Research and Development Series

GENDER AND HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP:
RESEARCHING THE CAREERS OF TOP MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME ALUMNI

Final Report

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Acknowledgements

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This research was not intended in any way to be seen as an evaluation of the Top Management Programme. The report presents the views of the research participants as interpreted by the research team, who take full responsibility for its content and recommendations.

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Foreword by Professor Colin Riordan

That only 17% of UK vice-chancellors and principals in the UK are women is nothing short of scandalous. Universities should be beacons of diversity and equality, and yet lag behind every other sector except the judiciary.

While more than half of the undergraduate population and 44.5% of academics are female, only 20.5% of professors are women. For a number of years the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education has run the Top Management Programme (TMP), which aims to prepare members of higher education senior leadership teams for the top job. Fourteen of the 29 female heads of institution in this country are graduates of TMP, which seems to indicate that it is of benefit in this respect. Yet the proportion of female vice-chancellors has remained stubbornly low, despite the undoubted merits of TMP (which I can vouch for as an alumnus myself).

The real scandal, however, is that this state of affairs so often goes unremarked. In the private sector the Davies report has led to a shake-up in appointments to company boards. My hope is that this report could give higher education a similar impetus. A code of practice for executive search firms, using existing equality legislation to the utmost, reforming promotions and talent management procedures, training and developing members of governing boards: all these measures could bring much-needed change. Why is it much needed? Universities should be setting an example in equal rights and showing that gender equity can become a reality.

There is evidence that more diversity at board level leads to better decision-making and better outcomes. We cannot afford to waste talent in this way: the argument is barely disputed where widening participation for students is concerned. We must ensure that the same is true for senior leadership teams in higher education institutions.

Colin Riordan is President and Vice-Chancellor at Cardiff University.

Foreword by Professor Janet Beer

This research was conducted with women and men who occupy some of the most senior roles in British higher education. It gives us hard evidence to support the contention that it is more difficult for women to be appointed as the chief executive in our universities and colleges. Whilst it is true that some of the participants – both men and women – are clear that they do not wish to be considered for the ‘top job’, of those who do, women are less likely to fulfil their ambitions and indeed, their potential.

Based on the research, the report makes significant recommendations, some of which are already under discussion in a variety of sector bodies, but which need to be rapidly progressed. The importance of achieving more gender balanced Governing Councils and Boards has already been highlighted by research conducted by Norma Jarboe for her Women Count report. The researchers here believe that equality and diversity training for those bodies, as well as the development of a code of practice for Executive Search Firms, are vital components of the changes needed to achieve truly meritocratic selection and recruitment. In the private sector targets have been set to achieve more balanced Board membership. Important work is also being done by the 30% Club, supported by KPMG and YSC, to dispel the myths about the reasons for women’s under-representation at senior levels by advocating the ‘dismantling’ of ‘structural barriers’ both to address bias and provide the kinds of professional development opportunities that will enable more women to progress in their careers. The researchers of this report, led by Professor Simonetta Manfredi, are equally ambitious in their recommendations for our sector; nothing less than a major commitment is required of us. This is not a question which is marginal; until we accept that it is a mainstream not a minority issue then nothing will change.

Janet Beer is Vice-Chancellor at Oxford Brookes University and Chaired the steering group for this research project.
Executive summary

Aims of the project
The paucity of women as vice-chancellors, professors and in senior management roles across the higher education sector in spite of the high proportions of women working in the sector is being publicly questioned. The Leadership Foundation’s Top Management Programme (TMP) has prepared people for senior leadership roles for over 10 years and has over 600 alumni. This project used a survey and 42 interviews to: map the career trajectories of TMP alumni with a focus on gender from a variety of institutional locations, professional backgrounds and demographic characteristics; explore their experiences of how their gender, ethnicity, disability, etc may have influenced their career paths; and highlight factors that may have facilitated or hindered their career progression.

