



**Ensuring, preparing & researching the  
HE workforce of the future:  
A perspective from the UK**

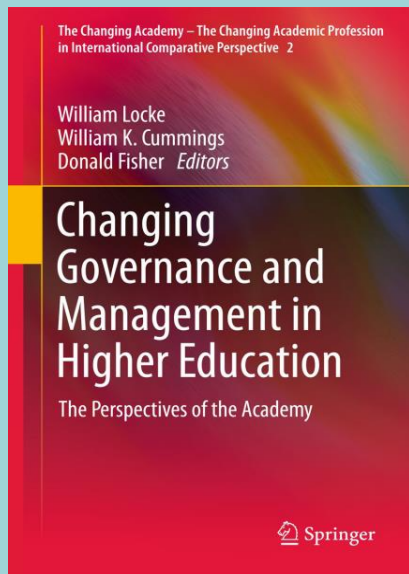
AHEIA / FBS / UCEA Conference, May 3, 2017

# **Ensuring, preparing and researching the HE workforce of the future: A perspective from the UK**

William Locke

Centre for Global Higher Education

UCL Institute of Education, University College London



AN ESRC & HEFCE INVESTMENT

*The future higher education workforce in locally and globally engaged HEIs*

- Some initial issues
- Significant recent shifts in the HE landscape
- Trends in staffing patterns and models in HE
- Particular trends in the UK data
- Themes emerging from our research & key challenges
- Key questions

“Successful universities and academic systems require career structures for the academic profession that permit a stable academic career, encourage the ‘best and brightest’ to join the profession, reward the most productive for their work, and weed out those who are unsuited for academic work. We have been struck by the dysfunctional nature of career structures in many countries – with disturbing negative trends ... Without a career structure that attracts quality, rewards productivity, and permits stability, universities will fail in their mission of high-quality teaching, innovative research, and building a ‘world-class’ reputation.”

(Altbach and Musselin 2008, p. 2)

“If academic life is to be an attractive future career choice for clever and dedicated people, then it is necessary to be able to show them a realistic description of what becoming an academic means, coupled with a career structure that meets the reality and expectations of an increasingly diversifying workforce.”

(Coates and Goedegebuure, 2012, p. 877)

# Some initial issues



- If staff, career structures – and, particularly, academic staff and academic career structures – are key to the success of universities and higher education, what are the implications of this?
- Are our career structures ‘fit for purpose’?
- Are the career prospects attractive to a new generation of academics?
- Do we provide honest and accurate information and advice about what HE offers in terms of careers?





Significant recent shifts  
in the HE landscape





- Difference and diversity
- The unbundling of university functions
- The physical and the virtual university
- Austerity and changing financial regimes
- Competition, rankings and the commodification of higher education
- Internationalisation (and its different forms) in response to globalisation
- Universities swimming against the wave of ‘populism’
  - e.g. ‘Brexit’ and higher education in the UK and beyond
- ‘The Metric Tide’: the quantitative evaluation of research and teaching



