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Defining Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research: *Demarcation or Enabling Empowerment?*

Professor Karl Dayson, Dean of Research

Context

- Period of enormous change and we wanted an outcome that could link with internal people strategy whilst capturing our research excellence.
- Wanted to aligning with academic career framework (post REF2021)
- Commitment in research strategy to improve training & development of researchers.
- Sector wide discussions about shift from T&R to T-only contracts.

1. Academic Career Framework

Teaching and Learning

Research

Leadership

- Provide **clear and transparent** academic career pathways, defining expectations to support development.
- Create **parity** across our career paths, meaning that Research will not be the only way to achieve progression.
- Pilot stage in 2019/2020 and adopt this new way of working across the University by **2021**.

2. Research Strategy 2017-2027: researcher development

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Personalised research support and development

Mentoring and coaching available to all academics

Adopt international best practice on the development and assessment of our researchers

Greater transparency and equity in allocation of research workload

3. Sector response

The recommendation provoked a strong response from the sector but two warnings in particular stood out. First, since not everyone with research in their contract is required to produce 'REFable' outputs, institutions would be left in the position of either including such individuals in their submission and taking a hit to their quality profile, or switching staff onto teaching-only contracts at the expense of people's careers. The units most at risk would be those in a heavy practice-based subject such as allied health, education, architecture and law. These are populated by individuals whose experi
informed by something other (but no less valuab
research leading to REF outputs.

WONKHE

From 2017
https://wonkhe.com/blogs/analysis-making-all-staff-selection-work-for-ref-2021/

THE WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

PROFESSIONAL JOBS EVENTS RANKINGS STUDENT

UK universities shift to teaching-only contracts ahead of REF

Latest Hesa data reveal universities where teaching-only numbers have increased the most