Key findings
Nearly half of our female respondents had experienced gender-related bias in their careers, and interview respondents talked of a gendered view of leaders among colleagues and selection panels; cultural and class bias had also been experienced, and respondents without an academic background felt that this factor had constrained their careers. There is unease about the role of executive search firms in appointments to senior roles.

Among those who said they had applied for more senior roles since completing TMP, women were more likely to have been unsuccessful than men.

Women were more likely than men to consider that ‘opportunities for training and development’ helped them with their career development.

No significant gender differences emerged from the analysis of career trajectories (in terms of career patterns) and approaches to career plans or lack of career plans. This is contrary to the belief that women tend to have more atypical career trajectories due to interruptions for career breaks to look after children. Most respondents did not think that they had planned their careers, but many did in fact have clear goals and were able to take opportunities as they arose. There is little experience of formal, structured career support.

A much higher proportion of our female respondents had significant other responsibilities outside work compared with male respondents. Typically women had taken short periods of maternity leave, had had little or no access to flexible working, and had experienced balancing work and family as a challenge (but one they felt had enriched them as people and as leaders, and that they would not have wanted to forgo).

Many of our respondents were from lower middle-class or working-class backgrounds, had strong values about the importance of education, appreciated the opportunities they had had, and were influenced by their upbringing to wish to bring those opportunities to others.

Women were over-represented among those whose professional identities did not have an exclusively academic or higher education focus. Typically, people in this category had experienced more variety in their careers and there is a perception that such careers make it harder to achieve the very top jobs. Mobility between higher education institutions (HEIs) has not necessarily been experienced as an essential factor in career development.

Our interviewees, both male and female, tended to accept the workload involved in senior roles as an inherent feature of the job, and to treat the question of dealing with the workload as a personal challenge rather than an organisational one. This is not to say that they were comfortable with it.

The role of TMP in respondents’ careers included giving them access to wider networks of colleagues outside their own institutions, and the opportunity to benchmark their own leadership against that of others; a chance to reflect on their values and careers; improved confidence and focus; and greater clarity about the nature of senior leadership roles, leading in some cases to a determination to move into such roles and in other cases to a decision to move sideways or stay put.
Recommendations

HEI governing boards: The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) and Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (Leadership Foundation) should develop and offer to members of governing boards and other key staff involved in making decisions about senior appointments appropriate, high-content equality training with a focus on selection and recruitment for leadership roles to raise awareness and understanding of the equality implications relating to the design of job descriptions and selection criteria at this level. HEIs should make it a mandatory requirement for members of governing bodies and other key people to attend such training. Action: ECU and Leadership Foundation

Executive search firms (ESFs): ESFs should develop a code of practice in collaboration with sector stakeholders, including ECU and Leadership Foundation, to promote good practice and greater transparency about the role of ESFs in the selection and recruitment process for senior appointments. This could draw from the experience of implementing the existing code of practice to achieve greater gender diversity on company boards. ESFs and their clients should aim for a proportion of at least 30% of female applicants on short-lists for leadership roles. Also, data on the proportion of female candidates put forward for senior appointments should be published. Action: ESFs, higher education sector bodies

Adopt positive action in recruitment and promotion: Provisions for positive action in the Equality Act 2010 (SS 158−159) permit (but do not require) employers to take into account a protected characteristic when deciding whom to recruit or promote where people having the protected characteristic are at a disadvantage or are under-represented and where the candidates are as qualified as each other. This is known as a ‘tie-break’ and the higher education sector should look at those experiences both in the UK and in other European countries where this and similar provisions to increase gender diversity have been used. Action: higher education sector bodies

Setting aspirational targets and monitoring the pipeline: HEIs should set aspirational targets supported by measurable and realistic action plans to increase diversity in senior management roles. Action: HEIs

Monitoring career trajectories: It is recommended that processes are set up to allow for the monitoring of career trajectories of TMP and Aurora alumni and to identify role models. Action: Leadership Foundation

Mentoring: Institutions should consider providing academic staff with access to mentoring programmes throughout their career, since these can help to boost confidence and provide a source of career advice and guidance. Action: HEIs

