign students at full fee and consequently a relatively low percentage input from Federal Government, at around 20% overall (Australian Government. Department of Education Science and Training 2007).

10.3 Summary
There are a huge variety of different practices surrounding workload allocation, with no one method without problems. There is also, however, agreement on ideal principles in relation to these methods, for example on equity and transparency. Further many felt the context, such as the discipline, to be very important to the process chosen. However, although this was not found to be a defining aspect, (see figure 9) it does indicate the desire for a locally owned system. An additional factor that has to be taken into account is the general disposition of many academics, with a high regard for autonomy and a fairly well developed cynicism about managerial practices. Through all the comparisons made between cases it would seem that, an approach that is particularised to its context, whilst at the same time encouraging involvement from staff, would seem to be the most appropriate way of meeting the agreed criteria. Given the resource pressures within departments and the frequent merger of units into larger schools, the previous informal approaches are becoming less appropriate to the new context. Further there is inherent in them the problem of the actuality and demonstration of equitable practice that has impacts both on individuals and HoD/S. It is recognised that more formal systems may be seen as invasive managerialism that erode academic autonomy, however organisations are held accountable not just for their resources, but for their treatment of staff, for example potentially by the Health and Safety Executive over aspects such as stress related illness from high workloads. Therefore it seems that a balance needs to be
sought between individual needs and the organisations, with the hope that synergies
between the two might be found.

The range of factors around the core category of workload allocation can be
summarised as:

- A variety of allocation practices within, as well as across universities
- Size of university, its grouping and location not influential in models used
- Wide agreement on principles such equity and transparency, but little known
generally about university policy
- Despite beliefs on equity a fairly widespread recognition of 'outliers' within the
  spread of workloads.
- General move towards larger departmental / school units and these more likely to
  adopt comprehensive model
- Belief in work overload, objections mostly to administrative aspect.
- Suspicion about change
- Disinclination to measure time in detail
- Hour-based models not representing real hours
- Some variations in employment contract
- Strong ethos about academic autonomy
- Teaching commitment met first, but staff worries on efficiency and quality.
- Research motivation strong, but work often occurring 'outside' of university
- General belief in need for particularised systems for each discipline, not
  confirmed by the research
- Both social and technical aspects at work in the allocation process, with
  consultation linking many areas.

From the cognitive mapping (chapter 9) and the above discussion the relationship
between the phenomena and the core category of workload allocation has started to be
conceptualised in to an ‘analytic story’ (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990) (p142), where
the relationships have been validated through comparisons across the data.

In the next chapter the return to theoretical literature helps as a supplementary
validation of the findings (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990) (p52). Further it can help to
enhance the findings by increasing understanding of them as described by Checkland (1993) and in section 3.2 above. In this way it is possible to inform the move towards the development of a theoretical model that can support improved practice in the sector.
11 Theoretical Discussion of Fieldwork

From the above summary of the research fieldwork there are three main emergent and interrelated areas that could benefit from further investigation from a theoretical viewpoint. This approach moves beyond the normal Grounded Theory approach and works, as described (section 3.2), to help triangulate findings (Denzin N 1970) and to test out their robustness through cycling between practical problem and theoretical studies as described in Soft Systems (Checkland P 1993).

These areas reflect the main levels of investigation within the interviews. They are:

- **The Policy level** – operating at university level, in terms of strategy implementation, leadership, managing change and the interpretation of organisational values.

- **The Evolving Process** – within academic unit level (school/department) and relating to staff relationship aspects, such as the iterative technical process of model development and the more social processes involved in implementation. This includes leadership aspects again, communication and negotiation processes, bounded by the context of professional autonomy.

- **Practical implications** – This is focused mainly at the individual level, for example how training provision for heads of department/school on staff management and scheduling issues can help to best match individuals to roles.

Before proceeding further to get some understanding of how these areas fit together, a comprehensive organisational will be introduced. There are many models that have been used to describe aspects of the higher education sector such as Stiles’ (2004) model that looks at goals and values, strategies and the organisation type and Middlehurst’s (1993) model that looks at the relationship between the task, individuals and the team from a leadership perspective (p19). However to fit with the issues emerging from the field work the model needs to look a little more broadly. Becher and Kogan’s (1992) (p11) model answers this call, but it does not indicate any interaction between its areas of individual, basic unit, institution and sector.
So it was decided to use Kast and Rosenzweig's model (1985), given in figure 10, as this model isolates the different areas, but also shows their areas of overlap, this may promote enquiry into how the variables are related. Further these intersecting five subsystems, managerial, technical, structural, psychosocial, and goals/values are held within an environmental supra-system with which they also interact in a dynamic way. The subsystems are mainly self-explanatory terms; the technical subsystem they suggest (p569) refers to the organisation and application of knowledge this might be physical manifestations or intellectual techniques, (p209). So this might include, training, techniques such as timetabling, planning and administration for both staff and students and machine technology within the organisation. The structural subsystem (p573) includes both the formal and informal makeup of the organisation, that is how it can differentiated in terms of task aspects such as hierarchies as well as how it comes together and is coordinated in areas such as joint activities. This encompasses aspect such as the makeup of faculties, their size, diversity and degree of specialisation and how power is dispersed within that, in the sharing of duties and responsibilities. However Kast and Rosenzweig argue that management is the key subsystem that spans the whole organisation and is the force that links the other subsystems (p5). A discussion on how the various theories from the next sections fit into the model will follow after them.

![Figure 10: Kast and Rosenzweig's model systems model of an organisation](image-url)
11.1 Policy

This area extends from the general context of HE (section 2.2) to cover research ranging from different views on strategy making, to processes for implementing those strategies, as well as theories surrounding commonly held values such as fairness and transparency that are within many policy guidelines. The papers from this section mainly fall within the management and goals and values subsystems of the Kast and Rosenzweig model (1985). Interestingly the latter, looking at the HE sector in the United States, see goals and values focused around the dissemination of knowledge to students, the creation and advancement of knowledge and a sense of usefulness or service to society. They argue that in striving for these goals academics require intellectual freedom to bring about change that may create conflict in its wake (p556).

From the management subsystem they see a wide dispersal of power with different levels of decision making occurring from: the HoD/S, coordinating individual activities within the educational area, with roles also in evaluation and recruiting, to Deans whose greater budgetary responsibilities work as major linking role with them and to higher administration, who have greater a role in working with the external environment, as well as in the establishment of broad policy.

The need for a wide contribution to policy making in higher education institutions has also concerned Kennie (2007) who argues also that policy needs to be responsive to changes in the external environment, such as from the political, social, economic, technical, legal, and environmental dimensions. Further this requires scenario building so that the implications of changes are considered. Choices then need to be made that articulate with the vision of the institution and that work to define it from competitors. From there he argues that the formulation of policy requires collective involvement from a range of staff to ensure commitment to the translation of policy into actions, and ultimately measures to calculate its success. Clarity of policy, the integration of its elements, as well as mechanism to allow it to adapt to changing circumstances, are all vital.

This need for response to changes in the environment has been analysed by Wilson (2000). He argues for strategic change in higher education, because of competition and resource and demand imbalance, he attempts to predict the challenges that it will
face, based on an analysis of academic structure. He foresees a safe future for the core disciplines and more interaction and mergers between disciplines, with implications for both research and teaching. However to support this he argues that interdisciplinary centres are needed rather than just the devolved powers at faculty level. Further external partnerships and collaboration should be used to ‘extend the intellectual range and depth’ of the given university. Strength then will come through this extension of their communication capacities. This view differs slightly from Clarke’s view (1997) on responses to resource pressures, discussed in section 2.5, who argues for assessments of core competencies and appropriate resources followed by a prioritisation in strategic response. If Wilson’s speculations are right the complexity of workload allocation systems will increase as staff receive their loads from cross disciplinary sources and even from external organisations. This research showed that this process was indeed starting and the complexity of the situation does require a more detailed response at policy level to avoid unmanaged or unfair allocations. However as Wilson points out, citing Mintzberg, ‘the professionals will always want to have a say in the management’ (p40), suggesting the care necessary in building such a policy.

This area of professional management has been reviewed by Pettigrew et al (1992). They describe the trend over the last two decades to bring private sector management techniques to the public sector, albeit with a focus on the health sector. They review the range of responses from some that see such an approach as a ‘mechanistic transfer’ (p13), through to those that feel that there are sufficient similarities to bring fruitful broader application and for cross fertilisation of ideas. They also discuss Mintzberg’s work (1990) on ‘professionalized bureaucracies’, that operate to deliver programmes in a relatively stable environment with change occurring incrementally, and note how changes from the mid 1980’s cost pressures forced top down ‘more radical configurations’ for change. They go on to describe the various forms of strategy making ranging from this top down approach to the more ad hoc position of post rationalising decisions into patterns. Within the middle ground of these approaches to strategy are responses such as the use of broad guidelines or process. The commonly viewed notion of universities as places with high levels of individual independence would seem to pose problems for these management techniques in linking the work of individual academics to university goals. Although as mentioned
in section 2.2 looking at the Australian sector Coaldrake and Stedman (1999) note the autonomy of individual academics has shifted through the increased use of team work in both teaching and research. Further universities are requiring justification of work such as from learning outcomes or practical application to meet market demands. Related to this they argue that competitive markets have moved market differentiation from individual academic units to institutional niche development.

The latter might provoke a slow stimulus to change in culture, but a more dynamic influence is described by Kotter (1996) who provides some practical ideas on how change can be implemented in large organisations. He describes an eight-stage process, which starts with the establishment of a sense of urgency and a movement away from the ‘comfort zones’ of the status quo. This has resonance with case study findings, where HoD/S found some staff reluctant to accept new ideas on workload allocation systems. Kotter distinguishes between leadership as necessary function to affect or cope with change, whilst management is needed to handle the organisational complexity (1996). He goes on to describe the need to build a powerful coalition team to work on an issue. These members would include a range staff outside of the senior management team. This was something that some of the cases studies were doing, although having the right leadership backup was an issue. Kotter suggests that the focus within this sort of group would be on building trust and communication within, so that a strong leadership would be formed. From here a vision would be created that is easy to communicate and appeal to all stakeholders. Other steps along the way include the removal of obstacles, either people or processes, that impede the strategy, and the delivery of short term ‘wins’ to improve the credibility of the strategy, before consolidating these improvements and making the vision part of the organisational culture. The latter involves rooting the vision in social norms. Relating this to WLA in the HE sector might involve linkage of the strategic vision to the strongly held belief in equity and transparency of process. The other coherent ideology, that at times can be seen to oppose this desire for social fairness, is the drive for self-actualisation and academic autonomy. This is why the individualisation element of the process becomes so vital. In this way the two elements of WLA process described above, with its formal model that helps to provide and demonstrate equitable loads, and the consultative element to individualise and support, can help to meet the sometime conflicting ideological norms. Another complicating issue is the boundaries that are
considered on fairness. For example the welfare of students is commonly spoken of and considerations on equity between staff seem to take this, often implicitly, as a vital consideration, as does the following discussion on equity.

Others too have focused on how the core values of an organisation remain stable or fixed, transcending market cycles and individual leaders, whilst the strategies and goals adapt to changes in circumstance (Collins J and Porras J 1998). Thompson (1967) for example looks at how different combinations of uncertainty concerning purpose/ preferred outcomes and cause and effect relationships have consequences for the approaches that different organisations can employ to rationally deal with the uncertainty they face. For example typically there is a consensus about equity as a purpose within WLA systems, but not a full understanding of the cause and effect relations, so judgement has to be left in the system typically through the ministrations of the HoD/S. He argues that an organisational drive to respond to relations requires a greater conceptual understanding of the impacts of issues, so for example for a given purpose, such as equity, the understanding of the implications of say class size or assessment load often would be beneficial. See Figure 11 below.

![Figure 11: Based on Thompson (1967) in Barrett 1993](image)

Becher and Kogan (1992) look specifically at change within the higher education sector, looking at features such as the sources of it, its context, and mechanisms for implementation, and the various processes for it. They also describe how the role of
higher education in the advancement and transmission of knowledge affects this change process, whilst at the same time 'academic conservatism' resists change, because of the heavy intellectual investment in a particular body of ideas (p135). They go on to argue, in a similar vein to Michela and Burke (2000), that the task of leaders then is to understand prevalent values, recognise inherent ones in the proposed change and to mediate the two in equilibrium, an idea discussed earlier (see section 2.3). In this study the values that academics recurrently talked of were equity and transparency. Looking first at equity, in which there was an almost universal belief, it is possible to differentiate process and outcomes. So in the case of workload allocation the model might be perceived to be a fair way to divide up work, but the outcomes might not be actually equitable. Conversely a model might be viewed as inequitable, perhaps because of little consultation in its development, but the outcomes from it might actually be fair. The primary proposition of equity theory suggests that individuals review inputs and outcomes of themselves and others and that there is greater cognitive dissonance when inequity is perceived. Performance then might be altered to adjust the balance, this might also include absenteeism or transferring to other work areas. The first issue looked at is often pay, but other aspects such as conditions, promotion and decision making opportunities are also at play (Carrell M and Dittrich J 1978). These ideas belong within the field of organisational justice discussed above, (section 2.4) where distributive justice focuses on the criteria to allocate resources, for example because of ideas on equality or merit, procedural justice examines how these decisions are taken, and interactional justice looks at how leaders treat others.

Another way of looking at this issue has been suggested by Stephens and Cobb (1999) who examine justice from two perspectives, the principle surrounding it, that is the normative approach, and perceptions of it, the technical perspective. They recount how proponents of the normative approach accuse the technical approach of being more interested in looking fair rather that being fair, whereas the technical stance may see the normative approach as being concerned with pure ethics removed from everyday realities. The technical approach based in social psychology, looks at theories of organisational justice and the cognitive and behavioural responses to what is perceived as fair or unfair. For example the trust and commitment to leaders and organisation when individuals perceive themselves as treated fairly. They cite an
earlier study (Cobb A et al. 1995) that shows the 'voice', - the ability to make known one's views and have them seriously considered by decision makers', as 'one of the most potent antecedents of procedural justice perceptions' (Stephens C and Cobb A 1999) (p25). The stance here focuses on how things are accomplished, whereas the philosophical approach looks more at what actions ought to be made. The authors however suggest that a Habermasian synthesis of the two approaches, that relies on their shared commitment to both ethics and process is possible, through the use of his third knowledge base, the applied. Such an approach incorporates the philosophical sense of what ought to be, with the technical understanding of implementation that can be worked through in a forum where all stakeholders are given equal opportunity to be heard.

