

The UK academic profession in an international context: Academic retreat or professional renewal?

William Locke and Alice Bennion,

Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, The Open University

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Room JG5002, John Galsworthy Building, Penrhyn Road

The majority of individual UK academics appear to be in retreat:

- *away from* increased management pressure to perform and be accountable, the complexities of operating within expanding institutions, cumbersome bureaucracy and reduced individual influence at all levels; and
- *towards* the attractions of their discipline, research which is still focused on personal interest, service and other academic activities (especially for those who are no longer defined as 'research active') and, of course, criticism of those in charge of institutions.

But, for the minority of those who attain senior and mid-tier positions within 'the managed academy', these developments may create new opportunities for professional renewal.

The *Changing Academic Profession* is an international study of the changing conditions and perceptions of academics in 20 countries. It follows the *First International Survey of the Academic Profession* conducted in 1992, involving 14 countries, and provides opportunities for chronological, as well as geographical, comparison. The Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI) at the Open University is undertaking the UK part of the study and contributing to international comparisons. The international study focuses on several themes of relevance to national and international policy and practice: the drive for *relevance* in teaching and research; the *internationalisation* of the profession; the *management* of academic work; and the preparation of *new entrants* to the profession and the different pathways to career progression.

Based on the UK survey and selected international comparisons, this seminar presentation and discussion will focus on the findings of most relevance to the governance and management of HEIs in the UK.