Support for staff with childcare and other caring responsibilities: It is important to offer flexible working to help staff to combine their work with childcare and other caring responsibilities at different stages of their careers. The Children and Families Act 2014 introduces provisions for shared parental leave and the right to request flexible working to all employees. Guidance could be provided by ECU to help HEIs consider the implications of the provisions of the Act in the higher education context. Action: ECU and HEIs

Take into account equality-related circumstances in academic promotions: The funding councils established principles through their equality guidance for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 to take into account how equality-related circumstances might have impacted on the quantity (not quality) of research outputs in selecting staff for inclusion. These principles should be adopted when making decisions about academic promotions.

Professional services career routes: HEIs should review career routes for this group of staff, which tends to be a higher percentage of women, to ensure that they are able to progress in leadership roles. Action: HEIs

Facilitate access to opportunities for taking management responsibilities, cross-institutional work and external exposure: Institutions should maximise opportunities for internal mobility by mapping out functions and responsibilities that could provide stepping stones to senior management roles and ensure that they can be accessed through a transparent process. This may also include the use of secondments and assignment to specific projects. They should ensure a balanced representation of women and wherever possible other equality groups on committees and especially those operating on a cross-institutional basis. Women may be encouraged through personal development plans to take up external roles, either within the higher education sector (e.g. involvement with research councils or with other sectors). Action: HEIs
**Talent management and access to leadership development:** Institutions should adopt clear criteria, which include equality considerations, to identify and nominate staff for leadership programmes. These criteria and the type of opportunities available to staff both internally and externally should be clearly communicated to staff at different stages of their careers. **Action:** HEIs

**Integrating equality in leadership development programmes:** There is a need for leadership development programmes at different levels to integrate equality and diversity in their curricula and to encourage future leaders to think how they can make a difference in this area (as Aurora has begun to do). There is also scope to promote better understanding of cross-cultural issues as there is a high proportion of international staff in higher education. **Action:** Leadership Foundation, ECU

**Tackle work–life balance issues in leadership programmes:** The Leadership Foundation should include in leadership programmes discussion on work–life balance, and draw on existing research about the role of technology and the future of work to explore positive ways in which technology can enable work–life balance rather than hinder it. It is also recommended that examples of good practice and role models at this level are identified both in the higher education and in other sectors where similar challenges are experienced in senior roles. **Action:** Leadership Foundation

Please note there is also a summary report published from this project¹, this can be found at [www.lfhe.ac.uk/2014research](http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/2014research)

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¹ Manfredi et al (2014)
Part 1: About the project

1.1 Introduction

Research indicates that between 1970 and 2008, there was a six-fold increase globally in the number of female students and that across the world, there are slightly more women enrolled on undergraduate courses than men. However, there is still a gender gap in the leadership of higher education, globally. At a Round Table discussion hosted by the Leadership Foundation in July 2012 and involving senior leaders, governors and academics, it was noted that the leadership of higher education in the UK seems to be shifting towards a less inclusive profile, with leaders being predominantly male and public-school educated. Only 17% of vice-chancellors are women and very few vice-chancellors or principals are from a minority ethnic background. Data published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in 2011 shows that the higher education sector has the second lowest percentage of women in ‘top jobs’; the lowest being the judiciary with 12.9%. A similar picture is presented by the private sector, where women’s under-representation in leadership roles has attracted much attention and continues to be the subject of significant debate following Lord Davies’ report, which highlighted the need to achieve greater gender diversity on company boards. More recently, the proposed introduction of an EU directive, sponsored by the Vice-President of the European Commission, Viviane Reding, will require all listed companies across the European Union to achieve female representation of 40% on company boards by 2020 (2018 if they are public undertakings). So far, only the voluntary sector has achieved a balanced representation of men and women in chief executive roles, where women represent 48% of this group.