CYCLE HIRE

Bloomsbury  
British Museum

← FITZROVIA  
British Museum

⊕ Russell Square ↑  
The Brunswick



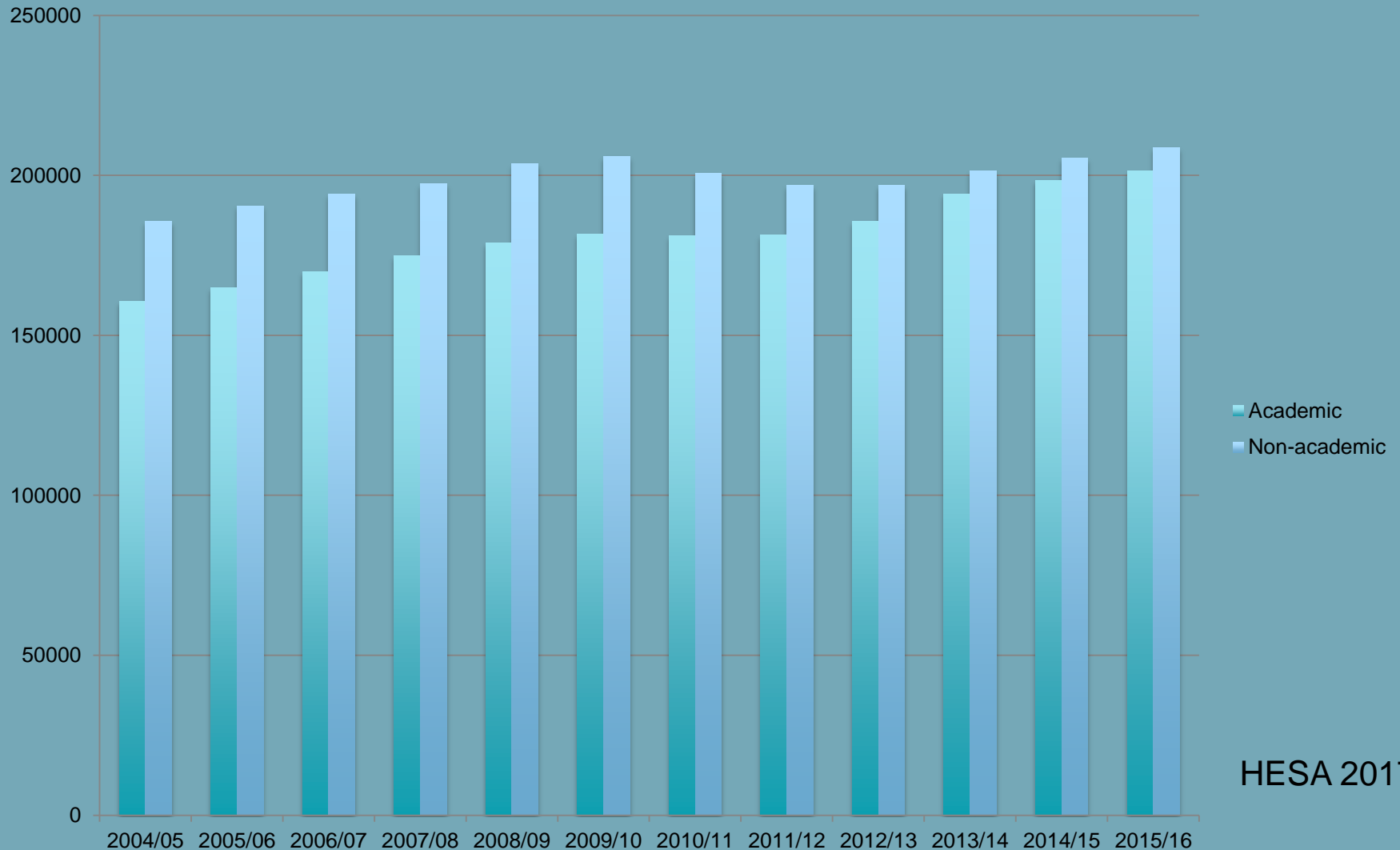
Trends in  
staffing  
patterns and  
models in HE

- Differentiation and diversification
- The ‘unbundling’ of academic work
- The academic/professional divide
- The growth of ‘contingent’ academics and ‘flexible’ workforce models
- The deteriorating experiences of ‘early career academics’
- Teaching-only contracts and roles
- Academics as ‘employees’ and a ‘workforce’, OR a ‘community of scholars’?