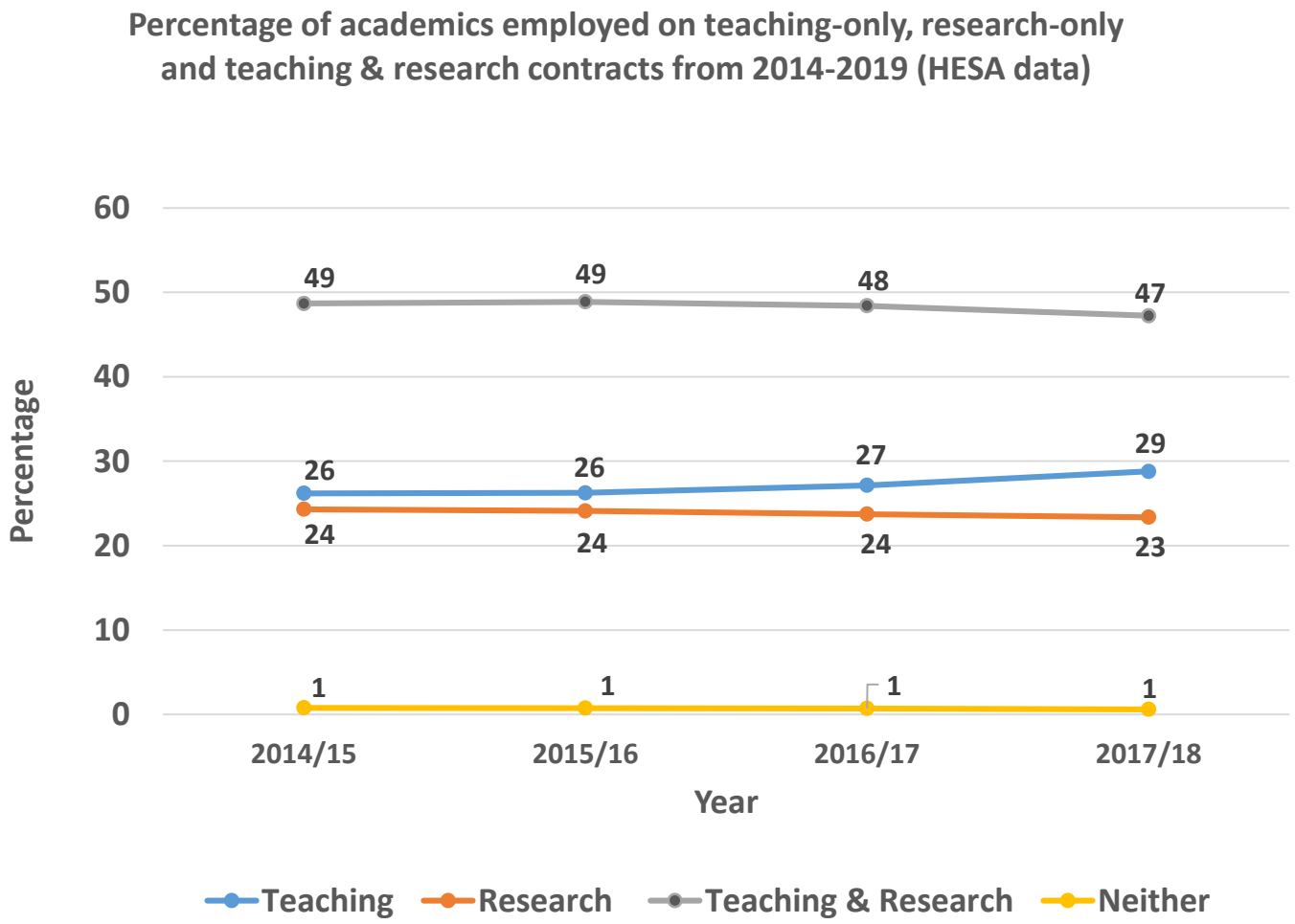
March 14, 2019

By Simon Baker

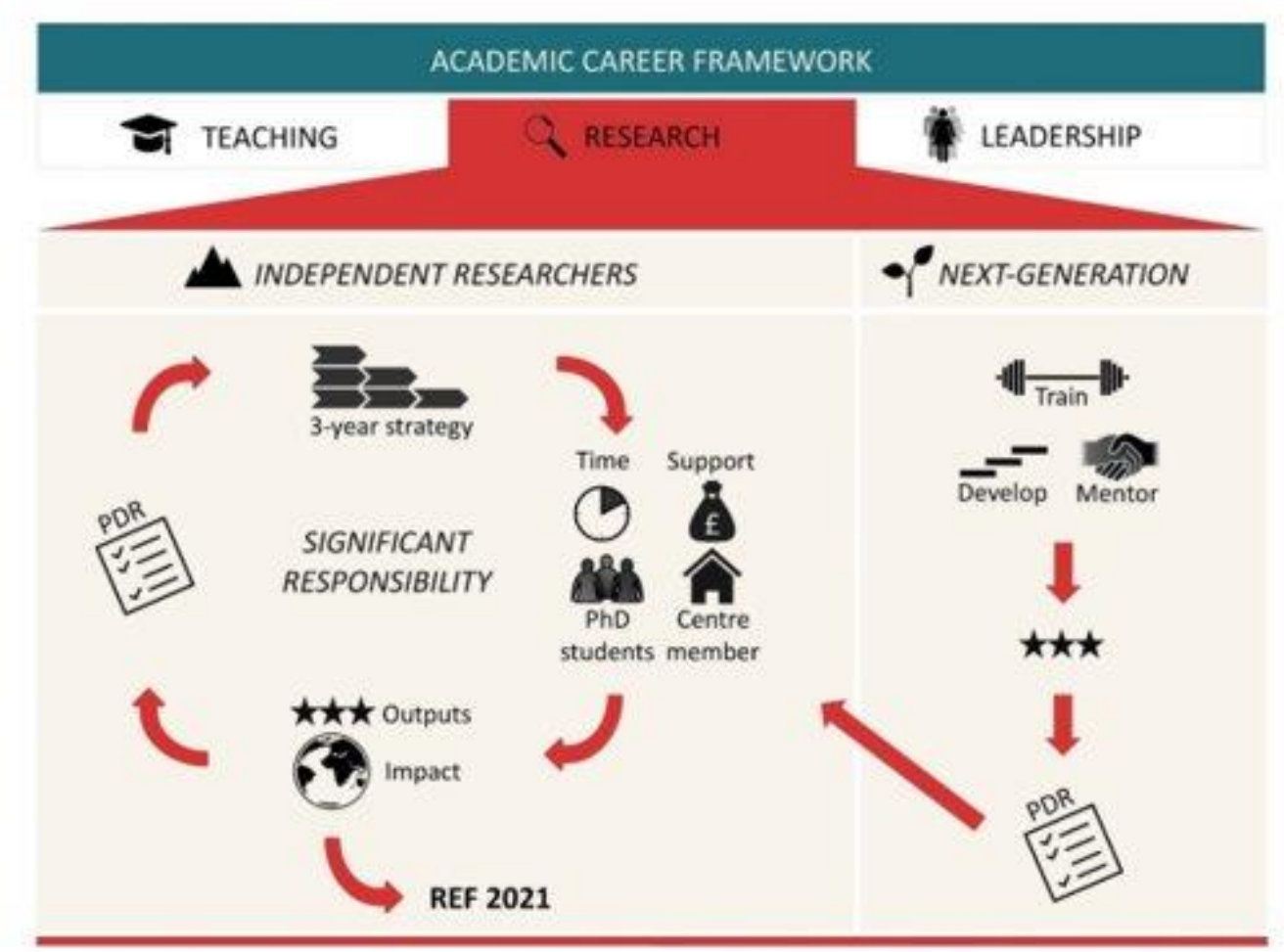
Twitter: @HigherBaker

From 2019
https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/uk-universities-shift-teaching-only-contracts-ahead-ref

Changes in contract type across the sector



Significant responsibility for research



3-Year Personal Research Plan

- Current research questions
- Current level of development (Next-Gen, L1, L2, L3) in each of the five areas.
- Development and support requirements, e.g. mentoring or specific training.

The 2019 SRR process

3-year plan submission period (***March – April***)

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Assessment of plans by School academic panels (***May***)

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RKE moderation and resolution of outcomes with panels (***June***)

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Notification to staff (***July***)