The debate about women’s under-representation on company boards in the commercial sector has drawn attention to the lack of gender diversity in senior roles in other sectors, including higher education. The paucity of female vice-chancellors and professors (20%) in spite of the fact that 44% of academics are women is being publicly questioned. Increasing the number of female vice-chancellors and the number of women in other leadership roles in the sector has been identified by the Leadership Foundation as a priority. In 2012 the Leadership Foundation commissioned a stimulus paper, written by Professor Louise Morley and published in 2013, to encourage discussion on women and leadership in higher education. One of the recommendations contained in this paper was to undertake research into ‘the enablers and impediments that women experience in career progression, and into the experience of women leaders’. Following on from Morley’s work, ECU and the Leadership Foundation jointly commissioned this study to explore the career trajectories of alumni of both genders from the Leadership Foundation’s Top Management Programme (TMP), in order to take an evidence-based approach so as to increase gender diversity in leadership roles and to enhance leadership through (greater) diversity. While this study was in progress the Leadership Foundation also launched a new programme called Aurora, which is aimed at early- and mid-career academic and professional women. This programme’s main aims are to develop a critical mass of women who will be motivated to take on future senior leadership roles and to challenge organisational practices that perpetuate gender bias.

About TMP

The TMP is the Leadership Foundation’s flagship programme and has an established track record in developing strategic leaders in higher education. Fifty-seven of the current UK vice-chancellors/principals (14 females and 43 males) are TMP alumni, with many of the other past participants of TMP holding some of the most senior posts throughout higher education.

TMP is intended to be challenging, providing an opportunity to broaden perspectives and to act as a force for change at institutional, personal and professional level. It is designed to provide long-term benefit to the university or higher education college.

At the time of writing, the Leadership Foundation is recruiting to the 34th run that will begin in October 2014. The programme is targeted at vice-chancellors/principals, chief executives, pro-vice-chancellors/vice-principals, executive deans with cross-institutional responsibility, heads of university administration and directors of professional services.

2 UNESCO (2014)
3 Jarboe (2013)
4 Davies (2011)
5 EHRC (2011)
6 ECU (2010)
7 Bateman (2013)
8 Morgan (2013)
9 Morley (2013) p16
10 See http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/en/programmes-events/you/aurora/index.cfm
11 For further information about the TMP, see www.lfhe.ac.uk/tmp
Participants in TMP require the full support of the institution/organisation and the vice-chancellor/principal or CEO. Already leading a significant area of operation at their institution, they must also be a member of their university or higher education college’s senior management team. The programme requires that they are acknowledged as having the potential to reach the highest position within higher education or in other economic sectors.

The demographic profile of this group is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 TMP alumni demographic profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>612</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BME</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNS*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A recent study on leaders in higher education reported that currently there are 29 female vice-chancellors and principals in the UK. Fourteen of these are TMP alumni (48%). According to the same report, there are 137 male vice-chancellors and principals, of whom 42 are TMP alumni (25%). This suggests that female alumni may have especially benefitted from attending TMP. Nonetheless, the overall proportion of female TMP alumni who have progressed into vice-chancellor and principal roles is less than half (5%) of that of male TMP alumni (12%). This does not reflect the overall ratio of male to female TMP alumni. Other equality data relating to TMP alumni is not reported due to small numbers and the need to protect individuals’ confidentiality.

Project aims and objectives

The broad aims of this study were to map the career trajectories of TMP alumni and to investigate gender and other diversity issues among a group of women and men who have spent significant periods of their career in senior management and leadership roles. More specifically the objectives of this research were as follows:

- Map the career trajectories of TMP alumni with a focus on gender from a variety of institutional locations, professional backgrounds and demographic characteristics, including ethnicity and disability (where known).
- Explore the experiences of TMP alumni, in particular their views and experiences of how their ethnicity, disability, gender, etc may have influenced their career paths.
- Highlight factors that may have facilitated or hindered the career progression of TMP alumni.
- Explore gender and issues around motherhood, gendered subject areas and other factors that may or may not impact on career ‘choice’.
- Examine the process of nomination and follow-up to TMP in a selected sample of institutions.

