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*Promoting Quality in Teacher Education*

**Results of survey into the impact of Covid 19 on education research**

**November 2020**

***Q1: impact on the time allowed for research activities amongst: (a) staff with ‘significant responsibilities’ for research; and (b) other staff within the department***

Institution 1

Time for research activities has been squeezed. Pre-COVID all academic staff already found it hard to realise/make use of their allocated 20% research & scholarly activity time (because timetabled activities tend to take longer than the time allocated). This time has been squeezed further given the increased preparation time required for online or blended teaching. We had a separate initiative to provide active researchers with more time to undertake research but have had to suspend this. The result is that research activity is significantly reduced, except for the relatively few staff who have secured external research funding.

Institution 2

In theory staff with SRR should have all their additional research time this year. In practice they have lot of extra work to do and so it is not clear yet what the consequences of this will be. In addition to SRR staff we had a smaller number of staff who last year who had some additional development time for research to support them to progress to significant responsibility. This has not be available this year, and we were also not able to offer this opportunity to others. The people most affected are our recent post docs who work in teacher education. Last year some staff also had time to support impact activities linked to Ref case studies but as yet it is unclear whether this will be available this year.

For all staff on teaching and research contracts, the contractual ‘Research and Scholarly Activity Time’ is supposed to be self-managed. However there has been a heavy steer that this is the time that should be used to support additional PD and curriculum development to take teaching online.

Institution 3

There has been no change in time allocations for any staff.  That is not to say staff have managed to find time over the summer and this term, but there has been no institutional change to allocation of time.

Institution 4

There have been no formal contractual changes to time/workload allocations although all staff are encouraged to use their 10/20% scholarship and research time to compensate for their additional preparation time for online teaching.

Institution 5

1. In my School, the allocation of time should be reduced to the minimum for eligibility for the REF (0.2 of workload). In practice as line manager of key people I might be able to make some increase on that – it is not clear yet.  Workload for these staff has been increased because it has become still more difficult to get non-research focused colleagues to supervise doctoral students.
2. Previously staff have been allowed to bid for research time.   They have not been able to do so this year. There is no research time in addition to the 22 days available for all staff (but which are in practice not all used for research and scholarly activity, and this activity will, I understand, be reduced still further this year. It is more difficult for non-research focused colleagues to identify time to supervise doctoral students.

Institution 6

Covid-19 has impacted on time available for research, rather than time ‘allowed’ for research. The time allocation for research activities (time for research is allocated against roles e.g. UoA 23 lead, Research Group Director, PhD supervisor etc.; or against project funding) remained, but in many cases was not able to be used as priorities changed due to the pandemic. Understandably the student needs were put first.

The focus for all staff since March has been on supporting teaching and learning through adapting programmes to online learning, and more latterly providing blended learning materials for both face to face and online delivery. This has impacted significantly on those with significant research responsibilities, who in our university also teach/lead programmes, and those ECRs in the education department who are not yet REFable.

All staff who have a significant research responsibility (submitted for the REF) are supported in taking 25 research days a year. This was impacted on in 2019-20 due to Covid-19 and increased demands identified above and very staff were able to take these research days. The REF submission deadline was delayed to reflect the change in circumstances due to C-19. The REF UoA 23 lead for the university (me) was advised to continue working to the previous deadlines. This increased workload from March, as the REF UoA 23 Impact Case Studies, Outputs and Environment Statement meetings and preparation continued alongside the increased demands from programme roles e.g. training staff to teach online, preparing resources for online teaching and teaching online.

Institution 7

There has been a greater burden in terms of academic/administration as colleagues have responded to changes in assessment, award boards.  This has had a negative impact on colleagues who are managing and implementing these changes. There was no clear 'academic year end' to 2019/2020, as the implication of changes, appeals took place over the summer months - many staff started the academic year without having had a break for annual leave.  There are concerns about the long-term impact on staff.

***Q2: The extent of any change in the priority given to teaching as opposed to research.***

Institution 1

Teaching was always the priority but has become more so.

Institution 2

Preparation for teaching is being prioritised over scholarship and research.

Institution 3

The University has clear KPIs relating to both research and teaching.  These have not changed since the pandemic began, but the emphasis is clearly on teaching through the newly formed Task and Finish Group for Teaching & Learning convened by the Pro-Vice Chancellor Teaching and Learning and comprising Deans, Directors of T and L and Heads of all Professional Services.