Particular trends in  
the UK data

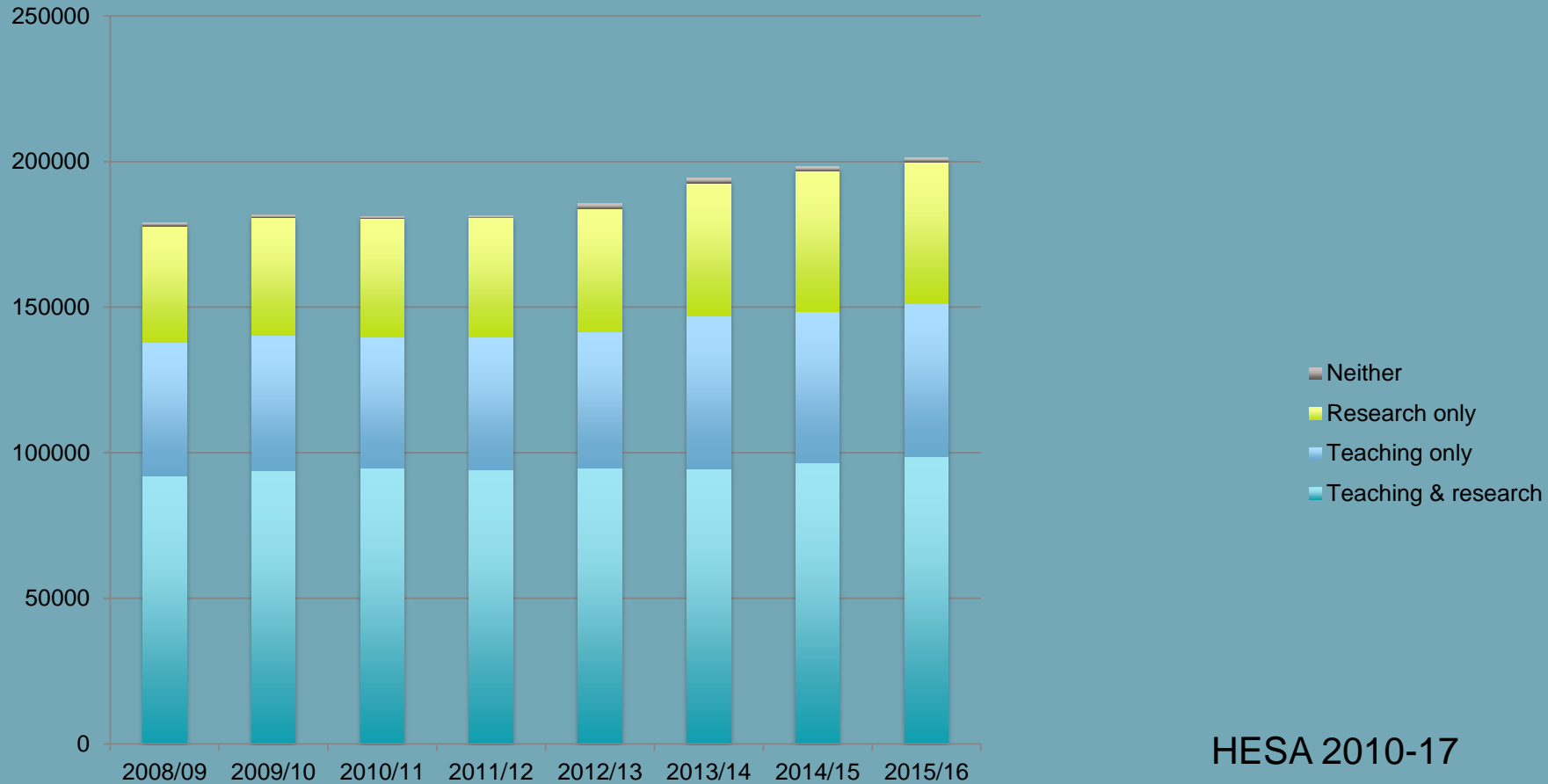
# Institute of Education Academic & 'non-academic' staff 2004/05 to 2015/16