Looking at the ideological construction of equity is something that has engaged many researchers. Ideology might be simply defined here as a system of ideas and beliefs that help to make sense of our world (Falser Havely C 1998). Such a definition can accommodate subjective experience and even the Marxist ideas on 'false thought'. Watson et al (1999) review the different theories on how normative ideas, such as equity, are developed. They cover theories on ideology ranging from the Marxist ideas on power relations, to Communitarians that see such ideology formed through dialogic discourse between individuals, lastly to theories of individualism, that see such values as self discovered and that gives primacy to individual liberty and autonomy. Their research however is not concerned with the antecedents of the ideology, but rather looks at the direct and indirect influences of ideology on judgements of fairness. Their empirical research measured participants against an ideological orientation scale (that measures tendencies towards individualism and communitarianism) and then asked for their responses to various scenarios surrounding downsizing of an organisation. Using regression analysis their findings were that their measures of ideological position, that is individualism, and communitarianism showed direct effects between the ideological stance and the policies adopted, that is they influenced their view on organisational obligations and the fairness of these different policies.

This work sheds light on why equity appears to be such a universally held value, despite differences in the ideological perspectives behind such views. A later paper by
Watson (2003) delves further into this area to look at how through discourse ideological constructs may be created ‘to construct a reality’ (p166) to serve the interests of a given group, for example a management perspective. For example he suggests that what is fair depends upon the perspective. He used Thompson’s framework (Thompson J B 1990) that consists of five general modes of ideological operation, to analyse speeches and press releases. Put simply these consist of: legitimisation, whereby authority is rationalised, dissimulation, where language is used to conceal or obscure power relations, unification, that includes strategies to create collective identity, fragmentation that is the opposite process that derogates those holding opposite ideas and lastly reification, that presents a contingent condition as though it is natural and permanent. Watson’s approach reveals the dangers, arguably unwitting at times, in these discourses, showing how the interests of a given section can use them to change perceptions. However whilst some of these strategies, such as fragmentation, seem more obviously objectionable, others are subtler in their play and would require very active reading and consciences to detect. This research then finds resonance with the work of Habermas, as explicated by Stephens and Cobb (1999), expressing the need for fairness that allows all the opportunity to voice concerns and have them considered.

Looked at in relation to this research one can see from Watson’s work the potential dangers around issues strongly shared ideological constructs, such as equity. For example within a consultation process a combination of unification and fragmentation might be used to create a strong core committed to a certain model, set of weightings or practice with the construction of them as an equitable reality. This might work to challenge and overrule other constructs or interpretations. A Head of Department/School might also be, perhaps unwittingly, involved in the unification process, not just from personal motivations, but through a desire to find consensus and resolution. In such a situation it might appear perverse to continue to search and examine plausible ‘solutions’. However rather than to see how fair they might appear it is necessary to question how, and in what circumstances, they would not be equitable. Work done at policy level, with inputs from different levels across the university, might help with this process, reducing the risk of power relations distorting the outcomes.
Transparency or openness was another value that was commonly espoused by staff. Bessire (2005) traces current associations of the word to purity to early ideas on this in the new economic theories to Bentham and the concept of utility. She notes how it is assumed that improving transparency prevents asymmetry of information and the adoption of opportunistic behaviour that this can allow. Bentham’s utilitarian philosophy made for the design of a building, the Panopticon that used transparency as a means for one-way surveillance and control. Bessire describes Foucault’s analysis of the Panopticon and his idea that dangerous power relations were involved in such ways of seeing and control. She goes on to argue that Bentham’s notion works from a pessimistic view of man as self interested and suggests that the discussion of transparency may highlight some areas, producing an overabundance of material, but obscure other issues such as ethics. More active participation, sharing responsibilities and trust she believes are the answer.

Bessire’s work focuses on corporate governance, but it does raise questions for the area of workload allocation. Whilst the areas of surveillance she describes might be reversed in the latter situation, that is the less powerful might be observing the more powerful, the issue of a one-way view might still be in operation. For example, as she describes, some areas may be illuminated and thus serve to obscure others. This was indeed noted in the case studies when staff felt that extensive information about decisions was given, but the actual reasoning behind them left obscure. Her work also raises some interesting thoughts about participation and control, if staff were more involved within the process of model development they might be more inclined to feel trust in the situation and transparency then would become less central.

Again looking in the area of business and corporate governance Welch and Rotberg (2006) argue that although transparency is always portrayed positively it may cause managers to water down their strategies rather than take the risk of having any failures publicly proclaimed. They also suggest that transparency of outcomes need to be treated with caution as often interventions cannot be linked conclusively with outcomes. This idea does indeed provide some cause for caution within the area of model development and workload allocations. If greater transparency is provided and more involvement within the process for staff it will still be necessary to moni
responses or run pilot studies to ensure that the intervention is creating the hoped for outcomes, with staff feeling more confident that work is being distributed fairly.

### 11.1.1 Reflection

Complexity in the system, as described by Wilson (2000), resulting from aspects such as cross disciplinary work and the merging of schools and faculties, demands that some attention is given to continuity of weightings and even the units used for staff to gain some feel of their loads, for HoD/S balancing them and Deans looking at resource levels across units. Change is another factor that is discussed, and as with the complexity issue, policy needs to be available to provide support for these environmental demands. In an area of complexity and change ad hoc responses might create greater instability. So for example, policy statements on aspects such as the units to be used might be appropriate to maximise consistency and equity across units. However as case studies showed it was the reasoning behind decisions and not just the decisions themselves that was important. Kotter’s work (1996) on change might be helpful here. He suggests useful ways that coalition teams, working on issues that require change, can be a way of engaging staff, especially if there is leadership backup. The area of policy formation around aspects of workload allocation might be one where such an approach is helpful and indeed some of the cases studies were using such cross-university teams.

Another of Kottter’s ideas is that of establishing the need for change. This might be another area the team could look at, highlighting problematic areas for general review, so that all staff could have a fuller appreciation of the problems that were being encountered, beyond their own personal experience. As described above this process would draw on strong shared academic values, such as for equity, and transparency, whilst involvement in this policy- making might help to maintain feelings of academic autonomy against a fear of creeping managerialism. Much of the work on leadership describes the need for leaders to be listening in order to help their understanding of the holistic workings of the university. Becher and Kogan’s (1992) remarks on mediating values accords with this research that reveals the need for leaders to be open to the subtle contradictions that can emerge between the espoused values and those actually in operation as part of the culture of the university. For example in the case studies academics often commented that promotion was in reality a function of
research activity despite broader policy criteria. Even if this is not the reality leaders need to be aware of these sort of perceptions about policies that could undermine trust. Further, equity, as an essential aspect within policy decisions, would seem to demand that the activity of research, with such importance, both for individuals and for the organisations goals, ought to be properly considered at policy level and reflected in individuals’ workload allocations.

These sort of contradictions seem especially pertinent when looked at in relation to Watson’s work on the potential manipulation of ideas in discourse. To create trust fairness needs to be driven by a desire to uphold the rights of all members rather than a shallow cover to fulfil other management interests and strategies. Attention must then be given to how notions of fairness are constructed and perceived, for example not just from leader’s discourse, but from equal opportunity for all staff to be heard. Equally, apparently innocuous concepts such as transparency have to delivered with a consideration of the rights of all parties, for example there might be occasions when full transparency over workloads is not appropriate, such as if a HoD/S alters loads on compassionate grounds that require discretion in handling.

11.2 Evolving Process

Following on from the processes involved in policy formation is the work of developing and implementing a model at the level of department/school. The practices and skills detailed in the previous section, such as in change management and leadership will again be required here, although the activities will be undertaken at a different level within the organisation. Some of the theories covered in this section are aimed at an organisational level, but ideas, such as on communication, seem to be specially relevant for academic units. Looking briefly at the Kast and Rosenzweig (1985) model (see figure 10) the emphasis shifts from the managerial and goals and values subsystems to the area of intersection between managerial and psychosocial areas, for example through the use of HoD/S communication skills in understanding the motivation and commitment of individual staff members, on the way to involve groups of staff and negotiate the planning and implementation of a model. Kast and Rosenzweig (1985) in their analysis of US universities see the psychosocial subsystem of universities as complicated through the diverse goals and motivations that occur within the different participants, with different ways of
thinking driven in part from the culture of their disciplines, but united by a substantial degree of autonomy (p579).

Given such diversity Schneider et al’s (2000) work on the climate of service-based organisations provides a useful link here to the previous section, as they argue for the importance of visible strategic focus in organisational practices. They see this focus as that which determines a setting’s climate (p36) and describe the importance of employees behaving consistently within that strategy. Both employees and customers then experience the climate. They go on to discuss research on leadership theories in relation to social climate and group dynamics, such as how leaders’ beliefs in people affect their behaviour and attitudes and thus the climate. They argue that cynicism about organisational change can be challenged by strategies that focus on a specific target, such as service, and that this requires a strong foundation from the areas such as training, leadership, human resource practices, marketing management and participation in decision-making. They suggest that without this a total pattern of activities and commitment the service climate does not emerge (p35).

What Schneider et al (2000) discuss is important to the higher education sector as it moves through the increases in fees to a greater awareness of its role as a service industry. Increases in competition within the sector and areas such as retention and satisfaction of students then come in to sharper focus. Comparisons made within this research on WLA to the different climate in Australian universities served to highlight the differences now with the UK sector and to allow for speculation about future trends, such as responding to student demands for evening lectures to accommodate their daytime paid work schedules and the development of more online programmes. The work of Schneider et al raises another interesting aspect for university leaders and that is the need to consult with employees ‘at the boundaries of the organisation serving customers’ (p35). In universities the lecturing staff will have valid information about student needs and so following Schneider’s advice it would seem essential that in any strategic thrust and formulation of policy about workload allocation these staff are consulted with, so that this experience can be considered in the formulations. This also is a means of ensuring that these policies become more than just words, but part of the essential service culture that addresses the needs of both staff and students.
This area of climate is further examined by Virtanen (2000) who distinguishes between climate and culture. The former being more manifest and based on individual perceptions where a person is distinct from their environment, working within it, but not creating it. Culture on the other hand he sees as the deep organisational structures ‘rooted in relatively stable values, beliefs and assumptions’ with an emphasis on the part of social relations as determinants of individual meaning. He argues that commitment is a psychological state best understood through an understanding of both climate and culture. These ideas prove useful when Virtanen goes on to build a framework for commitment. The basis for the framework lies in loci, objects, bases and foci. He suggests that two loci of commitment exist, ideas and agents, and that these have objects, such as, respectively, values or co-workers. Virtanen sees three bases within this that describe why commitment responses are made, these are, obligation, utility and emotion. These are distinguished from foci of commitment, for example moral, legal, economic and political. However he argues that taken together the bases and the foci provide the motive for commitment.

The framework is useful not just to see the different basis of commitment bindings, but also to look at their different continuums operating within climate and culture. However it might be enriched by an inclusion of factors that may influence commitment, such as personal and role factors and expectations of fairness, as described by Thornhill et al (1996) in section 2.4. The main point of Virtanen’s argument is that there needs to be a multidimensional analysis of commitment, as ‘instruments of organisational climate and as constituents of organisational culture’ (p353). This theory might be useful practically in a management situation where shared bases for commitment have reinforcing tendencies.

This dynamic between the individual and the organisation is something that concerns Duck (1998) when looking at organisational change. She argues that leaders need to look at issues more in their dynamic relationships, with a holistic approach rather than simply addressing single issues. This can be seen in relation to WLA which impinges on so many other issues, such as the appraisal process, and activity costing. However one of the problems noted in managing change is staff scepticism as a result of seeing so many new management initiatives. This was certainly the case with some of the
older academics interviewed. One for instance described a process of keeping his head down whilst change occurred and waiting for it blow over. Duck describes how this response can be challenged by requiring staff to change their behaviour first rather than trying to change attitudes. She argues that through these changes performance will improve and the benefits will lead to changes in attitude and belief. Further she argues that feelings have to be managed, allowing time for both gripes and bragging. Certainly many academics commented on the need to ‘let off steam’ or to ‘vent’ about certain organisational issues, however there do seem to be dangers in demanding radical change from academics, and in case studies where this had occurred it had been highly problematic.

However it is Duck’s theories on trust within organisations that seem most apt in relation to the HE sector. She describes Maslow’s pyramid, with self-actualisation at the top and security at the base, and how in the competitive organisational environment whilst staff are being offered opportunities to achieve they are simultaneously deprived of feelings of security about employment. This was certainly the case for in some of the case studies where stress was placed on research success, whilst at the same time restructuring was occurring with voluntary severance packages. The predictability of the psychological contract is undermined and through that trust is eroded. This idea of consistency in areas such as procedures and sensitivity in treatment links to the views on trust and mistrust of Saunders and Thornhill (2004) section 2.4. Again like Kotter (1996) Duck advocates a transition management team to manage this change, stimulating conversation, so that each side understands the needs and objectives of the other as way of restoring that predictability, and ultimately the trust. This view is echoed by Thackwray (2007) who argues that ‘change teams’ in higher education institutions that involve all levels of staff in management changes, through consultation and collaboration processes, create smooth transitions with these actions well understood. Within an academic unit this might be interpreted as encouraging all staff to participate in the consultation process of model development.

This intersection between leadership and communication issues is addressed by Fairhurst (2001). She looks at the dualisms that operates surrounding theories about leadership communication for example: transactional and transformational styles,
participative and autocratic leadership styles, organic and mechanistic, self management and external leadership, and the one she considers as the most central that of the dualism between individual and collective leadership communication. Further it leads to two secondary dualisms, these are the polarised views on: cognitive outcomes and conversational practices and transmission and meaning centred views of communication, aspects that are relevant too in the next section on evolving process. She argues against the polarised choice in all these theories and suggests instead a dialectic and interplay between them. She describes how ideas centred on the individual leader have been challenged by systems-orientated thinking, for example seeing leadership as behaviour that emerges as part of an interdependent systems dynamic (p383).

Leading on from this, theories on communication have polarised between views of it as personal cognitive responses, whereas conversational practices see the act of communication as an interactive process of adjustment between the parties in the creation of meaning. This finds resonance with the work of Watson (2003) above and the dangers of a dominant discourse by management creating constructs of reality. The other secondary dualism centres on polarised views on language and communication. One view being that messages have an objective reality, independent of sender or receiver, the other stance is that a dialectic occurs in the understanding of signs between the two sides. Fairhurst goes on to look at these dualisms against five different programs of leadership communication such as the contrasting fields of charisma and visionary leadership and systems-interactional leadership and to argue that each of the five tends to favour one side of the dualism and that this approach undermines a fuller understanding of the complexity of leadership communication: that is having constituents of the individual and the system, the monologic type transmission theories as well as the dialogic process and finally the personal as well as the cultural creation of meaning. The research findings on WLA have sympathy with much of this. Case studies indicate the need for the duality of leadership responses, against polarised visions of it, instead seeing leadership as quite distributed, for example in areas such as vision/goal- setting or negotiation.