Institution 4

The priority is very definitely on teaching and learning rather than research activity.  It is very difficult to “push” research activity at the moment given that staff are working so hard to move courses online and to get used to the new technology.  Thankfully REF preparations were well underway before March.

Institution 5

Teaching has always been given priority, but that level of priority has been explicitly increased, and it has been made clear that those who are research-focused should make a greater contribution to the School in a variety of ways; clearing was specified.

Institution 6

There has been a significant increase in research/funding bids since the start of the pandemic, as colleagues’ travel and external engagements have lessened.  Whilst this appears in the first instance not to have had a negative material impact on research, the concern is that when they have completed the project's data collection,  there may be a struggle to find time to analyse and write up- because it coincides with peak teaching time.  Again, many colleagues feel this will have a long-term impact that will not be noticeable for some months.   Where COVID has had an impact has been (and continues to have) is on impact case studies for the REF, particularly in the context of collecting evidence. However, in some areas the pandemic has also given rise to additional impact activities, but see the previous point about publishing/evidencing as an output from the pandemic-related funding opportunities.

***Q3: Whether institutional expectations of research activity have been adjusted in the light of any increased teaching responsibilities, or have been retained to be completed outside contracted hours.***

Institution 1

There has been no notification of any change to institutional expectations.

Institution 2

We don’t have expectations of research products or performance and if anything as REF coordinator I have reduced these from expectations of publication each year, to recognising how long things can take.

Institution 3

There has been no change to institutional expectations of research.  They remain on the workload and on the KPIs.

Institution 4

It has been agreed that appraisals will be “light touch” informal conversations to be held with staff rather than formal paper based meetings to address targets, so it is fair to say that institutional expectations for all staff (including those with SRR) have been lowered/suspended.  In the short term this is welcome news for staff.  In the longer term the hard-won progress made in recent years in establishing research may be lost, at least for the time being and could be difficult to recover.

Institution 5

Decisions about teaching responsibilities are taken at local, school, level.  There has been no change to the institutional policy.

Institution 6

The expectation is that research responsibilities/activities will be/have been completed. Some deadlines have been extended to support activity completion.

Institution 7

Expectations and allowances for research have not really changed during or after lockdown. While university policy expects us to be research active, the reality is that teaching and student facing commitments take up a very large proportion of our time. Research outputs will likely remain the same, based on staff working around other commitments. The one exception to this of course is that few or no conference presentations have been done by staff over the spring or summer.

***Q4: The extent to which the overall volume of education research in your institution has changed because of the Pandemic.***

Institution 1

Difficult to measure but I would estimate at down 50%.

Institution 2

There have been a number of research contracts that have been extended and there have been delays to research. We had some bids in around the time of Covid hitting and some of these were shelved by funders.

The timing could have been worse, as colleagues invested time last year in getting papers submitted for review and so in terms of the cycle of research and publish for most colleagues with SRR, the cycle this year would be starting new writing or research projects. The message I have given as REF coordinator has been to put long terms wellbeing first and not try to push to get thing published this autumn due to the REF deadline.

Institution 3

This is anecdotal, but it seems to me that staff PGRs (undertaking part-time doctorates) have struggled to progress their research since March. Experienced researchers (such as Readers, Professors) seem to have found a way of carrying on with research.

Institution 4

The overall volume has decreased across the institution. However there has been growth of research and public interest in work which was carried out with a small amount of internal funding during the first lockdown on home-schooling (a survey of parental experiences) which attracted wide public interest and led to the inclusion of its findings within a circular to all schools and an invitation to present to political representatives.  This was accompanied by a series of very popular blogs around lockdown and educational inequality, as well as staff being invited onto several webinars attended by hundreds of teachers.  So, less research activity in some ways (reduced data collection in schools etc.) but increased public engagement which has actually raised the public profile of research in the institution.

Institution 5

The volume of research-focused work has reduced due to a range of pressures, including the fact that admissions and enrolment of research students, for example, has been much slower, has involved significantly more work for academics in key posts (e.g. Directors and others involved in professional doctorates, PhDs, Associate Deans Research, etc.).  The ‘teaching’/design and delivery of programme support sessions has moved online, increasing the workload for academics working with EdD students, as is the case more generally across the School.

The progress on some research projects has slowed due to the general consequences of the pandemic rather than institutional policy (other than the fact that this policy has stopped face-to-face research except in exception situations (i.e. there that face to face activity does not involve an increase in the level or risk-increasing change in the nature of that activity.