HESA 2017

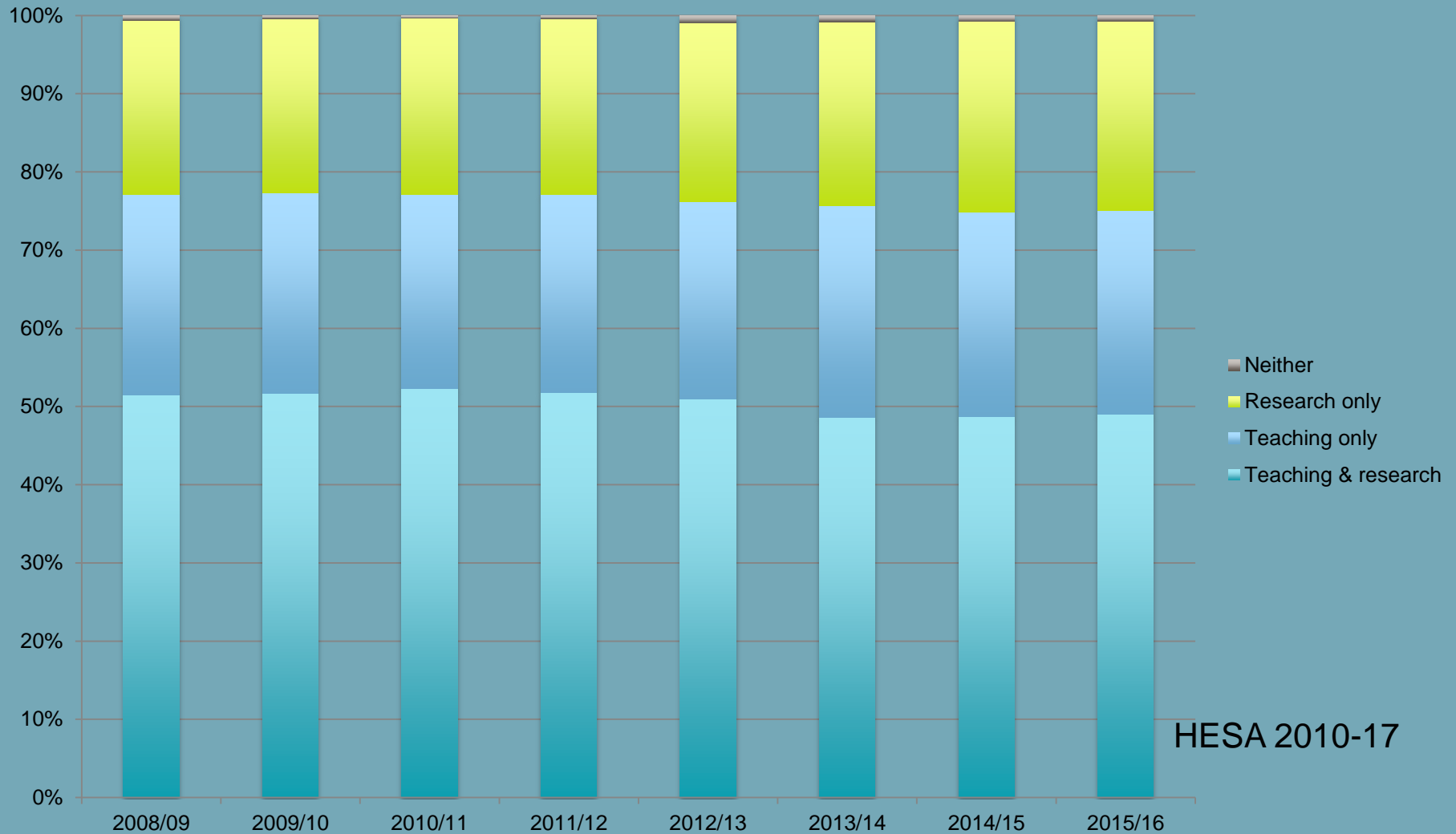


# Institute of Education Academic employment function 2008/09 to 2015/16 (numbers)



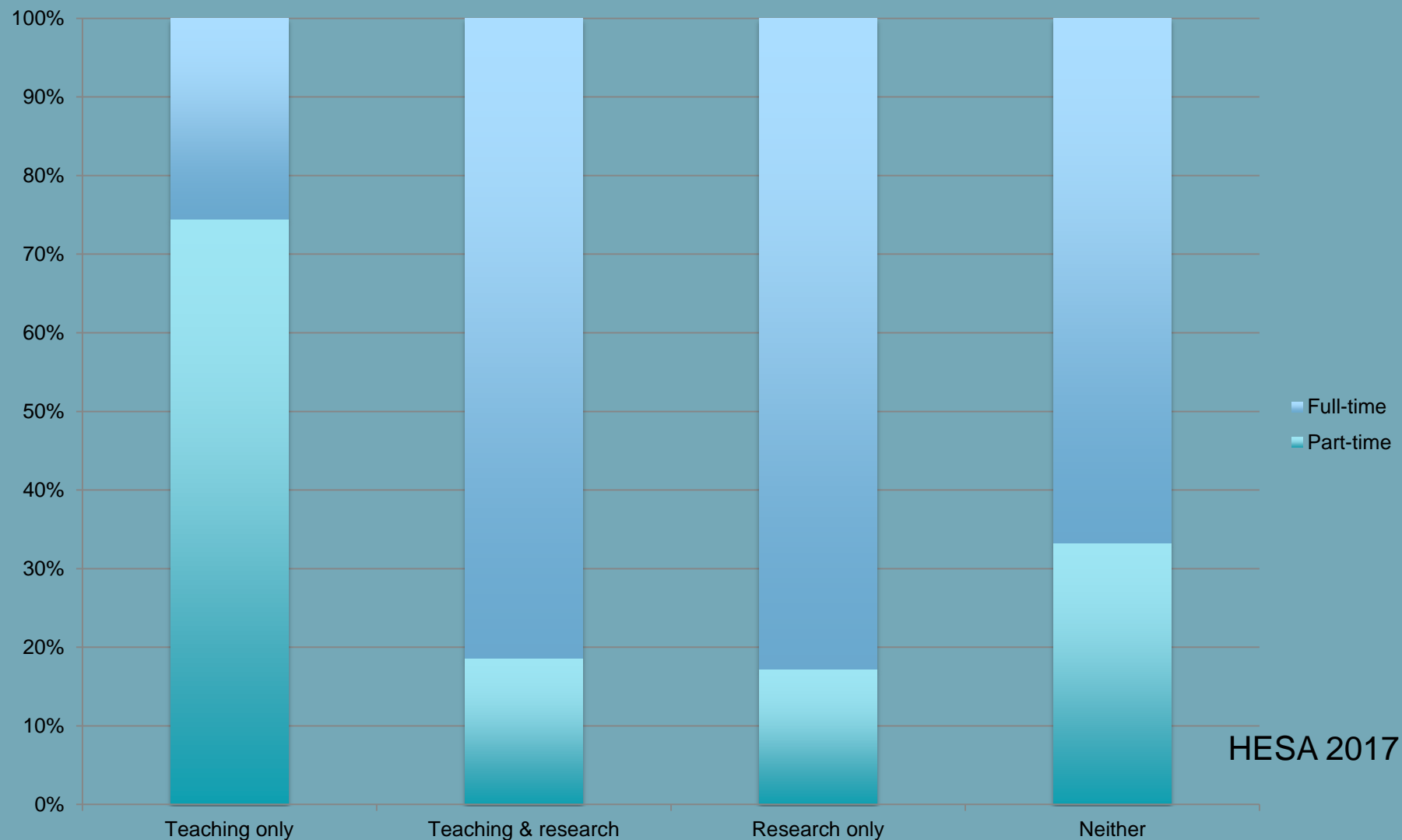
HESA 2010-17

# Institute of Education Academic employment function 2008/09 to 2015/16 (proportions)



HESA 2010-17

# Institute of Education Academic employment function by mode of employment, 2015/16



# Teaching-only and atypical academic staff by institution type, 2013/14



Institution type (number of HEIs)	<b>All academics (%)</b>	All teachers i.e. teaching- only & teaching & research (%)	Teaching-only contracts (%)	<b>Teaching- only as a proportion of all teachers in this type of HEI</b>	Atypical academic staff (%)
Russell Group universities (24)	77,485 (40%)	43,670 (30%)	11,960 (23%)	27%	37,820 (50%)
Other pre- 1992 universities (49)	50,434 (26%)	41,405 (28%)	20,740 (39%)	50%	14,795 (20%)
All other HEIs (88)	66,325 (34%)	61,980 (42%)	19,875 (38%)	32%	22,425 (30%)
<b>Total (161)</b>	<b>194,245 (100%)</b>	<b>147,055 (100%)</b>	<b>52,575 (100%)</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>75,040 (100%)</b>

# Themes emerging from our research & key challenges







- The changing parameters of academic work
- Career trajectories and pathways
- Recovering time and psychological space
- Differentiation and the need for individual development and support
- The redefinition of the ‘early career researcher/academic’

# Some challenges for staff



- Trying to 'do it all'
- Workloads (and particularly part-time staff)
- CPD opportunities valued by academic staff
- Opportunities for career progression
- Pressure to measure teaching
- Importance of line management