The project was articulated in two main stages. The first stage involved undertaking a literature review and a series of focus groups with TMP alumni to gather initial data and to help the research team develop research instruments for the second stage of the study. In the second stage, primary data was collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods with alumni and nominating managers in order to find out more about the nomination process.

This research project was guided by a steering committee chaired by Professor Janet Beer, Chair of the Equality Challenge Unit, who is herself a TMP alumna. The research began in April 2013 and was completed in January 2014. The project was undertaken by the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice at Oxford Brookes University, in collaboration with Learning for Good.

12 Figures relating to the demographic profile of TMP alumni were provided by the Leadership Foundation.
13 Jarboe (2013)
14 This is an area that due to the small numbers of participants involved in different subject areas we were not able to explore in a meaningful way in the survey. Moreover, the findings from the interviews did not highlight any significant issue relating to gendered subject areas.
1.2 Literature review

This project started with a literature review in order to develop a robust theoretical framework and inform the focus group discussions. The literature also informed the research instruments for the subsequent stages of the research. This review sought to integrate a number of perspectives by drawing from different strands of academic literature focusing on the following areas: causes of women’s under-representation in leadership roles and how this might be explained by the gendered construction of leadership; gender and careers with a focus on women’s experiences of career progression in the higher education sector; and an overview of structural and cultural issues in the sector which may explain lack of diversity in senior management roles and help to examine how the intersection of equality characteristics may affect career trajectories. A significant amount of academic literature exists for each of these strands and what is included in this report is not intended to be an exhaustive review of each strand, but rather illustrative of a number of key issues that emerge from the literature. The starting point for this work was Professor Morley’s stimulus paper on women and higher education leadership, which provides a comprehensive overview of international literature examining what ‘may drive or depress women’s aspirations and career orientations’ in the sector.

The main themes emerging from the literature review are discussed in the following sections.

Women’s under-representation in leadership roles: the glass ceiling, the labyrinth or the glass cliff?

A series of metaphors have been used to explain women’s under-representation in leadership roles. One of the most common is that of the ‘glass ceiling’, which has been defined as ‘a barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it prevents women and minorities from moving up in the management hierarchy’. It has been argued, however, that to use this metaphor to conceptualise women’s under-representation in leadership roles can be misleading. Eagly and Carli are critical of this concept for a number of reasons, most notably that it conveys the idea of a single, unvarying obstacle. This not only fails to capture the complexity of the barriers encountered by women in their careers and the effect on their progression within an organisation, but also encourages the adoption of interventions that focus simply in one direction, for example mentoring and sponsorship, which may not sufficiently tackle the problem. They identify a series of factors that can act as barriers for women in achieving leadership positions. These include family responsibilities, stereotypical views of women and issues around their perceived leadership styles. All or a combination of these factors may be faced by women at different stages of their careers and this renders their professional journey a complex endeavour. Hence they argue that a more meaningful metaphor to use is that of a ‘labyrinth’ where professional women find themselves having to negotiate several ‘twists and turns’ along the way.

Another metaphor adopted to describe gender bias faced by women once they have achieved leadership roles is that of the ‘glass cliff’. This describes the fact that women are more likely to be appointed on company boards that are underperforming and to be the subject of greater scrutiny and criticism compared with their male counterparts, making their standing as senior leaders correspondingly more fragile. This is also supported by a significant body of academic literature which has explored the gendered construction of leadership, as discussed in the next section.

The gendered construction of leadership

The gendered construction of leadership can be traced back to leadership research which, ‘like most research in management has been gendered’. It has been pointed out that most studies of leadership ranging from the ‘Great Man/Trait’ to the ‘new paradigm’ charismatic and transformational models, have been studies of men, by men (it may be added, likely to be white). These research findings, however, have been generalised and have underpinned business and executive education. It is therefore not surprising that the stereotype that associates ‘management with being male’ still persists and permeates organisational culture. Repeated studies have found that both men and women hold implicit associations between men and leadership; and that both men’s and women’s responses to male leaders are more positive than their responses to female leaders. ‘Not only are women considered less favourably than men for leadership positions, but if they do display the qualities considered important