Institution 6

The volume of education research has not changed as a consequence of the Pandemic. Grant applications continued during lockdown, with a focus on C-19 project funding. Output generation has continued.

***Q5: The impact of Covid on research involving fieldwork in schools, colleges or other settings.***

Institution 1

As above because most colleagues do their research in such settings and are struggling to find time to do their research; on the other hand some colleagues who could find time for funded or unfunded research have postponed this because of restrictions relating to online data collection only or because they feel it wouldn’t be right, ethically, to place additional burdens on schools and colleges at this time.

Institution 2

We have a policy of no face to face field work with any exemptions requiring senior sign off and as far as I am aware we have not sought any exemptions in education.  This has impact on funded and unfunded research.

Institution 3

Schools are struggling to accommodate empirical research.  We are finding ‘work-arounds’ such as setting up video recorders in classrooms.

Institution 4

There has been a significant impact on staff and students collecting data through face-to-face methods.  This has resulted in additional guidance being issued on online methods including ethics and safeguarding.

Institution 5

Nothing too serious yet, we have been able to defer elements in funded projects that involve face to face work.  The constraint on research students has been more significant, and the progress of a number of those in the data collection stage has been slowed as they have not been able to start / continue with that. As directly above, this is the effect of the pandemic generally rather than institutional policy.

Institution 6

Covid has impacted on education settings and this has caused the following challenges for collecting primary data from schools and colleges:

1. Increased workload in education settings has resulted in challenges in accessing teachers, leaders and students for interviews and surveys – this is for both academic researchers and PGR students
2. Collecting testimonial evidence for REF impact case studies has been delayed due to increased demands on educational settings
3. Access to schools and colleges for new research is proving challenging.

Institution 7

We have not had any formal communication about conducting fieldwork in settings during the pandemic, though at an informal level we are trying to take a common sense approach to this.

***Q6: Any other significant impacts***

Institution 1

Just that I fear for research generally given the financial implications of CV19 and the fact we are a predominantly teaching institution, which is where scarce staffing resource will be focused, and that we will be off to a slow start for the post-2021 REF period.

Institution 2

Possibly the most significant impact has been on post graduate research. PGR students were supported by no cost 3 month extensions. However, for many research has had to be delayed or redesigned. For part time PGR who are either teacher educators or teachers in school pressures have been greatest and I fear that drop out will increase. University funding for new PGR bursaries is not available this year and in education we would expect one or two full time students funded by the university. We are advertising for studentships with ESRC funding. But if we get any education PGRs with ERSRC funding this year they will not have companions funded by the University.  I also expect they will find networking opportunities with PGRs at the same stage as them to be affected.

Institution 3

The impact on research and scholarship has been more indirect due to the loss of international student income more widely across the University. Alongside we have had a 25% increase in student PGCE numbers, but around 50% reduction in sessional staff budget. So the 150 hours each tutor is allocated for research/ scholarly activities has been squeezed by the need to cover teaching, (virtual) school visits. Just an example of the wider impact of Covid for staff on teaching only contracts, for which research and scholarly activities are still important.

Institution 4

A huge amount of time across the university has been and is being, dedicated to organisational and pedagogical responses to the pandemic.  This emphasis, energy, and prioritisation brings a negative impact on the time and support for research – at institutional and, in particular, local levels.  This includes, to an extent, my time as a member of SLT – so I have less time to manage and support the development of research across the School (and am not able to engage in research myself)

Central university services that support research are, in practice, able to offer less support for researchers.

There are significantly fewer national (and, less significantly affected, international) funding opportunities – we had been developing some bids for tenders which have been taken down/deferred.

The library is not buying hard copied of book, and some are only available as hard copies (as it cannot process these when they arrive at the university).

Institution 5

‘Normal’ funding for educational research appears to have been deprioritised in favour of Covid related funding, which may have a detrimental effect on the field in future.

Research funding appears harder to win, which may be a consequence of the impending recession and increased vigilance around available funding.

Reporting on primary research undertaking is delayed as time to analyse data and write up findings has become less available.

Institution 6

We have been able to move all our research activities online.   We are aware that we have many of the structures and the culture in place to support these activities; however, because of the range of activities being offered and opportunities being made available (because of less travel time) there is a danger of conference/seminar attendance fatigue. Again, there is concern about the longer-term impact on staff wellbeing and research output.

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