Yukl (1989) looked more broadly at the various theories on leadership and also sees the need to show how these theories can usefully be seen to fit together. His
discussion ranges through theories such as on power influences and social exchange theories where power is accorded through demonstration of various abilities and attributes, to theories that emphasise leadership behaviour, such as their effectiveness in decision making, planning and empowering other workers. These theories seem closely linked to those based on a leader’s traits and the ability to use and balance different traits. The last group of theories that he reviews are the situational ones that look at the relationship between situation and a leader, in terms of how demands, expectations and constraints are understood, and coped with. Yukl then takes the variables from these various theories to provide an integrating conceptual framework. This encompasses five main sections involved in interactive processes: leadership characteristics, managerial behaviour, situational variables, intervening variables (follower effort, ability, cooperation etc) and lastly end result variables (unit performance, goals etc). These five then influence the personal power of the leader. Whereas Fairhurst can see a dialectic occurring, Yukl, a decade earlier, sees this as less reciprocal and notes that power allows ‘leaders to interpret events for followers, and the interpretation is a reflection of the prevailing culture and values’ (Yukl G 1989) p.279. Yukl and Fairhurst work in different ways to show the complexity of the issue of leadership, its dynamic basis and the number of factors involved.

The emphasis in these works on relationships and the possible dialectic between leaders and others makes the findings of a recent survey on behalf of University and College Union and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (University and College Union 2007) rather disturbing. The new study drawn from a 1,000 responses (24% response rate) revealed that 78% felt that morale had declined over the last three years and an 82% felt that the management culture of their institution had ‘actively contributed to their stress’ with only 15% believing that management were working to seek the cause of this. Control in the work environment was felt to be an important factor for work stress, with 71% reporting it stressful to be given responsibility, without authority, to make decisions. Although questionnaire results such as these do not give any real notion of the strength of these feelings it does seem that workloads and workplace culture and relations were central to the survey findings on stress.

Looking more deeply into this area Becher and Kogan (1992) provide an interesting model of the relationships at work at both the macro and micro level of the sector.
Through it the interplay and tension between the different forces, the individual professional, management, market and society, can be monitored. It shows the modes in operation as normative, encompassing aspects such as the values and aspirations, and operational that describes work practices. They work through some examples suggesting that people are affected in the normative mode through peer group judgments and norms within the basic unit, and at the operational mode the individual's activities are affected by the demands of the basic unit such as curricular needs. Alongside these two modes are four basic components: the individual, basic units (dept/school), institution and central authority. They then describe how each of these modes can have internal and external aspects, the internal aspect being integral to the system of higher education and the external from forces outside of it that impinge, for example as political and social expectations (p12). The model then accommodates the interplay and shifts of control between the various forces and looks at the way resolutions are reached at any given time and context. Whilst the characteristics are permanent, changes occur between the levels due to 'cycles of dominance' (p178).

These processes and structure seems to align quite well with the research findings. Both recognise the complex dynamic between working practices and values, their effects and the iterative processes involved in negotiating a resolution between these sometimes opposing forces. Communication and negotiation skills in these situations become pivotal, and within this issues such as trust are paramount. Becher and Kogan (1992) describe the autonomy of individual academics and the complex process in which compromises are reached in order to accommodate diverse demands. They suggest that there is a 'deep seated belief among many academics that worthwhile intellectual activity cannot survive in a context in which outside demands begin to exercise a dominating influence over choice and action' (p101). However they note that individual academics are not islands, but rather 'peninsulas' (p153) affected by their context and the prevailing norms in operation.

This is something that accords with Alvesson's (2001) view on identity constructs of employees in knowledge intensive organisations. He argues that the ambiguity or 'slipperiness' of much of what is termed knowledge, its basis, significance and contingent results, makes for problems in the demonstration of competence and
performance. This puts a strain on identity, which can allow for ‘innovative constructions’ (p883) at both the organisational and personal level. To compensate for this these organisations may nurture a reassuring image, use rhetoric and invest in social processes to persuade of their expertise. He argues that this may be executed through a development of a corporate culture, ideas, values and behaviour, that can shore up uncertainties on identity, borne of ‘frustrations contingent upon ambiguity of performance and confirmation’ (p877). Alvesson (2001) is talking about knowledge intensive organisations generally, and work would need to be done in higher education to see how much this holds true. Certainly from this research work new lecturers especially seemed to want reassurance on their performance, and one could surmise that this was linked to their developing identity as an academic. How much the universities operate to develop a corporate culture is another issue again.

Participation and decision making is something that Seibold and Shea discuss (2001) and, although their review is general, they take a more positive view than Becher and Kogan. They suggest that management structures and processes have changed as employee participation has increased. The necessary conditions for this include a supportive and participative organisational climate, a management that is willing to share information and employees who are interested in participating. They go on to look at the most commonly used participative programmes that differ in their scope, range and level of operation, which in turn influence communication patterns. From these five programmes of involvement, all of which have advantages and problems, communication seems to be an intervening, moderating variable on the outcomes for them all (p685). They suggest that a greater understanding gained about the organisation through the information flows in the process may affect motivational and attitudinal forces through feelings of self-empowerment and self-efficacy and that it is ‘this combination of team, organisation and informational factors’ (p689) that account for the relative efficacy of the most participative programme. This view shares many features with Thornhill et al (1996), discussed in section 2.4, whose work showed a significant relationship between the way an organisation communicated and the commitment felt by workers, with participative engagement and dispersed decision making power having positive impacts. In relation to WLA these studies confirm the belief in the need for involvement and information flows between the organisational levels. This would mean that individual academics should be involved in the
development of their department/school model, and also their ideas could inform university policy on WLA. Also flows of information down the organisation might help academics to get a greater understanding of the implications of their choices.

Such a flow could help break down antagonisms between the university levels, but as Seibold and Shea also note there will remain a tension between this participation and the need for control. They suggest some frames through which such control operates, such as at the performance level and through ideological control (p694). Certainly, within the league table culture that universities exist and compete in now, the performance control will be potent. Ideological control, relating to core shared beliefs and practices, may be at work employing fundamental ideas such as the search for truth or reason. However as Becher and Kogan (1992), Barnett (2003) and others (Stiles D 2004) suggest the values that run through universities are many and diverse, so this form of control may not be so effective. Another issue raised by Seibold and Shea (2001), pertinent to WLA in universities, is the motivation for such participative activities. Whilst there is a need to ensure that staff are treated equitably and given the opportunity to engage in work for which they have capabilities and interest, ‘the ends’ or customers, in this case the student, must also be central to these participative discussions on WLA matters.

In a wide ranging and extensive work Jablin and Sias (2001) look at ways that have been used for assessing communication competence and go on to create a model for it. However they first review research on how communication competence has been conceptualised, ranging from a focus on goal achievement, to appropriate communication behaviours, to the resource orientated view. In summary they note that these theories work off two primary dimensions: behaviour and cognition, and they go on to look at each of these at a variety of levels, the individual, the group level and the organisational level.

They discuss research looking at the behavioural aspects working at the individual level from simple ideas such as on listening, empathising, giving feedback and motivating, to more complex frameworks based on encoding, decoding abilities, maintaining user relationships and the importance of perceptions of the relationships within these communicative behaviours. They also report research that questions
whether training in this area is an ‘inherently manipulative’ form of management control (p823). The cognitive aspects reviewed cover knowledge, traits and abilities, such as in anticipating and reflecting on the complex interaction of situational factors. They then go on to discuss the assumptions within much of this research, such as how communication competence is often categorised by polar extremes, rather than as a continuum, or how it may vary dynamically and how motivation, that influences efforts, may affect it. Going on from this they focus on their model development that proposes that communication competence (at individual, group, or organisation level) is influenced by, and influences, the environment in which the processes occur, so that continuous mutual interaction occurs.

11.1.1 Reflection
This section includes a variety of theories that focus on the relationship and interaction between the individual and the organisation, and the ways that leadership can be seen to mediate them. The process of evolving an acceptable and equitable workload system would seem to rely on the interpretation and understanding of both organisational and individual values, and the modes, either normative or operational, which help to form them. Through this understanding organisational practices, such as workload allocation, can then be developed and aligned with the strategic focus of the organisation. However the approach needs to be holistic and the challenge for leaders, both at university level and from HoD/S, is to form an understanding of the total pattern of activities, such as training, consultation processes and decision-making, and their dynamic relationships, in order to manage these changes. Becher and Kogan’s (1992) work helps to move this understanding into a wider frame at the macro level, looking at the political and social influences on universities as well as the way individuals and groups accommodate diverse demands. However, perhaps a richer understanding of how this actually occurs can come from Virtanen’s (2000) theories. He argues that there is a need to understand both why there is a commitment to something, a person or a particular value, and what that commitment is focused around. This needs to occur at both the level of the individual and the organisation.

Taking an example, there appears to be commitment to the value of equity at both the individual level and organisational level. Using Virtanen’s theory a wider understanding of the basis of this could be achieved, such as a questioning of why the
individual might feel this, is their response based in feelings of obligation or emotions, and is the focus of it perhaps moral or political? From an organisational viewpoint, is it based in utility, which suggests that work should be spread out evenly to create efficiency or does it run from notions of obligation as the employer? Further, is it focused in political imperatives or perhaps moral or legal ones? The issue then is to understand not just the foundations of this commitment from both individuals and organisation, but to see how the two interconnect and infuse each other. However although Virtanen describes the reinforcing part of social relations as determinants of individual meaning, an understanding of the basis of divergence might also be useful when disagreements and disjuncture occur. In evolving a WLA model organisational conceptions of fairness for example might be seen as stable values, (seen within the goals and values section of Figure 10) which are shared widely across the university. Whereas personal perceptions (see the psychosocial area of Figure 10) of it whilst upholding the value itself might challenge the interpretation of it, for example the perceived favouring of the importance of one work type or discipline over another. Another complication within this scenario is the divergence between commitment to an agent, such as a Head of Department/School, and to a value such as equity. Situations can and do occur when a WLA model is not seen to be completely fair, but commitment to a HoD/S makes staff disinclined to object, this could be seen operating to a degree in Case 6b. However the opposite scenario where staff show strong commitment to the value of equity without commitment to the agent HoD/S can be problematic. This was seen also in the case studies when a new or diffident HoD/S tried to implement changes and staff members did not cooperate with the process.

11.3 Practical Implications
Returning to the model of Kast and Rosenzweig (1985) it needs mentioning that although they draw a broad model they stress the importance of the contingency approach in terms of how it is used. This highlights the idea of appropriateness, where the context and the interaction between the parts is an important factor in any situation, and the variables involved are contingent upon this. This is a vital aspect to be considered when discussing the various ideas surrounding practical implications. From the fieldwork some main factors emerged relevant to the task of fitting work to individual staff members: these were: individualising the process, managing within
the norms of the academic culture, and evolving practices to fit changing and diverse needs. The research in this section focuses on the structure and technology part of the Kast and Rosenzweig (1985) model, for example looking at how different areas are planned and scheduled, as well as the psychosocial subsystem such as leadership behaviour appropriate to different maturity levels of staff.

Wolverton et al (2005) have done research in the US on how to practically prepare HoD/S for the task of leading their academic unit, this includes identifying the knowledge required, as well as the development of programmes to prepare a skill base. They argue that the role covers a huge array of tasks that demand many skills that are rarely fully acquired, such as leadership, communication, coaching, problem solving and conflict resolution. They prepared and ran a highly successful development program for individuals who had been identified by Deans as having leadership potential. The scope of the programme was developed by a survey of fifty-six current HoD/S asking them what they wished they had known when they first moved into position. From there they ran seven three hour seminars, spread over a year, working to cover interlinked professional development areas and skills, rather than task specific issues that could be covered by central administration. Other aspects that were included in the programme included reading assignments to support the work, group reflective activity that helped build a support network, and personal assessment activities that helped participants to understand how their own personality affected their leadership style.

Maister's (1993) work on the professional service firm provides some useful insights into scheduling issues for these managers. He describes how in matching the right resources to assignments there is a need to satisfy the client, or in this case probably the student, as well as to encourage the skill development of staff. These new challenges and responsibilities will then affect their morale and motivation. Such decisions then must take account of whether to let staff engage in repeat activities, or to challenge them to new work when the learning curve has started to flatten. For lecturing staff their was a tendency to resist taking on new lecture series as the preparation time was so great, although many units made some provision for this in weightings this was not universal. However division of work and sharing prevents dependency on particular individuals, for example, group collaboration in team
working can bring many advantages in mutual support, although as Maister (1993) warns positive group dynamics are vital.

Another decision that scheduling work throws up for managers is the extent to which they allow their staff to become generalists or specialists. The needs of the academic unit obviously have to be served, but managers have some responsibility for the longer-term development of their staff, and the choices made may well affect promotion possibilities. So Maister points out that the manager here must be balancing client needs with staff and considering both the short term implications as well as looking further ahead. The overall network of relationships involved in scheduling Maister (1993) works into a framework, (p179) with six dimensions. These are: firstly the recruiting implications of fitting new staff to needs and satisfying their desire for variety and autonomy, secondly considerations about training and development, for example for new staff to do a teaching certificate. The actual work assignments are another pivotal dimension too and their makeup and balance will probably affect two other of his dimensions, promotion and compensation. This was seen to occur for example when in certain universities staff chose to take on an administrative role, such as subject group leader, whereas in others staff swerved from these tasks, seeing research as the only way to progress. Performance evaluation was the last of his six dimensions involved with scheduling issues, this discussion on choices and performance might involve the balancing of the department/school needs with those of individuals’ wants/needs. Another salient point that Maister argues is that these decisions should be made by the practice leader, as they are strategic not administrative, and rely on judgments that reflect their wide vision of the context. This is something that some staff did comment on, preferring to have dealings with the HoD/S rather than their deputy.

Some theories that fit well with Maister’s work and shed light on how leaders may actually match the individual to the task come from Hersey and Blanchard (1982). This links to the work of French et al (1982) in section 2.1 about how mismatches of fit between abilities, expectations and their work can cause stress to staff. Hersey and Blanchard (1982) propose a model that uses two dimensions for the individual, their ability (job maturity) and their willingness, a product of confidence and/or commitment (psychological maturity) (p261). This then has to be matched to the
appropriate leadership style to accommodate that maturity level. The head and the individual then assess this so that the appropriate leadership style is matched to them. This might range from complete delegation to participating or even telling. The implications of this for the head are that when they looking at allocating work they need to consider the specific demands of the work, then look at the maturity level of the individual, in terms of being able and willing and lastly consider what they need to do to facilitate this dynamic. This requires leaders to also become self aware both about their own natural, primary style of leadership (p237) and the range of styles that they use and their appropriateness in given situations. Further as Hersey and Blanchard describe head and individual staff member need to reach some agreement on the maturity levels and the leadership style suitable to them. Such a process gives feedback to both parties and requires sensitive handling. This, as Wolverton (2005) also argues, is an area that the training for HoD/S might cover, diagnosing their own leadership styles, analysing staff maturity levels, working to provide appropriate styles to support them, as well as the tools to enter this process of negotiation.