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15 Morley (2013)
16 Morley (2013) p2
17 Morrison and von Glinow (1990) p200
18 Eagly and Carli (2007)
19 Ryan and Haslam (2007)
20 Alimo-Metcalfe (2004)
21 ibid p161
22 Berthoin Antal and Izreali (1993)
23 summarised in Valian (1999); Kandola (2009); ECU (2013)
for leadership, these qualities are considered less favourably than when demonstrated by a man.\textsuperscript{24} As a result of this, particular qualities associated with white men are normalised and prioritised within key organisational processes such as selection and recruitment and promotion, thus creating gender bias which leads to the continued ‘cloning’ of the dominant group.\textsuperscript{25}

Conceptions of leadership that draw on social identity theory offer a useful lens through which to view gendered constructions of leadership. Haslam et al\textsuperscript{26} describe the importance of leaders’ membership of in-groups or out-groups, and the use they and others make of these overlapping and intersectional memberships. This in turn influences how their behaviour is described and interpreted, which determines the extent to which their leadership is valued by others around them. Leadership, they argue, is socially constructed: ‘a group process in which leaders and followers are joined together – and perceive themselves to be joined together – in shared endeavour’.\textsuperscript{27} The authors argue that ‘heroic’ or ‘trait’ models of leadership risk reinforcing the stereotypes in which, through an essentialist elision of practice, behaviour and qualities, masculine behaviours are those most often associated with leadership qualities. Leadership in the social identity model involves understanding and reflecting the identity of the group; representing, and being seen to reflect, the identity and interests of the group; and realising or advancing the group’s interests in the wider world. Bolden et al\textsuperscript{28} used social identity theory in a study of academic leadership in the UK, and conclude that academic leadership consists of providing a holding space to enable productive academic work; working for and with the group; and boundary-spanning on behalf of individuals and groups. In applying this theoretical frame to the present study, we take the view that although the processes of social construction of leadership can (unlike essentialist discourses) create spaces in which to negotiate the meanings of gender, race and other aspects of personal identity, this negotiation may present additional challenges for those leaders or aspiring leaders whose personal identity places them in the out-group.

Some research strands on the under-representation of women in senior management roles highlight differences between men and women’s experiences, circumstances and aspirations. Lewis\textsuperscript{29} summarises research on gender differences of leaders’ styles and behaviours where men are traditionally seen as possessing a set of characteristics termed ‘initiating structure behaviour’, while women are seen as possessing ‘consideration behaviour’ characteristics. Differences are explained not only in terms of biological differences but more significantly as a result of the effects of socialisation, and these studies propose that women have higher interpersonal sensitivity and human relation skills, suggesting that women can be more effective leaders than men. The findings of Broussine and Fox’s study of women chief executives\textsuperscript{30} in local government support this analysis. ‘Some felt that skills such as effectiveness with people and bringing about transformational change equipped women colleagues especially for meeting the challenges of local government modernisation.’\textsuperscript{31}