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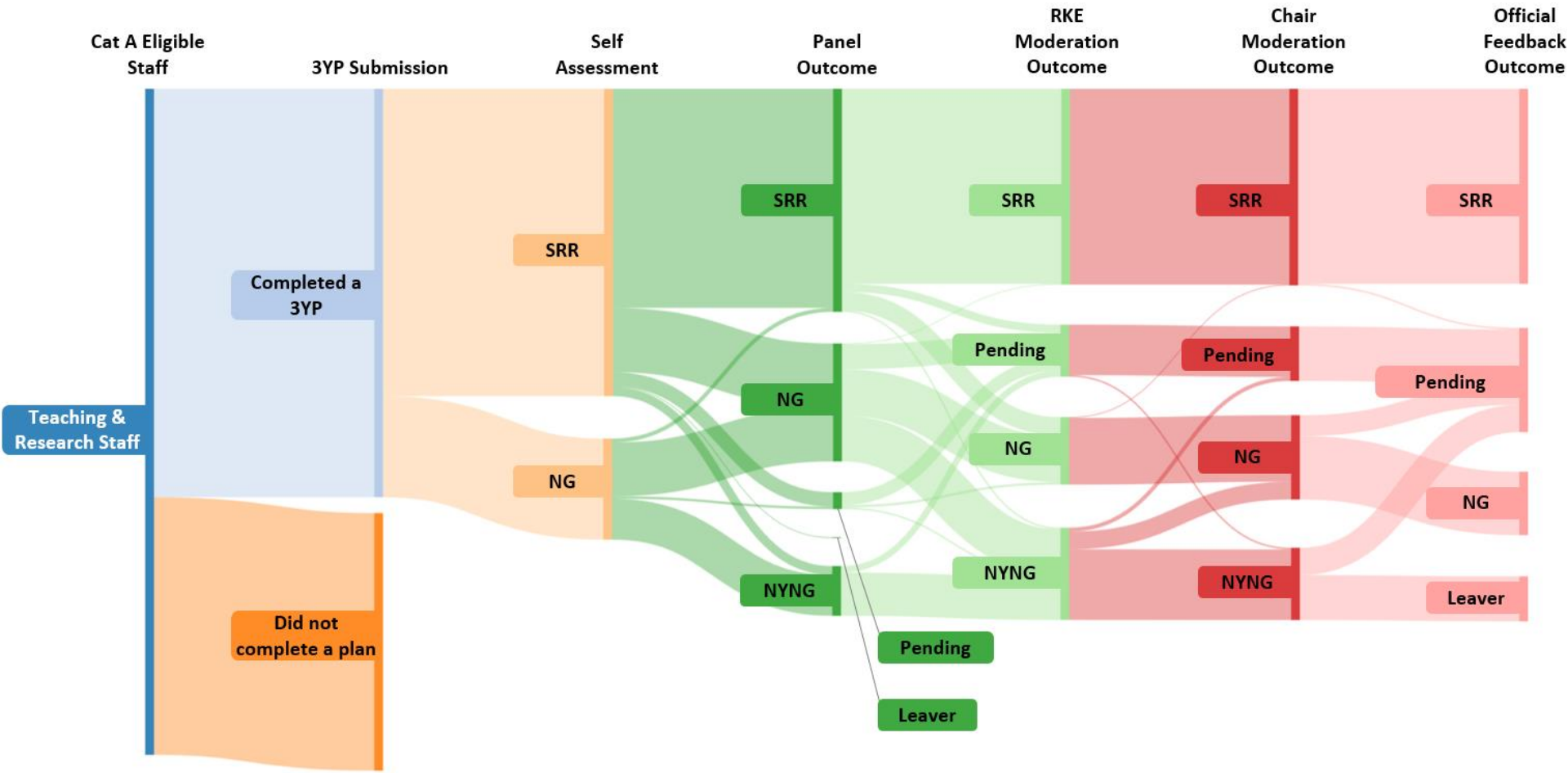
Resolution of “pending” outcomes (***August-September***)

Best practice in researcher assessment

- Responsible metrics: working group & signatory to San Francisco Declaration on Researcher Assessment (DORA).
- Both qualitative and quantitative assessment using multiple indices.
- Academic peer review within Schools.
- Context-dependent to both disciplines and individuals (including effect of equality-related circumstances on research trajectory).
- Contributions to team-based research and collaboration, as well as individual activities.

Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) process 2019



Main Challenges

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- Equality and diversity
- Management & consistency

	% Female	% Male
Significant responsibility for research	38%	62%
Next-Generation/Joining/Returning researcher	39%	61%

	% of eligible women	% of eligible men
All staff currently with SRR	26%	37%
REF2014 all eligible staff	24%	42%

Future opportunities: Building impact

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Training and development

Personalised development plans from our Researcher Development Coordinator

Knowledge Transfer (KTPs)

KTP Office in contact with staff who mention "KTPs" in their plans

Analysis of partnerships data

Geographic & sector analysis of 756 partners

Potential to facilitate new collaborations

Bidding development

Bidding team following up with proposed grant development plans

Conclusion

- Approach was collaborative involving staff and trade union representatives
- Has been approved by Research England
- Post-Stern REF rules have been used strategically to enhance our support for research active staff
- Beneficial if REF is seen as contributing to a research strategy, rather than the focus of it.