- Understanding the impact of changes in the workforce and staffing models on teaching and research quality
- Ensuring that organisational changes and shifts in resource allocation lead to greater efficiency, productivity and effectiveness
- Reducing the friction – and creating greater complementarity – between teaching and research
- Re-establishing the psychological contract within universities



A vibrant, sunlit park scene. In the foreground, a green lawn is dotted with numerous pigeons. A low, curved hedge runs across the middle ground. Behind it, several people are sitting on black park benches. A small, white, tiered fountain is visible on the right side. The background is filled with large, leafy green trees and a white building with arched windows. Three black lampposts are scattered throughout the park. A large, semi-transparent red rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "Key questions" in white.

Key questions

## Do our career structures...

- encourage the 'best and brightest' to join?
- reward the most productive for their work?
- weed out those who are unsuited for the work?
- permit a sustainable career?
- meet the reality and expectations of an increasingly diversifying workforce?



Will there be:

- equal opportunities for different groups of academics and professional staff?
- parity between different routes into academia?
- the conditions for higher efficiency and productivity, better decision-making, increased support for academic work, and improved resources and facilities?
- the means for monitoring and evaluation that distinguish and enhance quality rather than mainly reflect prestige and reputation?
- a revived sense of the social and civic purposes of higher education as a public benefit as well as a private (and individual) good?

- Rethinking academic work and careers
- Achieving greater parity in the reward and recognition of academic work
- Enhancing professionalism

*Thanks for  
listening*



- Altbach, P. G. and Musselin, C. (2008) 'The Worst Academic Careers – Worldwide'. *Inside Higher Education*, 15 September 2008 [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2008/09/15/altbach#sthash.NGgtMdLg.dpbs>
- Coates, H. and Goedegebuure, L. (2012) 'Recasting the academic workforce: Why the attractiveness of the academic profession needs to be increased and eight possible strategies for how to go about this from an Australian perspective', *Higher Education*, 64, 875–89.
- HESA (2010-2017) *Staff in Higher Education*, Cheltenham: Higher Education Statistics Agency.
- Locke, W. (2014) *Shifting Academic Careers and their implications for enhancing professionalism in teaching and supporting learning*, York: Higher Education Academy. <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/node/10079>
- Locke, W., Freeman, R. and Rose, A. (2016) *Early career social science researchers: experiences and support needs*, Swindon: Economic and Social Research Council: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/skills-and-careers/postgraduate-careers/early-career-researchers/>
- Locke, W., Whitchurch, C., Smith, H. & Mazonod, A. (2016) *Shifting Landscapes: Meeting the staff development needs of the changing academic workforce*, York: Higher Education Academy. [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/shifting\\_landscapes\\_1.pdf](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/shifting_landscapes_1.pdf)