This theory helps to answer some of the problems seen within the case studies. For example some new lecturers were finding their work stressful because of self-doubts on areas such as the quality of their work, and about how they were distributing their time. These individuals had the ability, but their confidence was not high, so that from the Hersey and Blanchard (1982) view full delegation would not probably be appropriate and more participation from the leader required. Often all that these new lecturers required was some simple reassurance about the quality of their work and ideas of norms for preparing and assessing students’ work. At the other end of the spectrum HoD/S have to deal with experienced staff that are able and confident, but not committed to a particular area, such as administration, preferring to spend their time on teaching or research activities. This again requires a participative leadership style, with listening and two-way decision-making emphasised to help to strengthen motivation (p153). All of this could be impossibly time-consuming for HoD/S. So another way of coping with this is for leaders, when assessing the capacity of individuals and the gap between their ability and the knowledge required, to

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5 An important aspect to note here is that this leader might be any delegated leader, such as the subject group leader, although for ease of reference this is now taken to be the Head.
compensate with other mechanisms. These might be through team working or from encoded knowledge, or from increasing the degree of specialisation (Barrett PS 1993). This might increase confidence of staff in their ability, but on the other hand potentially make staff more vulnerable to job insecurity driven by gross changes in subject demand. However referring back to the Maister (1993), in doing all this the Head has also to balance the needs of the students and accommodate the longer term as well as short term needs. It raises the issue of what drives the course provision, and how it is delivered, the expertise of staff involved or student demand, where the modularisation of courses is in practice how this is achieved. Further the Head has to manage and balance all the staff needs and differing maturity levels. Taken together this helps to explain why both staff and HoD/S often feel that individuals who are calm, capable and co-operative are more prevailed upon when it comes to the new additional task. These characteristics for ease of reference will now be termed the 3Cs.

For the head then there is a need to manage the whole context of the academic unit, and one of the more obvious problems seems to be that the climate or values surrounding academic autonomy creates difficulties for new members of staff. This area is something that Handy (1985) discusses. He argues that all behaviour and attitudes occur within an environment, that might be physical, psychological, or sociological and that the interaction or the relationship between the behaviour and environment is the ecology of the organisation (p125). He goes on to give examples of how adjusting the environment can bring changes in behaviour, such as how working in small groups increases participation, and increased interaction leads to increased sentiments, and these might be positive or hostile! However, he argues that behaviour is influenced by the way things and people are organised as much as by direct interaction between the parties, but these aspects are often unnoticed, being such things as organisational rules, strategies, procedures, technology, physical groupings, and decision making criteria for selection and promotion. Relating this to the workload allocation area it could be seen that changes in conditions that a head introduces will influence behaviour and attitudes of staff, and so care needs to be taken in assessing or predicting implications. For example when HoD/S invested and gave allocated time to the development of new course modules staff were more inclined to update provision, also where universities had strengthened their strategic
line on research this had changed staff attitudes and behaviour, making them more sensitive to the amount of time that they had to work on their research. This work of Handy’s brings the area of implementation back full circle to the policy issues.

The above focus mainly on the qualitative aspects of matching individuals to task, however another aspect to this is the quantitative dimension of working out the balance between different activities. So for example teaching and research were allocated in very different ways in the case studies seen. Teaching was always quantified into given units, whereas research was usually taken as a residual element and not calibrated, although on occasions it was calculated retrospectively in broad terms. Part of the problem is that staff often work in both areas and the proportions of each can very considerably, thus managing these diverse needs appears to be generally problematic. Thompson (1967) again provides some interesting insights into why this might be so, drawing on the notion of a continuum of interdependence, from weak to strong. He describes how the parts of organisations can be related, for example they might have ‘pooled’ interdependence, where all areas are only loosely connected, but contribute to total performance. ‘Sequential’ interdependence on the other hand is where the order of inputs is pivotal and a ‘reciprocal’ situation is where the outputs for one unit become the inputs for another and vice versa (p55).

Thompson (1967) argues that particular forms of coordination parallel the three types of interdependence. For example ‘pooled’ interdependence suits standardisation procedures, ‘sequential’ by plan is appropriate, and with ‘reciprocal’ interdependence coordination calls for the more time-consuming process of mutual adjustment. It would seem that teaching resembles ‘pooled’ interdependence, with an individual’s teaching activities remaining separate from other taught work, but at times it also has elements of ‘sequential’ interdependence, for example prerequisites in the ordering of modules and also at the time exam boards when marked scripts need to be provided before the next stage can progress. The coordination of this teaching can be achieved through fairly standard routines, such as timetabling, examination and assessment procedures. Within Thompson’s model then for an organisation teaching can be seen to operate at the lowest level of interdependence, in other words a fair degree of autonomy is in operation. However when research is considered it is difficult to place it within the model for an organisation at all because it operates below even the
‘pooled’ level of interdependence criteria where, ‘failure of any one can threaten the whole’ (p54). This might be because research often revolves around the wider research or professional community, and this independence might explain why it is not inclusively coordinated within organisational activities. This is speculation, but it might go some way to answer why research is rarely coordinated in detail within the WLA models.

11.3.1 Reflection
From the theories above it seems that two issues are at stake: that of making the workload specific and fitting to individual competences and wants, and that of responding to multiple, diverse demands. To answer the former seems to require more input on training of leaders, however from the case studies heads of department/school were usually overloaded themselves with work, especially those who were less experienced in managing. However implicit in these responses is the issue that efficiency did improve with time, as HoD/S got more adept at juggling demands. The question then remains on how to create sufficient slack for HoD/S to acquire those essential leadership skills. Using Handy’s (1985) ideas this might mean changing the environment for HoD/S, for example by initially giving them a larger allocation to account for this work. Through this leadership training HoD/S would become more aware of their own innate leadership style and have more knowledge of other modes that could be adopted in different situations. Greater understanding could also be gleaned about how to balance different demands, how to compensate best in those areas where a shortfall exists and also to provide challenge where that provision is met easily. However this seems to be becoming increasingly difficult to achieve even for experienced HoD/S possibly because of turbulence in the subject markets that makes it hard for staff to remain in one specialism, further the move to bigger academic units makes it more difficult for heads to intimately know and manage the strengths and weakness of their staff.

The response to the second area of diverse demands seems more complex. There does seem to be a problem in creating WLA models that cope with the diverse needs of staff, so that all work activities are accounted. Using Thompson’s work (1967) one can see how the semi-autonomous, externally orientated nature of research might fall outside the routine department/school coordinating structures. Although teaching also
is relatively independent it has a client (the student) present and making demands in the short term, whereas research demands might work through more remote agencies such as funding institutions, journals, and the RAE. Heads themselves are busy and staff are motivated to do their research work, and this might go some way to explain why research is often left out of models. Galbraith (1977) provides a rationale for this approach proposing the 'creation of self contained tasks' (p49) as a legitimate way in which organisations can reduce the need for information processing. This can work well where those involved are happy to act autonomously and the dangers attendant upon uncoordinated activity are slight. For example Quinn et al (1996) describe how professional organisations often invert usual organisational hierarchical structures instead organising themselves in patterns that are adapted to the 'particular way their professional intellect creates value' (p342). This sort of inversion, with limited need to solve problems through interaction, allows them 'to customize their knowledge at the point of contact with customers' (p344). This does seem to fit the situation described for research, it may create benefit for academics allowing them to interact easily within the complex of external research networks. However the dangers of this uncoordinated activity may appear slight, but case studies and other surveys (Kinman G and Jones F 2004) showed that staff were feeling strains often because of the tensions operating between the open-endedness of research and the tight constraints and often peak demands of teaching work.

11.4 Summary of Theoretical Discussion
Looking at the Kast and Rosenzweig model (1985) above (figure 10) it can be seen that all the subsystems within it can be related to the fieldwork research. The three interrelated areas of policy, evolving process and practical implications all centrally consider the management subsystem, but their focus or scope varies reflecting the move from more abstract ideas to more practical responses. For example the policy section looks more at the goals and values subsystem, whereas the evolving process includes additionally the psychosocial subsystem. The last area of practical implications considers the more technical subsystem’s aspects of planning and scheduling involved in the development of a model, as well as structural implications for the coordination of this activity, such as the appointment of subject group leaders. However, as the discussion in the next chapter (12) will demonstrate, these areas work
in a dynamic relationship with much overlap. So for example the policy section will be informed by both the goals and values as well as technical subsystems.

It has been argued (Kast FE and Rosenzweig JE 1985) that the particular nature of higher education, in the creation and advancement of knowledge, requires intellectual freedom or autonomy to bring about change (p556). This makes the culture different from other professional organisations, that often use relatively mechanistic procedures for allocating and accounting for the work done as seen in the case studies 9 and 10. If this is the case it may go some way to explain the difficulties involved in implementing or changing allocation mechanisms. From the literature it seems that understanding this culture is a way to create change. This may be viewed at various levels within the university to understand how values or norms are translated into practice. Further there is a need to distinguish between stable values and those perceptions that are more fluid and susceptible to change.

Within this, as Becher and Kogan (1992) note, there are internal and external forces that exert influence at each level and these in turn can influence each other in a series of shifts and modulations. Diversity, autonomy and change all make the understanding of these norms, and their attendant behaviour, difficult. For example organisational commitment might be to a given value, a core idea such as equity, but individuals might in practice oppose this through greater commitment to an agent, such as a colleague, and so perhaps create resistance to change (Virtanen T 2000). These complexities reinforce the need for consultation processes that authentically work to understand such behaviours, whilst also maintaining the allegiance to agreed core values. Further this complex environment requires that this process is dynamic and works to accommodate contextual changes.

Translating this into the three areas discussed, this may start centrally at a policy level where this stage then involves a process of accommodation, between the strategic thrust of the university and the practices of its staff in the formation of policy around allocating work. The next part revolves around the HoD/S role in taking this forward when developing their model. This requires refining of these general agreements to fit their particular context, staff and environment. The development of a workload allocation model then requires leadership that enters into dialectic with staff groups,
drawing from these values to negotiate between conflicting and diverse demands and commitments, to get a broad consensus for operation. The final stage of accommodation requires leaders to assess individual’s ability and willingness in the matching of staff and roles, and the balancing with needs, such as those of the student. It also requires them to consider the total load, including work that is difficult to quantify or does not explicitly require coordination, within the academic unit.

Further Kast and Rosenzweig (1985) argue that organisational processes are dynamic, for example: in the psychosocial area people’s maturity levels change as they develop; structurally changes occur in response to other influences, for example when departments/schools become larger for internal or external market reasons; and technically this dynamic can be seen in the evolving development of a WLA model. Contingency theory suggests there are many possible combinations of subsystems and that these cannot be isolated from their environment and the optimal arrangement depends on matching them together to fit appropriately with it. However this environmental context may also be changing, so the organisation will need also to respond to this (p555-559).

The use of Kast and Rosenzweig’s (1985) model to structure the use of the literature has proved a useful way to understand how the various aspects overlap and the levels interact. It has also helped to move beyond an understanding of the discreet parts into a more integrated appreciation of their dynamic relationships. This will now inform the development of an idealised general model for workload allocation in universities.
12 Development of an Integrated Model

The thesis has established that, across the case studies seen, the allocation of academic workloads is typified by a high level of variety within and between universities, and that this applies to both technical models and social processes. The models seen work in a continuum from informal methods to comprehensive approaches, that have different advantages and disadvantages, there was no clear correlation between particular disciplines and the model adopted, however size did appear to be relevant as the smaller units were more able to cope with informal mechanisms, whereas larger units of thirty plus staff tended strongly towards more comprehensive models. There is an almost total cultural resistance to detailed accounting of time, and there appears to be little knowledge generally of university policy on the issue.

Staff responding to the Kinman and Jones (2004) survey expressed their desire for models that could fairly distribute work and within the case studies this view was confirmed too. Universities share this aspiration. So moving from the current position, and drawing from the literature and comparisons across the fieldwork, a set of connected, dynamic, processes will now be suggested about how this might best be done, drawing from the best practices seen operating. The description will focus successively on the three levels of investigation within the interviews and described in the preceding Chapter 11 namely: the university level, the Head of Department / School and the individual. This part will culminate with a proposition for an integrated socio-technical model. The model constructed (section 12.4) will then be related back to the case studies (section 12.5) and to a new longitudinal case study 11 (section 12.6). It needs stressing that these are broad generic propositions that will always need adapting to a particular academic context. Although the wider context of these, the higher education sector, has been widely commented on elsewhere, and there is broad agreement on the challenges placed upon it from issues such as widening student access, resource constraints, public scrutiny and accountability.

12.1 University level

Looking first then at university level, most organisations had a policy on WLA, however few members of staff were aware of this except union representatives and
staff from Personnel. A first step that needs to be addressed is to create an understanding of the issues and a more active stance in this area. To overcome perceptions about interference to autonomous practices the appeal needs to centre on the inequity that currently exists in many academic units. It seems reasonable to suggest that to help with this that there should be wide input, from cross disciplinary working parties, into the creation of such policy (Kennie T 2007). Staff would then be better informed and the policy could move beyond worthy, but rather bland ideas on equity to a fuller working through of the problems that this actually involves in practice. This would be a first move towards creating a culture where criteria surrounding workload distribution were known and discussed. Further, improvements in communication and participation have been shown to increase commitment felt by staff (Thornhill A et al. 1996).

This policy area broadly covers the areas of values and how changes in practices or strategy may be brought about. In the former it focuses on how leaders may need to link and mediate between the demands of change/vision and social norms, such as equity, (Kotter J 1996; Michela J and Warner Burke W 2000), but also the dangers of their voice overpowering that of others and also distorting issues to suit particular purposes (Watson G 2003). Complexity and a turbulent environment may not only disrupt or cause uncertainty about purpose at a strategic level when considering workload-modelling systems, but there may also be uncertainty about cause and effect mechanisms in their operation (Thompson J D 1967), an aspect with which judgement of a HoD/S might assist. So whilst equity and transparency might be a purpose, universities need to find the means to listen to the diverse voices on operational mechanisms, and thus the implications for practice. This is happening in some universities where there are broad selections of staff in multi disciplinary teams (Thackwray B 2007) looking at the issue of WLA. This involvement should bring benefits in that the ‘policies’, whether they be loose guidelines or include template models, will be informed by those with the greatest knowledge of the implications involved and that these individuals, through this process, will have a wider knowledge of these ‘policies’ and the thinking behind them. This thus works to satisfy the need for justice in both the process (Cobb A et al. 1995) and outcomes dimensions.
To maintain this visible strategic focus a strong holistic foundation is required from areas such as leadership, human resource management and training, which together can help to encourage staff to behave consistently with the policy. For example to help with an understanding of how to deal with these issues it would be helpful if prospective HoD/S were given training to help them develop skills, such as in the areas of negotiation and conflict resolution (Wolverton et al. 2005). Further assistance might be gained through helping them gain greater insights into their own leadership style and also the potential range of styles and their appropriateness in given situations (Hersey and Blanchard 1982). Discussion could focus on the problems meeting seemingly innocuous, but potentially conflicting, basic principles, such as equity and quality. For example the temptation to give an overloaded, but high performing and willing member of staff the newly arrived extra task. Many suggested that WLA models only challenge the ‘outliers’, that is those who are way above or way below average levels. Although they felt that their HoD/S was working to create equity, in many systems they had no evidence to support this and many mentioned the ‘work horses and shirkers’ categories. These are probably the hardest for HoD/S to work on, as they have to fight a natural tendency to give more work to the capable, cooperative overworked academic, as Tann notes (1995), and also muster the energy to confront those few who resist any attempt to be given a task no matter how justified. This issue is a problem not just for the overworked staff concerned, but from the effect it can have on staff morale generally to see some successfully avoiding work. A model can help address this difficult area for HoD/S, whilst still leaving them discretion over the large middle ground. Consistency then, both between strategies and between policy and practice, should help with perceptions on trust (Kotter 1996).

