

Pathway 3: digest of feedback from UCU members

This is a summary of the key issues and suggestions that have been raised by Pathway 3 staff who are UCU members.

1. Career progression and definition of roles

a. Major concerns were raised by almost all staff about **role profiles** and **opportunities for promotion/progression**. These included:

- A significant number of staff reported being asked to take on duties inappropriate to their current role/level (often while also being in a non-progressable post).
- It was noted that there are currently differences of practice between different faculties on what counts for promotion/progression and on how PW3 staff are treated in terms of long-term contracts and career opportunities.
- Some PW3 staff raised concerns at not being given opportunities to take on administrative or other roles, which limits potential for promotion/progression.
- It was noted frequently that PW3 needs to more specifically cater both for those currently wishing to progress and those who are happy to take on a non-progressable role (and that, at present, the criteria are not necessarily clear in either case).

b. Currently PW3 staff have limited opportunities to **specialise** - e.g. as someone who works particularly with postgraduates; on assessment; in widening participation - and they are consequently asked to take on any/all administrative role. Could the role definitions make more explicit the need to provide opportunities for staff to build up area/s of specialisation?

c. A concern was raised about the lack of **role models and mentoring** on PW3.

d. A suggestion was made by several staff that we should be seeking to address some issues on PW3 at **appointment** stage, by making more explicit internally how PW3 careers can develop - and, for example, by actively advertising this as an attractive/alternative route to current PGR students.

e. Some concerns were raised about the **naming of roles**; especially that in some faculties the title 'Teaching Fellow' is used for appointments that are actually at Teaching Associate role. It was also noted that the progression from 'Senior Teaching Associate' to 'Teaching Fellow' is confusing, especially when the title is used externally.

2. Workload and professional development

a. A major concern, raised by staff at all levels, was **workload** and - in particular - lack of clarity across the institution about the expectations for PW3 staff. A significant number of staff reported working significantly beyond the expected hours, but felt unable to raise this issue due to the insecure nature of their contract or a perception that their voice would not be heard.

b. Almost all staff asked for clarity about the **standard workload expectations** for PW3 and the balance that might be expected between teaching, administration and scholarship.

c. Particular concerns were raised by many staff about the effect of both short-term contracts and workload on capacity **space to innovate, reflect and prepare** (including a frequent plea for a 'teaching free day').

d. **Short-term contracts** have been very damaging including/especially for those kept on these for many years, for whom the implications have been profound in personal/professional terms

e. **Health and wellbeing concerns** were raised by a number of staff due to cumulative effect of issues cited.

f. An issue that was raised very frequently was about **lack of opportunities for career/professional development**, with lack of funding to attend conferences, research or good practice seminars, cited as an example.

3. Representation and esteem

a. At present, there is a perception of PW3 as something one seeks to escape from or fears being relegated to. There are thus major problems with **parity of esteem** for this pathway.

b. There was a widespread perception that currently PW3 staff do not have a sufficient role in **decision-making**; that they need to be better represented in committees at all levels, rather than being fed information indirectly; and that opportunities to apply for particular School/Faculty roles needs to be managed equitably and more such opportunities need to be offered.

c. Many colleagues felt valued by their students, and felt their work is vital to **the student experience**. However, they did not feel that this contribution was valued equally by the institution or their colleagues. Some PW3 articulated a strong feeling of being 'invisible' to the institution.

4. Scholarship

a. A wide range of views were expressed about this aspect of PW3, with some colleagues who are seeking to pursue **disciplinary research** seeking clarity about the expectations/opportunities on this pathway; others, who are interested in pursuing **pedagogic research**, feel there is a lack of clarity about what is possible/required and a lack of support to get started.

b. There was a widespread view that **clarity** is needed in this area: on how much time PW3 colleagues can devote to scholarship; on models of the kind of research that might be pursued; on how publishing in one's discipline on PW3 differs from PW1.

c. Again, the issue of **funding**, internally to attend conferences and opportunities to apply for external funding, was raised often.

5. What is success on this pathway?

a. It was noted by some members that success on PW1 might be defined as 'doing your job well', whereas on PW3 **something extra seems to be required** in order to progress.

b. It was felt that **excellence in teaching** needs to be more clearly defined, and teaching needs to be recognised by institution as equally valuable as research.

6. Languages staff

a. Some particular issues were raised by **PW3 languages** staff, and a separate paper is being prepared on the issues they are facing including around how their roles are perceived and presented; the opportunities that are not given for wider involvement in Faculty/university activities; and lack of opportunities for career development.