Whilst many believe that it is impossible to create a WLA system that can accommodate all the intricacies of a given department it should be possible to provide a loose framework that goes some way to address policy criteria such as the need for equity. Such an approach would provide some reassurance that all departments were, at the very least, meeting certain minimum criteria, even if their chosen approach remained quite informal. It would also help to prevent local disputes, for example with unions through misinterpretation of employment contracts, or arising from a lack of consensus where informal approaches are being used. This framework could then
be customised to meet the needs of individual departments. The cognitive mapping diagrams (see figures 5, 6 and 7) would suggest that consultative processes are pivotal to this customisation. This does partially happen in many departments, for example over aspects such as the weighting for certain tasks. This type of guidance might help new HoD/S to avoid adopting extreme responses, either rushing to develop new models without fully understanding the dynamics involved or merely adopting an old system for ‘efficiency’ or in order not to upset certain sections of the staff.

Equity is hard to achieve through partial systems or in those that do not integrate all work areas. However departments often operated this type of system, possibly because of the problems attendant on creating a more comprehensive model. So a university framework might consider aspects such as the units of measurement that could be used, this might be calibrated in unit points, hours or Full Time Equivalent (FTEs), the essential aspect would be ease of integration of these units across all the different work types. Decisions on units of measure would be a function of factors, such as employment contract and organisational history / experience. Models based on time measures would provide ease of use within those employment contracts that stipulate teaching contact hours, and would allow staff a tangible sense of loads. Preparation and assessment loads could then be calibrated using weightings. However there are potential problems here in that these hours might not actually be a realistic measure of the work involved. Advantages that FTEs and points systems can offer is encouragement to staff to think flexibly about how they deliver their teaching. Discussion then could focus on how these units of measure, centred on teaching, could be used in relation to other roles such as research and administration. Examples of weighting equivalence might be helpful here, as well as, in relation to research, decisions on allowances being calculated retrospectively on outcomes, or as part of forward planning to accommodate or encourage research work. Guidance from university level on these choices would help HoD/S with a clearer view of implications within their department and for Deans looking across faculties at resources.

More specifically within each type of work, guidance could be given on factors that could be included. For teaching this might include aspects such as student numbers, assessment, credit rating of a module and reduced loads for new staff. Other factors
specific to the department, such as on different modes of delivery, and weightings
could then be consulted on and agreed locally. With administrative work, discussion
could cover both internal commitments and external elements such as work
placements, field trips, and liaison with industry partners. In a similar way to teaching
some assessment of the size of the role might be calculated, such as for subject group
leaders taking into account factors such as student numbers involved and the number
of programmes to be coordinated. A pragmatically useful measure adopted in one
case was to allow so many units to cover all the small elements in personal workloads
that a model could not encompass, so defusing counter-productive exacting
discussions over “small change”. For research, global allocations or calculations
based on funding, papers and research student supervision might be used for
weightings. Advice on all these detailed elements could centre just around a loose
framework of aspects that require consideration, but for practical implementation are
strongly dependent on departmental context. Further the advice should be open to
feedback from academic staff, and reviewed more generally perhaps every 3-5 years.
However as previously stated the aspect that needs more careful attention is how the
major elements are integrated, so that systems provide an equitable distribution of
work, balancing all the work types. Research was an element that many left out of
models, however at university level all the organisations, even those with limited
experience of it, had it as a strategic aim, an area that perhaps requires some
mediation from leaders (Becher T and Kogan M 1992). Such an approach to research
then relies on staff working on it in the time left over or, as most frequently occurred,
in their own time. Omitting this aspect and relying on the self-motivation of
individuals cannot help with equitable distribution of work across the
departments/schools.

The importance of team building activities and workload monitoring was evident in
the non-HE organisations and this might be a fruitful area of discussion at the training
sessions for heads. Support from colleagues and reassurance from line managers on
aspects such as performance and efficiency seemed important to many junior
academics, and of great assistance in alleviating work stress. Again these did not
result from formal procedures or appraisal, but rather from informal talks, which
served both to reassure and informally monitor ongoing workloads. Changes in
working habit were cited by some as part of a decline in informal support
mechanisms, for example home working and the decline in use of the senior common room. Mechanisms to overcome this could be discussed and although many staff were slightly cynical about university-wide surveys, thought could be given to local, focused feedback mechanisms.

12.2 Head of Department / School Level

The focus in this section is on processes involved in introducing a new system as this seemed to be the area that caused most problems for HoD/S. However within all the detail the problem for the HoD/S can be summarised as the balancing of two main variables: the number of staff against the amount of work to be done. The work element is a function of issues such as the number of students, the tasks and the time given to those tasks; and the staff aspects involve issues such as competence, expertise and preferences. If there is no prospect of increasing staffing then heads must look to the tasks to balance, to see which are essential and if any need altering or cutting, and also to the time allocated to the work areas. Another aspect that may require attention is that of distinguishing between a general problem of workloads, and that of outliers, those who are overloaded or under loaded compared to the rest of the academic unit. So heads might look to changing or modifying parts of their system to accommodate issues such as inflation in workloads, or correcting loads for 'outliers' or, more radically, introducing a new model. The process that follows is an explication of how a new model might be developed to achieve this delicate balance between work and staff.

Using the organisational guidance and drawing from focused training on the various potential dimensions to be considered, the head could engage staff in a collective consultation process (Seibold D and Shea B 2001)(p689). Through this it would be possible to customise the framework model to their department and get some broad agreement on the scope of the model, for example how detailed or formal it needed to be, or how to invest in research. Further refinements could be the division of teaching work into coordination, delivery and assessment aspects. From this work a mutually agreed notion of a reasonable load could be agreed upon. This might be the median for the department or for the teaching element a figure, such as the 550 contact hours, that could be used as a reference against which to assess individual loads. In units were there has been only informal systems used this whole process might cause upset.
Case evidence has shown that where radical changes are being made this process benefits from an approach that incorporates a pilot study, with feedback and modifications. Such a double loop process seems to facilitate staff engagement with the process, and reassure those staff resistant to change. Care would need to be taken in these discussions to avoid the head, or perhaps other dominant voices, overpowering and preventing a full discussion of the issues (Watson G 2003). An important factor here is that staff are often closest to students, (Schneider B et al. 2000) (p35) and through serving their needs have a clearer view of new allocation needs, perhaps for online provision or changes to timetabling schedules.

Further this process need not be seen as monolithic, as consultation should also be done individually between staff and HoD/S. In larger units this task might be delegated to the HoD/S representatives, such as subject group leaders, however the HoD/S would still need to retain a role in the overall balancing of allocations across all the work areas. In this way, using judgement and discretion, the overall model can be fine-tuned to optimise equity within it. This finding on consultation confirms research results on strain and the need for managers to facilitate a good match for staff to their tasks (French J et al. 1982). Through an awareness of their ability or motivation HoD/S can then adjust their own style to accommodate staff needs, from fully delegating to, say, using team working for inexperienced staff (Hersey P and Blanchard K 1982). Additionally there needs to be a monitoring process, which was seen operating successfully in the non-educational organisations. Case study evidence showed many junior academic staff anxious about their own efficiency and the quality of their work, this often required reassurance rather than readjustment. Further an environment that centres around the idea of autonomy and independent work makes this reassurance often difficult to obtain (Handy C 1985; Gillespie N et al. 2001). So the Head needs to be alert to those individuals predisposed to strain responses, whilst at the same time optimising staff autonomy, an aspect shown to reduce strain (Karasek R 1979). This is quite a tall order! Further this approach may seem resource intensive, however it might be a sound investment as feedback from HoD/S showed that even small problems or disputes with staff were extremely time consuming if allowed to escalate. Further stress related illness is a consequence that all parties will wish to avoid.
The benefits from achieving a good fit for staff around equitable workloads will be very real and case studies did show that staff had quite high levels of trust for their HoD/S facilitating the process. However it is important to remember that despite the existence of the model and a responsiveness to individuals, the Head ultimately has to make hard decisions about work allocations and the criteria for these judgments need to be clear and defensible. The degree of transparency revealed about individual allocations will also need some discussion, although as both theory (Bessire D 2005) and the case studies describe, transparency is not an absolute concept. What is not revealed and to whom is as vital as what is known, for example, the reasoning behind decisions or appointments. Clear models and consultation processes obviously go some way to assist with this. The head then would be key to developing a model, with staff through consensual processes. Feedback could then also be made from this to the general university model.

Such an interactive approach could help to facilitate a collective response to the issue of workload management rather than seeing it as increased managerialism. Agreements with staff might look beyond just the model and the overall balancing of work to aspects such as how the work arrives, patterns and distribution of work. For example case studies showed that workload peaks caused stressful conditions for staff, however some HoD/S, and the non-educational organisations, had actively managed this problem. An understanding of these complex work issues could form the basis of a *Socio-Temporal Contract*, where work was not viewed in just the one dimension of time, but rather as part of a richer network of relationships that require attention. This of course draws on the notion of psychological contracts, an idea with a long history starting with Argyris (1960), (see also Cullinane and Dundon section 2.3) carrying notions of organisations and their staff negotiating a “social as well as an economic exchange” (Cullinane N and Dundon T 2006) (p114). The specific idea here draws from Vischer (2005) where the analogous “social-spatial contract” is introduced, highlighting the social complexities of managing workspaces for staff. In relation to workloads the “temporal” aspect expresses the more subjective experience of time. For example teaching contact hours are not just objective measures, but are informed by other aspects such as whether the teaching material is new or repeat, how the contact hours are distributed through the week and the related diversity of tasks involved, such as marking.
This approach makes explicit what the better-managed departments do anyway, through packaging work sensitively. This type of approach with a broad understanding of what is fair and reasonable built up across the department (the “socio” part) and supported by a spreadsheet or database model could assist in times of change, whether from external influences or from internal factors such as changes of Head. Further this could assist in the longer-term maintenance of the system helping to cope with problems such as the creeping inflation of loads and helping to avoid ‘outliers’ from the standard load. However as Cullinane and Dundon highlight there are potential problems in the inequality of power that can work to engender a set of norms and values within psychological contracts placing emphasis on individual obligations and undermining collective relationships, such as with union bodies (Cullinane N and Dundon T 2006) p124). However it can be hoped that higher levels of information for staff and increased consultation between the parties could help to mitigate some of the potential problems associated with such inequalities in power.

12.3 Individual level

Individual members of staff then have responsibilities, not just through actively engaging with the consultative processes, but in the choices that they make in relation to their work. Case studies showed that staff needed to be aware of their inputs to various work aspects; inefficiency and the exceeding of quality requirements were frequently cited. Work resulting from research interests or external industry partnerships might result in staff working in the evenings and at weekends. This might be a choice and the work rewarding, but there needs to an understanding of the impact on other work, such as from fatigue. Further, rather than just absorbing this extra work, there is a need for staff to communicate issues and if necessary to negotiate compromises. The work of Hersey and Blanchard (1982) might also be useful for staff allowing them to assess their ability and confidence and how it varies in different roles and the implication that this has on their workloads. For example in the case studies some staff told how their lack of confidence about a certain task caused them to take longer on it worrying over small details and reducing their efficiency. Greater awareness of this sort of problem could trigger strategies such as initial mentoring in an area whilst confidence was built.
12.4 Socio-technical Integrated Model

Drawing together this strands of the above discussion, Figure 12 summarises diagrammatically a theoretical overview of an ideal approach to workload allocation, showing three levels: the organisational level, the Head, and staff and their outputs. The solid arrows show existing typical practice and the dashed arrows those elements that seem to call for action as set out above.

![Technical dimension](image)

**Figure 12: Integrated Model: Negotiating the “Socio-Temporal Contract”**

The scope of the model is as set out under the methodology section 3.1 using Checkland’s (1993) CATWOE system for defining a study, so the main activity or transformation (T) here is workload allocation, with ownership (O) by the university, and both the customers and the actors (C and A) being the university staff, all within the context of the environmental constraints (E). Although the study worked taking multiple perspectives and can encompass multiple Weltanschauungs, ultimately to maintain coherence a choice has to be made on a predominant one for any particular analysis (see section 3.1). Thus the primary Weltanschauung, or world view, (W) adopted is the view of the Head of Department/School.
This integrated model, developed both from the fieldwork and theoretical work generally, can be related back to the specific findings from the individual case studies to better understand the interactions between the parts.

12.5 Relating Integrated Model Components to Case Studies

The position of the case studies on the various elements is summarised in the following tables, it looks at all three levels within the university. It allows some broad assessment of aspects such as the relationship between the felt investment at university level and trust felt by staff and between model types and their implementation and feelings on equity, transparency and trust. It must be noted that these are a ‘snap shot’ and do not take into account any changes occurring and do not indicate any absolute values. The positive and negative measures are relative, calibrated by looking across all the data, using comparisons as set out under the principles of Grounded Theory (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990) (p73) (see also thesis section 3.2), mainly these are self-explanatory, however a few need some explication. Neutral responses in ‘policy’ for example is where there is a policy, but it is not disseminated effectively, and for work loads on ‘equity’ a neutral response was often non committal because of a lack of knowledge about the loads of others. For ‘transparency’ a neutral response occurs where the process is semi-transparent, such as when staff see a summary sheet of workloads, rather than other individuals’ allocations. ‘Development process’ relates to aspects such as the degree and effect of the consultation involved in developing/modifying a model at unit level, whereas ‘fine-tuning’ refers to the individual allocation.

Table 16: Relating Integrated Model Components to Case Studies

| Case 1 |

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating to individuals</td>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>8a, 8b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>8a, 8b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust (Org)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust (HoD/S and unit)</td>
<td>8a, 8b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a small sample and the relationships are complex making any generalisations difficult, however from these tables a few features can be tentatively described:

- There seems to be some relationship between the university level activity and perceptions of trust in the organisation - negative perceptions around policy correspond to negative responses on trust in the organisation such as in cases 3 and 8. Positive perceptions are associated with neutral or positive responses (cases 1, 4, 5, 6).

- A fairly consistent relationship operates between perceptions on equity and those on trust at unit level.

It is helpful to group some of the material from these tables around the different model types so that any trends can be seen more clearly. So Table 17 now looks more closely at relationships within academic units.

Table 17: Social Aspects of Model Development within Academic Units Against Perceptions on Equity and Trust, by Technical Model Groupings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Development model (unit level)</th>
<th>Fine tuning to Individual</th>
<th>Perceptions on Equity</th>
<th>Perceptions on Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal Model</td>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6b</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7a</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7b</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Model</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The actual type of model alone used seems to be relatively independent of beliefs on equity, as all three model types had cases showing positive perceptions on equity and trust at unit level, although only the informal model had any negative perceptions. However a far more complicated relationship appears to be operating beyond the technical aspects that involve perceptions about the HoD/S and areas such as fine tuning or individualising the allocation, that is, the social aspects. So for example where fine-tuning to individuals has been positively addressed this almost invariably leads to positive perceptions on equity and trust.

Notably within the Informal model neutral or negative responses are more random and reflect the absence of any objective measures for individuals who have to depend more heavily on the quality of consultation/tuning processes.

The relationship between the technical model and the social aspect shows that surprisingly the comprehensive model has no negative responses about either the consultation involved in the development of a model or fine tuning process (the more social dimensions of WLA). However the informal models system, as might be expected, has negative responses related to the unit level of developing the process but a higher degree of positive and neutral responses for the individualising tuning aspect. Partial models show similar responses to the comprehensive models.

The comprehensive and partial models did have higher positive perceptions of equity than the informal model with 57% and 50% respectively, compared to 40% positive response in the informal cases. These figures are the same for trust except for the comprehensive model which increases to 71%. These tendencies might be related to more inclusive social procedures (see above), suggesting that these HoD/S have not relied alone on the technical aspects of their model, and perhaps that its development had facilitated the social process and the ongoing more transparent process.

Looking at the extreme cases one can contrast Case 3b, where perceptions on equity were lowest, and the developing and fine tuning of models minimal,
compared to Case 4b with high perceptions on equity and good mechanisms for tuning and developing the unit model to changing circumstances and needs.

- The notable exception to this general trend is Case 5 where in both cases perceptions on equity were lower than might be anticipated from the fine-tuning and development processes. This, however, was due to perceptions generally that online teaching methods were causing problems that were not being addressed.

This last issue highlights the potential for deterioration in the process as a consequence of some contextual change. The fact that many of the models were of fairly recent making raises the value of looking at this from a longitudinal perspective. The next section picks up this issue.

12.6 Integrated Model Verification - Case Study 11

The case studies carried out covered the single time frame of the present, and notably many had only recently (in the last couple of years) developed comprehensive models. Further as Case study 5 indicated, changes in circumstance might cause problems. Given the importance in all the model types of consultation and the fine-tuning process and the degree to which the comprehensive models had incorporated these, it was felt useful to see how these social processes continued over a longer time frame. A case was chosen where change in the system had occurred some years previously to capture reactions to it then and to look at how things were operating subsequently using a longitudinal basis. The interviews covered the previous HoD/S, who had first made changes to the system, following on to the present Head and a member of staff at lecturer level.

Policy Context and History of Model Development

The Head of Department in post in 1998 described the sequence of events leading to the development and implementation of the current allocation system. The Arts department concerned had used the informal assessment used by the previous HoD/S with some adjustments made to cover aspects such as higher demands driven by student numbers. The system was described as 'as hoc' and relied to a large degree on trust. Problems did occur in relation to administration work and 'bitter debate' here provided some of the impetus for a workload planning model.
The model developed covered the usual categories of teaching, research and administration, but also included enterprise, marking (of all types of work) and supervision. The premises behind the model were: that it was not to be mathematically precise, but used to make the loads roughly equitable, and transparent, and that the categories would remain separate so that an overall profile rating of the work could be seen, as a set of figures rather than just an overall summary figure. This was felt to be helpful as it retained visibility of the area where high loading was occurring. It was expected that the model would be reviewed and refined. A Workload Committee evaluated the proposals and analysed the spread of results for individuals and some imbalances were at this stage corrected and adjustments made. Their proposals then went to the Departmental Board and were approved.

The creation of larger schools soon after within the university, and the appointment of the HoD/S involved in the above model development as the new Head of school demanded the inclusion within the model of other subject areas. The size of school at this stage was about thirty-five to forty academics. A workload working group was established, including representation from: HoS, Deputy HoS, the three Directors of Subject Groups, and the School’s Research Representative. The group made some adjustments to the earlier model, and presented it to the School Executive. The model was implemented with few problems, however by 2001 the University itself was introducing a new workload-balancing model and the school offered to pioneer it. More work was done trialling the new software and inputting loads in to the new model. Sessions were held to introduce staff to the model. Staff were provided with a template for their work that they had to fill in. This model, which is still in operation, provides an overall average for staff and individuals are given a figure that shows how they compare to that average, this is colour coded. Green shows loads significantly below average, whilst red shows work rather higher that average levels for the school. In brief the University model covers: the various administrative tasks under three categories, each group having a different allocation depending on the relative load of the role, ranging from 5-30 points, University defined posts such as HoS and Associate Head of School (Teaching) have also designated points, 50 and 30 respectively. Teaching modules take the credit value and number of students into account to create the number of workload units. Supervision of undergraduate and
postgraduate student again works from a scale and research follows the bandings aligned with RAE 2001 bandings for example 50 points for a 5 RAE band.

The model was conceived as a managerial tool to make adjustments, but in those first two years this never occurred, as the process usually meant that the early discussions and agreements had been made in the Workload Committee with the Directors of Subject Groups working out their teaching programmes and liaising with staff and then just inputting the material into the model. At this stage there were some ‘outliers’, generally in growth areas, and the spread of loads was seen as wide. Peer pressure meant at this stage that staff in the green were more concerned to raise their loads than those in red to complain, further as nearly all staff were research active there was little tension between teaching and research, only one complaint was received. However an area that caused more controversy was that the figure of 100 for workloads was not an absolute, but worked to school averages, so that staff could be above or below it and it could actually inflate over the years to reflect the changing work entered into the model.

Development Process
The current HoS described how the school had grown substantially and the comprehensive model as described above is still in operation. Little modification had been done to the model, except the adding in of a few roles and tweaking some areas. It was expected that the area of Academic Enterprise would need to be more actively introduced into the model as this area moved more fully into the school’s work. Staff could enter into competitive bidding every three years for a sabbatical. New staff had no set reduction in their teaching, but it was argued that unless they were a replacement post they would need to develop their own new modules and the approval process for this would take about a year, thus allowing preparation time. The HoS also felt that Directors of Subject Group would try to be accommodating. Provision was made for studying towards a PG Cert, and generally staff got at least one day a week to devote to research, and the HoS did not feel that staff were having problems getting the time to do research. Early career researchers could get the same weighting for research as Professors or Senior lecturers if their RAE profile was high enough.
Fine Tuning

The cycle of activity started with meetings in May to review the previous year’s allocations and those outliers that might need adjustment. These meetings included the Directors of Subject Groups who reviewed the staffing requirements to deliver teaching, and much of the administrative work that was tied to teaching, such as programme leaders. Later in July student choices for their optional modules had been made and this helped to firm up on most of the fulltime teaching allocation. By late August a spreadsheet had been prepared and the Director of Subject Groups had had consultations with staff and made adjustments to the allocations. In early October this was circulated generally and any anomalies flagged up.

Peaks of high workload did occur, and this obviously varied depending on work profiles, but registration, and assessment procedures such as exam boards as well as ‘resit’ examinations did cause some strain on loads. However as long as staff were not consistently over the norm this was not felt to be problematic, but it was anticipated that when tight deadlines were in sight, and for ambitious staff, evening or weekend work would be called for. Staff interviewed said that roughly three evenings a week some work would be needed, but that the first year after appointment was especially difficult in preparing all the new lecture material. The actual median for workloads had reduced this year to the level of 120. One of the problems of new roles was that these peaks of activity often occurred unexpectedly and that immediate priorities meant that research commitments were worked on only after all the teaching and administrative work was completed. The tensions between the work demands could be difficult to manage. However it was felt that there was more awareness from the University in the last few years of the need to maintain a work life balance.

Transparency and Equity

The HoS felt that the model worked well with few people making comparisons, aided by the fact that nearly all staff were research active. Transparency of the model was interesting in that it allowed staff to see the distribution of roles across staff and between the subjects. However one staff member seen felt that although the model was transparent the decisions behind the model were ‘opaque’, an improvement would be some individual feedback on the calculation for the workload given. The
issue was mentioned of certain staff taking on heavy or unpopular roles and those who seem inept at certain tasks avoiding them.

**Review**

Some problems that were flagged up were that the model was a little mechanistic in its accounting and that, although it revealed some differences in load, these were not tuned sufficiently and perhaps an overhaul was needed to account for the many changes, and new initiatives brought in from the University, that had impacted on much of the administrative work. This had created problems and a disjuncture between the model and the lived reality. Another issue was felt to a cultural one of values, where the value or recognition given to certain roles such as administrative work was not acknowledged, but it was felt that HERA might change this.

Looking at a model from a longitudinal perspective has in this instance revealed the need for any given model to be updated to accommodate changes, University wide or school, such as in the loads of particular roles and the extra areas that develop. The review at university level might not need to be very frequent perhaps on a five yearly basis, but the unit review might need some refreshing within the span of each new HoD/S's term. Review of individuals should occur yearly with regular monitoring for some such as new staff, and needs to foster sensitivity to general workload / role issues. For example long term tendencies for particular members of staff to have high loads, or particular types of staff to be taking on particular types of work, or within a school for staff within a particular subject to be consistently taking on certain roles. Perhaps when staff have been operating for a number of years consistently above the mean for the academic unit then a review procedure could be triggered. This would probably involve a very small number of cases, but it could help to raise awareness about staff who for a number of reasons attract large workloads. Openness and discussion about these issues should help with perceptions on equity that a model itself cannot deliver.

A danger with a comprehensive model seems to be overdependence on the technical aspect and less emphasis on the consultation and review aspects. A model might be perfectly equitable, but staff need to have some idea of how decisions are made and what impact their representations have had to their overall allocation.
Looking back at the previous section 12.5, this longitudinal case highlights the importance of the fine-tuning aspect discussed there, but interestingly the benefits possibly derived from the act of collectively creating a model that can be lost if those social dimensions are neglected and there is not a collective, dynamic ownership of the system.

12.7 Summary / Link

The review of the case studies and the longitudinal study has served to support the model's proposals and the relationships between policy, model development, and fine tuning with perceptions on equity and trust. Referring back to the tenets of Pragmatic Critical Realism (Johnson P and Duberley J 2000) the 'practical adequacy' (p187) of the model has been tested. However although the integrated model developed shows the need for proposals to be incorporated from staff to feed back up the organisational levels, there would be benefit in practice from greater emphasis on this as an ongoing adaptive process, for both the social and technical aspects.
13 Summary

13.1 Background

The research has looked at the issue of workload allocation that initially presented itself as an area for enquiry. The aim was to identify the variety of practices used, the benefits and problems associated with them in relation to other contextual factors. It was hoped that through this process potential approaches could be identified that would help promote more equitable loads for individuals as well as providing synergies for institutions.

The findings of large surveys on staff working and stress levels provided some of the impetus for the study and early enquiry showed that there was little consistency in the methods used to allocate work nor little theoretical work to help understand this aspect of resource allocation. So the study aimed to first get some idea of the range of practices employed and to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches. In doing this account had to be taken of the tensions between various aspects, such as individual against organisational needs, and feelings on academic autonomy versus managerialism and bureaucracy. Other aspects that required consideration were the contextual factors surrounding the universities and this affected choices made about the sample. Further the technical aspect of WLA seemed to operate within a complex set of social relations, which also needed researching.

A literature synthesis was done to get some greater insights into these issues. This covered: the reports on workloads and stress, aspects such as human resource allocation, the context of higher education and leadership within it, and areas such as research on factors influencing communication and trust. The synthesis revealed that although many aspects surrounding workloads have been researched intensively the actual specific issue of the management of academic work loads as a process is a more neglected area. Overall there was not a clear proposition to test, however the literature served to sensitise the researcher to a wide range of issues that might emerge from the fieldwork. For example the findings of the synthesis had implications for the
methodology adopted such as in the need for an approach that allowed for theory building rather than the more traditional theory testing approach.

13.2 Methodology

Consideration was thus given to the methodological approach working through the various ontological and epistemological considerations. The theoretical perspective of Pragmatic Critical Realism (Johnson P and Duberley J 2000) was felt most appropriate and informed the approach taken. It accepts that there is a real world, but that it can only be seen through partial perspectives. This approach argues that all knowledge is socially constructed, but would hold that the veracity of theories and cognitive systems can be evaluated through their ‘practical adequacy’ (Johnson P and Duberley J 2000)(p187). This research then used this principle later to evaluate the veracity of the emergent theories and models.

Having reviewed the various alternative ways of analysing qualitative material, Grounded Theory (Glaser B and Strauss A 1967) was chosen as being an appropriate methodology to such a complex social issue, founded on multiple perspectives on a real world with an emphasis on theory building. It involves inductively building up theory through comparisons of the same event or process, but in different situations, with findings emerging progressively through the various analyses. Within this a case study framework seemed the most fitting way to capture the interaction between university and department/school level rather than interviewing discreet individuals, and with interviews the best method to capture the rich material. In order to strengthen the research approach it was felt that it would be helpful to compare these practical findings with related theoretical works as described in Soft Systems theory (Checkland P 1993). Further to create a focus in the study, in line with Checkland’s theories (1993), it was useful to identify the particular Weltanschauung, or world view. This could be individual staff members, university leaders, heads of departments or schools (HoD/S), union representatives and so on. As the study was involved with the interfaces between individuals, departments and university the most appropriate main perspective was chosen to be HoD/S.

Interviews were carried out in eight universities; these were not randomly selected, but chosen to gain a wide picture across the sector, so that variety in size,
geographical location and type of university grouping was taken into account. In order to get a broad view of the process the interviews were designed to cover a range of staff at each university. In each two lecturers and their heads of department were interviewed as well as a senior staff member, and representatives from Personnel and the staff union body. Two non-educational, but knowledge intensive, organisations were also studied to see alternative practices and to help gain greater insights, through comparisons, with the HE sector. A semi-structured questionnaire was assembled to cover three main areas of university, academic unit and individual level. In line with the aims of Grounded Theory (Strauss A and Corbin J 1990) (p180) this worked as a provisional guide only and was not used to direct or limit the process of investigating workload allocation. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and then coded using NVivo following a simplification of the general procedures set out by Strauss and Corbin (1990). This involved the comparing of phenomena leading to groupings under general category names (open coding). This selection was based on their theoretical relevance because of their repeated presence or notable absence when comparing across all the interviews (p177).

After completion of the coding individual case analyses were written. An analytical framework for the cases was drawn from the open coding categories and properties, which were progressively reviewed and simplified through the practical process of writing up the first two cases. Following on from this a cross case analysis was carried out looking at these individual categories, such as equity, across all the cases. From this data a framework was developed of the contexts, actions and consequences of each major category. This was part of axial coding where the relationships and connections between nodes are analysed. Decision Explorer software (Ackermann F et al. 1996) was then used for cognitive mapping to help show the interactions between the various phenomena in a visual representation. The software allowed various different views to be seen in a variety of maps. One constant aspect seen was the broad split, and dynamic relationship, between more 'technical' factors, such as the calculation and allocation of workloads, and 'social' factors, such as trust and equity. Following on from this an initial discussion of findings was done comparing across the universities contexts and allocation processes.
13.3 Field work Findings

Initial fieldwork findings revealed that there are a variety of allocation practices within, as well as across universities. The contextual factors such as the differences between geographical location, grouping, and size of university had little impact on the results, the only significant one being the need to measure teaching contact in hours in the post 1992 universities as result of their employment contract. However, size of department did have a bearing on the model used, with discipline having only a small possible impact, with the science subjects slightly more inclined to use comprehensive models. The widespread belief in need for particularised systems for each discipline was challenged by the findings that showed a spread of approaches across the disciplines. There was wide agreement on principles such equity and transparency. However, few members of staff were aware of university level policy on WLA practices. Three main approaches to workload allocation were identified:

- Informal systems relying on the HoD/S to share out work taking into account preferences, specialisms and competence issues.
- Partial approaches that put only some aspects of the work into a model.
- Comprehensive models that included all the main work types, of research teaching and administration, in their models.

At a lecturer level there was a suspicion about change and a belief in work overload, with the strongest objections directed mostly to the administrative aspect. When workloads were very high teaching commitment were met first, but junior staff often had worries on efficiency and quality. There was strong motivation to do research, but high loads often meant working in the evenings and weekends. There was a strong ethos about academic autonomy and, in contrast with the non-educational organisations, a disinclination to use systems that might measure time in detail, and a feeling that hour-based models did not represent real time. Generally compared with the non-educational organisations academic case studies placed less effort on planning workflows and monitoring workloads.

Using Soft Systems theory (Checkland P 1993), that advocates cycling between theory and practice, these initial findings were enthused by a second more focused literature search that helped inform the fieldwork findings. From these an integrated
model was developed that incorporated findings on both the social and technical aspects of the workload allocation and their dynamic relationship, incorporating the organisation level, the Head, staff and their outputs. This is a subtle approach that requires the elements to work together to achieve a balance. Although the following factors where not seen working altogether in any one place the contention is that an idealised model for workload allocation would include the following bullet points, which seem to be both desirable in theory and feasible in practice. It is recognised that in a small unit, with a Head working hard to balance resources fairly against needs, an informal model could provide an equitable distribution of work. However the observed trend was towards larger academic units and, further, the more positive outcomes were from the comprehensive models, although to sustain these a dialogue and consensus about the model, as well as fine-tuning to individuals, needs to continue.

Thus, at its simplest it is suggested that the following elements would more effectively allow equitable workload allocation to be achieved and facilitate greater understanding of the process (see too figure 12 above). Although these work to support comprehensive models the principles involved can be used for any of the systems adopted. However it needs also to be noted that the very particular needs of each context are stressed with an emphasis on local adaptation. The suggested elements are:

- University wide policy and general framework model to meet agreed WLA criteria.
- Consultative local tuning of general framework model to fit departments / schools (loop process), ideally as a periodic review process. Reasonable reference load for the unit agreed upon.
- Integration of all work areas into models/assessment - including research
- Potential for feedback from staff to university model (loop process)
- Fine-tuning by HoD/S, or their representative, to fit individuals (HoD/S to retain responsibility for overall balancing)
- Informal regular monitoring of loads - and individual response to stress, with potential for review and assistance with longer-term problems.
- Training of HoD/S to support these systems
- Refinement of existing teaching allocations - management of peak periods, role stability
- Encouragement of staff to think about / negotiate the balance of their activities.

This integrated model was then related back to the case study data, in line with the principles of Pragmatic Critical Realism (Johnson P and Duberley J 2000). This concerned looking at aspects such as the technical model type, as well as the social processes involved, such as consultation and fine-tuning, in relation to outcome perceptions on transparency, equity and trust. Revisiting the case study material, through this perspective, revealed the importance of the social aspect to beliefs on equity, no matter which model type was used, although comprehensive models did seem to have somewhat better perceptions on equity (57%) compared to the informal model (40%). This might be due to the consultation processes typically involved throughout the academic unit in developing the model. The question then arose about what would happen in the longer term as the majority of the comprehensive models were of fairly recent development and much experimentation was occurring. So in order to investigate this further a case study was pursued that had initially been developed quite a few years earlier using many of the features in the proposed model. Through this longitudinal work two particular areas were highlighted, firstly: the need to review technical aspects of the model to accommodate contextual changes, and secondly, as there seemed to be some deterioration in the fine-tuning aspects, the importance of maintaining the agreement through the social dimensions also. Through this process the initial view of the objectives of workload allocation, namely to equitably distribute work in a way that endeavours to align university and individual aspirations, has been enhanced. It is now clear that in addition effective, ongoing, consultation, leading to a positive climate, is also important.

Building from this summary, the next chapter draws overall conclusions.
14 Conclusions

The concluding chapter will now discuss contributions to knowledge, limitations in the research, and recommendation for future work.

14.1 Contributions

14.1.1 Contribution to Theory

The contribution to theory occurs on several fronts, in brief classifying the systems and also providing an idealised integrated model for practice. The area of workload allocation itself has been relatively neglected and this appears to be an original contribution to the area drawing together fieldwork findings with related theoretical studies. The study demonstrated that a wide variety of workload allocation models are being used both across and within universities. Further those seen could be classified into informal, partial and comprehensives systems. Although this was seen to work as a continuum, particular characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of each of these systems can be seen around in each broad type (figure 1). Another finding following on from this was that the different models were not discipline specific (figure 8), and this has implications for the development of broad guidelines for universities. However larger units tended to adopt comprehensive models (table 15), and roughly half the sample were experimenting with new models or aspects of them.

The study was theory building in its very nature and from the Grounded Theory approach an idealised integrated model (figure 12) has been constructed that shows a dynamic pattern of activities and relationships between the three levels of university, academic unit and individual that works through both technical and social dimensions. The theoretical contention is that both of these latter aspects require ongoing attention in order to maximise equity, and the perception of it, in the allocation process. From a management viewpoint the importance of consultation, regardless of model type, to perceptions on equity was shown. The study suggests that there needs to be a recognition that this is a dynamic process, not just a ‘one off’ development, but rather an ongoing process recognising changing needs at individual, unit and university levels. Further factors, such as the size of the academic unit, may influence the choice
of model to be used, however in order for equity to occur all the work areas need to be accommodated in the assessment. At present certain aspects, such as research, were often happening outside of ‘office hours’.

From a management viewpoint the research has also highlighted the need for university strategies and policy to be both sensitive to operational issues in WLA and also communicated effectively. This aspect can be related to the dynamic interaction between values and operations across the various levels of the university that Becher and Kogan (1992) propose in their model of higher education. The contribution here has been to illustrate problems that can occur when this dynamic is not working effectively. For example problems occur when the implications of central university strategies are not fully understood in relation to workload allocation, such as when research becomes part of a strong strategic aim without discussion about how this research work might be incorporated within workloads or when mergers occur between institutions without considering the problems of allocating work to staff on different contracts. The indications from the research is that policy on workload allocation is often not working down through the organisation and that this kind of separation between the various levels in the universities can have negative effects, not just on workload allocation processes, but on perceptions of staff and their trust in higher organisational levels (see Table 16).

14.1.2 Contribution to Practice

Through comparison with non-educational organisations’ methods of allocating work, the importance of certain aspects of higher education culture has been shown, such the strong disinclination on all sides to use systems that accurately record work activities and the desire to operate autonomously. However the research has shown the need for monitoring work levels such as at peak times and for more junior staff and some of the practices used in these non-educational organisations might be usefully employed at these crucial periods. Further the integrated model developed, that shows the subtle balance between the technical and social aspects of workload allocation, might be of interest to these other professionals.

This research has also shown the importance of interaction between all levels of the university to avoid suspicion and distrust. It has shown what normally occurs at
university level in relation to policy on WLA, and the lack, often, both of a dialogue in creating policy and the subsequent dissemination of it. Further policy requirements, such as for equity and transparency, often do not actually work through some of the more difficult implications. The research contribution has been to reveal a need for HoD/S training sessions, covering amongst other things, the technical and social aspects of WLA. The research showed that little help has been given to heads in this area, meaning that they often simply adopt old methods. Training, then, could help HoD/S prepare for some of the dilemmas that they will face, such as the natural inclination to give amenable overworked staff the extra new task that has arisen. A framework model could be provided to provide guidance on aspects such as the use of units of measure and the calculation of weightings.

The research has also contributed to practice by describing the range of model types used. Such a classification can be of use to HoD/S in clarifying where their system fits in and an aid in working to mitigate the problems that can be associated with it. However it cannot give a blue print solution nor promise equity or transparency, as ultimately this depends on individuals. Another contribution that works as advice to HoD/S relates to the transparency of operations. This research has indicated that staff feel a real need to be aware of reasons behind decisions not just the decisions themselves. This area relies too on the training session advice described above.

Another practical approach this research has contributed to is in suggesting the need for some mechanism to detect staff that are over the years consistently working beyond the median for the academic unit. This was seen quite frequently in the case studies, and the reasons for it seemed diverse. However there seemed little detection of this issue at university level. Another practical contribution was to raise awareness of the problem of peak flows of work that often result from central scheduling in areas such as exam timetabling and exam boards. This research suggests that central university and the academic units need to strengthen their links in relation to WLA, and this involvement should lead to joint initiatives on these sorts of problems.

A contribution to practice has been to show that effort put into WLA systems (see table 17) has benefits in relation to equity and trust, and consequently that this area should not be ignored. For HoD/S the importance in practice of consulting with staff
in both the developing of a model and maintaining it has been shown. Feedback from the consultation could then be fed back to university level to inform areas such as future training and on guidance on general WLA frameworks. The research contributes to practice by showing that the WLA model itself might be usefully viewed as a dynamic, evolving, process rather than a fixed feature. It indicates that where greater involvement with staff has occurred perceptions on equity are higher (see table 17). In this way the fears of increasing managerialism can be reduced as solutions are consensually created. Further contributions as a result of these findings on equity and trust include a set of recommendations for practice, for example describing how after accommodating staff views the implementation process would involve a balance between the model and discretionary inputs from HoD/S to fine-tune to individuals. Such a dialogue would also assist with the informal bonds within the department, help HoD/S to monitor work whilst supporting staff, especially junior members, to manage their work better. The research showed how frequently a reassuring chat prevented, often overworked, staff feeling inadequate and underperforming. The more regular monitoring of loads that occurred in the non-educational organisations showed that this type of monitoring is both practical and helpful.

14.1.3 Contribution to Methodology
This research used Grounded Theory to generate a hypothesis, but whereas Grounded Theory (Glaser B and Strauss A 1967) would say that this theory should emerge from the fieldwork data alone, in this research it was felt useful to look at the initial findings from practice against other studies (see chapter 11) as advocated in Soft Systems theory (Checkland P 1993). This was done as it was felt that such a practice could provide greater insights into the issues than would result from a Grounded approach alone. So for example in relation to transparency the findings were that how this was defined varied considerably and that staff felt that decisions alone and not the reasoning behind them could hardly be called transparent. From a Grounded approach alone identifying the phenomenon would be sufficient, but looking at the theories about transparency increases our understanding and sensitivity to power relations in operation and the question of, who sees what, and the inequalities of the vision. Such a fusion of approaches helps to deepen understanding of the issues.
Another contribution springs from the use of Context, Actions, Consequences tables from the axial coding to create cognitive maps that show the links and the relationships between phenomena pictorially (see chapter 8). The contribution here has been to develop this approach that other researchers might find helpful as a way to show explicitly the connection between the case study data and the cognitive maps.

14.2 Limitations of Study and Recommendations for further work

Questions can be asked on how reliable the results are and the degree to which they can be generalised to other universities (Zeisel J 2006). This issue focuses on the nature of the data involved and the sample itself. As Yin (1989) explains this latter area relies on external validity (p44), where analytical generalisations are extended beyond the immediate cases studied.

On the issue of reliability the nature of the data is of a qualitative nature, working within an interpretative paradigm (Cassell C and Symon G 1994), which it has been argued is suited to studies that require depth and detail (Patton M 2002). However to test the reliability in this area another investigator could do the same study again, replicating it using well documented procedures, to test out the findings (Yin R 1989). Internal validity relates to the establishing of the causal relationships from the data (p42). However this research was not focused on causal relationships. Rather it relies on the other aspect of internal validity, that of inference from the interview material and the need to consider other explanations for the findings. Yin (1989) describes how pattern-matching logic (p113) can be used in an iterative process of explanation building in case study research. This process of revision and refinement through comparisons between the cases was used in the study. However another way to widen understanding of the issue would be to go back to the methodological choices and use some different techniques, for example observation of participants that could still work within the overall interpretative phenomenological approach. Alternatively a positivist approach could be adopted, such as postal questionnaires and might provide different insights and more quantifiable results, although this method would be unlikely to get the depth of understanding it could reach a wider sample.

On the generalisability from the sample itself, it can be noted that the results have been well received when presented, but to reach some firmer conclusions about this
area it would be essential to do more case studies to see if the findings were replicated and that the pattern of models and their associated strengths and weaknesses remained constant, and to come to greater understanding of the contextual factors involved. As Strauss and Corbin (1990) note the researcher must not leap from substantive theory, that is the study of a phenomenon in a particular context, to formal theory, the study in many different contexts (p174). This research is limited in its findings to the higher education context in the UK (albeit including some initial findings from Australia) and, for example, could not be extended to say a European situation.

Within that limited context it would also be interesting to follow some of the cases that were in the process of developing a new system and see if the findings from the longitudinal case study on the importance of longer term maintenance of social processes were replicated. If more cases were involved of a similar nature and they showed little variability, and were replicable from the findings of this study, then the reliability would be higher and this would help with generalisability.

Another aspect that has already been discussed is the problem of the selection of case studies within institutions. An improvement on the present study would be to use a mechanism to select across a university rather than allowing them to make that choice, as occurred for pragmatic reasons in this research. However a study could be done attempting to reach a different sample, looking at old established intuitions and then at more recently founded universities, to see what new insights this could have for the model. Findings from this could also inform the level of generalisability of the research.

Following on from these studies work could be done actually implementing and testing the integrated socio-technical model, probably initially within a few academic units, using for example a network of university partners. Findings could inform the process and allow for the refinement of it, for example the accommodation of other pertinent contextual factors. 6

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6 HEFCE have recently funded a two-year study, on which this researcher will work, that involves twelve university partners who will work on this issue together through a series of workshops and produce information sheets to help disseminate their work more widely to the sector.
The study uncovered many diverse elements many of which could not be developed more deeply within the research. There would be benefit in pursuing these, both to help inform WLA itself, and also as topics in their own right. For example, research could focus on the relationships between gender and workloads, in both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. The issue of the different forms of contract being used in some units simultaneously, due to mergers, is another area that warrants some investigation. Another area that might benefit from further research is into the linkage between WLA and other systems such as staff appraisals, activity costing or Transparency Review within universities, as cases showed that they were not generally linked at present. This was not because of any lack of acceptance that it would make sense, but rather was a result of the sheer impossibility of aggregating data and synchronising activities given the devolved and idiosyncratic approach taken to WLA. The implication is however, that if a university can achieve some broad consistency in its approach to WLA then these linkages become much more feasible. This would then enable better strategic choices to be made, so alleviating some of the tensions flowing from the turbulent HE environment.

14.3 Final Words

Most universities will be taking some of the actions proposed in the integrated model and text, but to achieve the full effect, it is proposed, would demand action on all fronts. In this way more equitable workloads can be achieved, and the fit between organisational needs and staff interests can be improved. In summary, this suggests that in order to achieve equitable and effective workload allocation practices requires a balance between the technical and social dimensions, dealt with appropriately at all levels within a university.

Workload allocation could be seen as a low level operational issue, but given the centrality of staff to the success of universities, it is in fact a major strategic process, which if not well done can undermine the trust and collegiality and potentially the success of the organisation. If effectively and authentically handled universities can create strong socio-temporal contracts with their staff that embody and support the vision of the university.
References


Checkland P (1993). *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice*. Chichester, John Wiley and Sons Ltd.


HEFCE (2003 (revised 2004)). HEFCE Strategic Plan 2003-08. Swindon, HEFCE.

HEFCE (2006a). Staff Employed at HEFCE Funded HEIs: Trends and Profiles. Swindon, HEFCE.

HEFCE (2006b). TRAC for teaching. Swindon, HEFCE.


Appendix 1: Semi-structured Questionnaires

Prompts / Questions: Lecturer Level

Generic

What is the department? Number of academics? Length of service?

Knowledge of University policies or codes of practice on workload allocation

What is the normal allocation process in the department? Who, what and when? Unit of measurement? Changes over the years? How is Balance achieved?

RAE effect? Is space/slack for research or creative thinking provided in blocks or small slices?

Balance period a longer / shorter time frame for adjustment? Adaptations to the provision – new courses/modules/- new staff?-sabbaticals/ study leave scheme?

Is the process reviewed and monitored to correct imbalances and identify problem areas such as stress?

How transparent is the process generally?

How do you feel about the process- effectiveness- the benefits- the problems- improvements?

Own Workload.

Is their work allocation generally typical or representative in terms of quantity and quality within the dept. Roughly how would they describe it?

Best use of skills- Challenge and variety, development. Perceptions of competence (peer review and student feedback on quality).

Do you have a sense of control and autonomy to carry out job the way they wish.- allowing for syllabus constraints?

How do you balance competing demands - (e.g. compromise /prioritise? Lower standards? Give up? Work longer hours?). Perception of coping and Stress?

Experience role conflict/ambiguity?

What is found satisfying (motivating) about the work?

Work Relationships
Perceptions of Line Manager - Consultation process - communication on decisions
Feedback mechanisms - Perceptions of fairness and trust

Does the appraisal process link to the WLA?

Experience of any dispute - how resolved

Organisational Culture

Perceptions of senior management - the management style in relation to WLA
Realistic view of work levels? Trust in SM - decisions, strategy. Communications -
info up and down org.

Does the allocation of types of work have implications generally for promotion?

Perceptions on University environment turbulence, or restructuring? - Initiatives -
  Transparency review? Centralised timetabling? Full Economic Costing?
  Training/development schemes? Surveys?

To what degree do your personal goals align with those of the University values?

Any other points?
Head of Department/School level.

Generic

What is the department? Number of academics? Length of service?

Knowledge of University policies or codes of practice on workload allocation

What is the normal allocation process in the department? Who, what and when? Unit of measurement? Changes over the years? How Balance achieved?

RAE effect? Is space/ slack for research or creative thinking provided in blocks or small slices?

Balance period a longer / shorter time frame for adjustment? Adaptations to the provision – new courses/modules? - new staff? - sabbaticals/ study leave scheme?

Is the process reviewed and monitored to correct imbalances and identify problem areas such as stress?

How transparent is the process generally?

How do you feel about the process- effectiveness- the benefits- the problems-improvements?

W.L.A. and Work Relationships

How did they develop or learn the system that they are using? Modifications?

Perceptions of competence in doing the WLA and leverage in staff performance?

Is allocation linked to appraisal? Does it link to the general goals or mission of the dept.

Degree of consultation with staff Perceptions of fairness - Trust - coping, communication of decisions- Opportunities for feedback or change.

Dispute resolutions – problems of staff overwork/ under perform. Problems with other staff.

HOD/S. Own Workload.

How is their own allocation decided upon? Roughly of what does their role comprise?

Advocate for staff or channel for SMT strategy?
How do you balance these competing demands. (e.g. prioritise? Lower standards? Give up? Work longer hours?). Delegating –how well does it work?

Sense of autonomy to carry out job the way they wish.

Perception of coping / stress (e.g. managing work/ home life/ general health). Space for creativity?

What is found satisfying (motivating) with the work? (e.g. Extrinsic features= promotion. Intrinsic features=intellectual, job itself).

HOD/S. Organisational Culture

Perceptions on senior management- interest? Support? Realistic view? management style- Trust- Communications info up and down the org.

Problems aligning University goals with their departments or their own personal goals.

Values - promotion criteria? Does WLA have implications here?.


Any other points?
Institution level: **Union**

**Generic**

**University policies or consistent principles** on work load allocation?

What are the various **approaches taken in departments/schools**? What factors influence these approaches? How is the **balance** achieved? Research and the RAE?

**Changes** over the last few years over the way allocation carried out? (e.g. change in direction of professional staff work to address Gov. demands rather than academic work).

Sense of staff **coping?** Work Life **balance?**
- Role conflict- competing demands responses?

How **transparent** is the process generally? Published?

Feelings about the process- effectiveness- the benefits- the problems- improvements?

**Work relationships**

Perceptions on **consultation** with staff - on **fairness** generally- on **Trust** - on. communication of decisions – on feedback mechanisms.

Is the **appraisal** process linked to the WLA?

**Dispute resolutions** – Sorts of problems that require AUT involvement in relation to WLA? Demands on probationary staff? Problems of staff overwork/ under perform

**Organisational Culture**

Perceptions on **senior management**- the management style- on **Trust** in them. Communication up and down the org.

Have there been university wide **surveys** in this area? What has been the response? Are there worries about detailed time controls?

Does the allocation of certain work types have implications for **promotion**?

What sort of issues are encountered aligning University goals in this area with their objectives. What do they see as their role?

Institution level: **Personnel**

**Generic**

**Policies or consistent principles** on work load allocation. Are they complied with?

What are the **various approaches taken within departments/schools**? What factors influence these approaches? How is the **balance achieved**? **Research RAE issues**? **Changes** over the last few.

What is the period that the **cycle** covers? (e.g. yearly (less) or 3 year period?). Debits and credits carry over?

What sense do you have of staff **coping**? - Work life balance issues? - Role conflict- **competing demands responses**?

How **transparent** is the process generally? – published?

How do they **feel** about the process generally? Its **effectiveness** – **Benefits**- specific problems **Improvements**?- **Monitor** and review function?

Perceptions on **satisfaction with WLA**?

**Work relationships within departments/schools.**

Perceptions on WLA in relation to –**consultation** – **fairness** – **Trust** - **communication of decisions** - **feedback** with staff over allocation.

Is the **appraisal** process linked to the WLA? Does WLA link to general **goals** of University / Department?

**Dispute resolutions** – Sorts of problems that require HR involvement in relation to WLA? Demands on probationary staff? Problems of staff overwork/ under perform

**Organisational Culture**

Perceptions on **senior management** - **the management style** -**Trust** in them - **Communication** –up and down the org.

Have there been **surveys** on workloads? What response has been made to the findings? AUT response?

**Promotion implications in WLA**? Are there tensions as a result? (e.g research emphasis and RAE versus admin/teaching prep).

What sort of issues do they encounter aligning University goals in this area with their objectives. What do they see as their role?

Other Points?
Senior staff: PVC / Dean

Generic

Policies or consistent principles on work load allocation. Are they complied with?

What are the various approaches? How is the balance achieved? Research and RAE? What factors influence these approaches? Changes over the last few years over the way allocation carried out?


What sense do you have of staff coping?
- Work life balance issues?
- Role conflict- competing demands responses?

Is the appraisal process linked to the WLA? Does WLA link to general goals of University / Department?

Dispute resolutions – Sorts of problems that require senior involvement in relation to WLA?

Own Work Load.

Own work load makeup – balance competing demands?

Perceptions on their - coping / stress - space for creative thought- Autonomy - Competence

What is satisfying about their work - what motivates them?

Organisational Culture

On balance how would they describe the management style - Trust-
Communications information up and down the organisation.

Have there been surveys on workloads? What response has been made to the findings? Strategy – precision worries/accounting bureaucracy. Role of union in discussions on WLA?

Does the allocation of certain work types have implications for promotion? Are there quality tensions as a result (e.g. research emphasis and RAE versus admin/teaching prep).

What sort of issues do they encounter aligning University goals in this area with their objectives.

Any other points?
## Appendix 2: Initial Coding Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allocation Process</strong></td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Common or diverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Ranging in degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disputes</td>
<td>degree experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>open or non-open process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Hour unit / FTE/Other. Accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility (including sabbaticals)</td>
<td>Range of flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Staff</td>
<td>Allowance made or not made in allocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Range in degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home working</td>
<td>Extensive or limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Code of Practice / Policy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Code known/operational or unknown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching</strong></td>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>New or stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Specialisms / Core Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Range of class size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td>RAE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Empirical / Non Empirical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bidding</td>
<td>Time allocated or not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Allocated/residual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administration</strong></td>
<td>Fit</td>
<td>Degree of match Work to Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Over/Light burden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Role / research / teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distribution Patterns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timesheets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Contracts</strong></td>
<td>Service length</td>
<td>New/Experienced staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>Prioritise / slog / lower standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Autonomous/Interference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Stable/Turbulent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management style</td>
<td>Collegial / managerial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication/ shared Values/Goals</td>
<td>Good / poor communication / sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>High / low trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Department/School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Systems</strong></td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full Economic Costing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appraisal</td>
<td>Linked to process or not linked to process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Availability of schemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Degree related to work types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Union</td>
<td>Degree of influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Framework agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 3: Criteria for Final Coding Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allocation Process</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Common or diverse methods across the University in allocation of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equity / Fairness</td>
<td>Relating to equity in methods and their implementation. HoD/S role in this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theories/Models</td>
<td>Theories of staff in relation to the process. WLA model development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timings</td>
<td>Relating to all the issues surrounding the timing of allocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disputes/Conflict</td>
<td>Problems that have increased possibly with the need for intervention by a third party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problems</td>
<td>Issues arising from the allocation process viewed as non optimal by some quarters. Also unaccounted for factors such as student’s emails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>The degree to which the process is seen as open, e.g. published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>The actual methods used to calculate workloads e.g. Hour unit / FTE/Other. Accuracy. Allowances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staffing / Balancing Roles and loads, including recruitment</td>
<td>Means by which the various roles are balanced out using more subjective judgements than in the method category. (Type or quantity aspect assessed). Staff recruitment issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility (including sabbaticals)</td>
<td>Means by which the model is adapted to cover a range of events such sickness, maternity leave and sabbaticals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Staff</td>
<td>The ways or degree to which the model accommodates new staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOD/S Role</td>
<td>The role of the HoD/S in forming strategy within the dept. on this issue and their role in implementing it. Including aspects such as HoD/S training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>The discussion between the allocator and staff on work allocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dept / Faculty Strategies</td>
<td>Relating to dept. strategies that impinge on the allocations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dept / Faculty. Environment</td>
<td>Relating to aspects of dept such as size (students, and staff), subject, RAE. History. Existing WLA model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home working</td>
<td>The influence of home working on the work allocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Code of Practice / Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Relating to a University code and the degree to which it is known and operational.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>The impact of taught work on the allocation e.g. New or stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>The impact of specialisms/core courses on the allocation. Issues of specialisms etc Professional org. requirements. Modes of delivery aspects. Online courses. Audit issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Student related issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship Activity</td>
<td>Work in relation to teaching scholarship.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>The impact of class size or. numbers of modules Involved in the allocation. Hours**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other teaching Staff/students</td>
<td>Impact of Part time staff or research students on Workloads.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and marking</td>
<td>Issues relating to marking exams or course work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>RAE</td>
<td>The effects of the RAE process on workload allocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Type of research undertaken in relation to its effect on WLA. E.g. empirical/non empirical.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidding / Grants</td>
<td>Implications of bidding and funding. The degree to which time is allocated for research bidding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>The degree to which time is dedicated to research activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Types</td>
<td>Quality audits: Marketing: Finance. The impact of administration on work loads. The ways that they are accounted for in the model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>Fit</td>
<td>The degree that work is matched to Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Hour or other measures. Over burden/Creative space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Issues relating to gender in the allocation of workloads. E.g Any specific roles more frequently allocated to either gender.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution Patterns</td>
<td>The effect of the different combinations of work types has on the overall load. Also aspects such as holidays and space for research Peaks and troughs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Factors</td>
<td>Possible help from administrative staff, or from the Faculty etc. IT factors. Library.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>The roles or duties undertaken and the effect of this in the overall workload. Open-ended roles. Part-time staff issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Activities/ Influences</td>
<td>Consultancy work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Contracts</td>
<td>Part time or sessional contracts</td>
<td>Covering issues such as hours or specific duties involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited contracts- Teach or research only.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Response</td>
<td>Service length / Age profiles</td>
<td>The impact of service length on the experience of work loads. E.g. New/Experienced staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour/relationships</td>
<td>Relating to responses to allocation system such as interaction of individuals, even aspects such as changing teaching methods. Home/Work balance. Motivation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Relating to aspects such as quality or efficiency. Including student assessment of teaching. Extra activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>The different responses of staff the high work loads e.g. Prioritise / slog / lower standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Relating to the areas found to give most satisfaction e.g. research/Teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrations</td>
<td>Areas that frustrated staff in their work situation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>The degree to which staff feel able to carry out their work to suit their own judgements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Internal and external aspects relating to the environment such as Stability/Turbulence, Niche, Reviews.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management style</td>
<td>Expressions of how the management team lead the University e.g. Collegial / managerial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Perceptions on the confidence in academic leaders in relation to issues such as strategies, priorities, motivation, information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Financial position of Uni.- impact of any changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>University strategies that are seen to impinge on the issue of WLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication / shared Values / Goals</td>
<td>Perceptions on information sharing within the org.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Relating to issues of trust within the Org and Depts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department/School</td>
<td>Relating to the Involvement of the HoD/S with Org.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### University Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Economic Costing / Activity costing/Transparency Review</th>
<th>Processes within the University in response to external directives.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review/Appraisal</td>
<td>Issues relating to the appraisal process and WLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Availability of schemes to support roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Issues of how advancement within the University is linked to various work types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Issues of WLA and Union responses. EB agreements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralised Timetabling</td>
<td>The ways in which this impacts on workloads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timesheets</td>
<td>Issues relating to detailed accounting of time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Publications from the Study.


*Current Practice in the Allocation of Academic Workloads.* Higher Education Quarterly Volume 61, No.4, October 2007, pp461-478