However, these research findings are contested both in conceptual and empirical terms. More empirically based research\textsuperscript{32} tends to point to the absence of significant differences between men and women; and research on unconscious bias\textsuperscript{33} indicates the human tendency to magnify differences between members of the in-group and members of the out-group. We would caution against stereotyping gender differences and essentialism as being unhelpful and leading to the continuation of existing dominant paradigms and dogma in relation to patterns of career development for men and women. ‘Women’ are not a homogenous group with age, race, culture, motherhood, sexual orientation, life experience, academic culture and caring roles all having an impact. Other debates\textsuperscript{34} have re-examined gender by de-emphasising difference. Difference becomes understood as socially and culturally specific and historically fluid rather than biological. As Minow (1985) suggests, by ‘both focusing on and ignoring difference [we] risk recreating it. This is the dilemma of difference’.\textsuperscript{35}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{24} Eagly and Karau (2002), cited in ECU (2013) p22
\bibitem{25} Gronn and Lacey (2006), cited in Morley (2013)
\bibitem{26} Haslam, Reicher and Platow (2011)
\bibitem{27} ibid p2
\bibitem{28} Bolden, Gosling, O’Brien, Peters, Ryan and Haslam (2012)
\bibitem{29} Lewis (1998)
\bibitem{30} Broussine and Fox (2003)
\bibitem{31} ibid p5
\bibitem{32} Bass and Stogdill (1990)
\bibitem{33} summarised in ECU (2013)
\bibitem{34} Hyde (1981)
\bibitem{35} Minow (1985) p160
\end{thebibliography}
Other accounts highlight characteristics of women and suggest women make a better organisational investment in the contemporary context. Recently, a positive discourse on women in leadership roles is developing around the debate about women’s under-representation on company boards. A number of studies have presented evidence that suggests that companies with a higher representation of women on their boards overall perform better. These arguments are underpinned by the ‘business case for diversity’, which, however, has been criticised for being contingent on factors such as company profitability and the state of the economy. Thus the case for improving gender diversity could prove fragile if entirely based on pragmatic and utilitarian business arguments. We would argue that in order to ensure sustainable progress it is important that the goal of increasing gender diversity is rooted in the social justice case for gender equality and that business arguments are only used in a complementary way.

If we turn to the higher education context, it has been argued that the new managerial culture adopted by the sector is underpinned by a masculine style of management. However, empirical research suggests that some collegiate approaches rooted in a more traditional type of academic culture can be equally deeply masculine. Others argue that the new managerial culture can open up opportunities for women. This claim is consistent with the findings of a large study that explored the career trajectories of 137 academic senior managers, including vice-chancellors. The findings from this research suggest that greater emphasis on management has opened up opportunities for women to be promoted to senior roles. However, they also indicate that women’s working experiences are likely to be influenced by ‘gender power relations’. O’Connor’s research on Irish universities indicates that many of them are still male dominated and permeated by a ‘homosocial’ culture where by and large men are most comfortable working with other men. On a more positive note, however, this study found that even in such male-dominated working environments, the importance of increasing the number of women in senior management roles was widely acknowledged.

**Gender and careers**

The literature on women and careers contains a growing body of work that spans experiences of the workplace, work–life balance issues and career aspirations and expectations. As discussed above, there are many ‘twists and turns’ that women may have to negotiate in their professional journey and some of the factors that can act as barriers to women’s career progression are discussed in this section. The section ends with a summary of relevant literature that considers career decision-making processes and differences between men and women’s career paths.

A key factor that affects women’s experience in the workplace is the gendered division of labour, in which women, whether partnered or single, face expectations that they will act as primary carers for children, partners and parents. This requires having to constantly re-negotiate the boundaries between their family responsibilities and work. It has also implications for working patterns and earnings since a higher proportion of women in the sector, as indeed in many other sectors, work part-time. Part-time working not only impacts on women’s earnings but it can also undermine their career prospects since the idea that senior jobs can only be done on a full-time basis is still widespread in HEIs. Furthermore, women’s caring responsibilities and periods of absence from the workplace (ie, maternity and parental leave) can slow down their career progression; it is interesting to note that Breakwell and Tytherleigh’s study of vice-chancellors found that women were appointed at a slightly higher age than men. The female vice-chancellors in their report were less likely to have children than the male vice-chancellors, which is a common pattern when comparing male and female leaders.

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36 Barsh and Yee (2011); European Commission (2012)
37 Dickens (1994)
38 Morley (1999); Saunderson (2002); also see Morley (2013) on management and masculinity
39 Thomas and Davies (2002)
40 Goode and Bagilhole (1998)
41 Deem (2003)
42 ibid p254
43 O’Connor (2012)
44 Morley (2013)
45 ECU (2012)
46 Doherty and Manfredi (2006)
47 Breakwell and Tytherleigh (2008)
Women’s family responsibilities and broader considerations about their work–life balance can be incompatible with organisational practices that demand a separation between career and life. This may deter them from applying for leadership roles that involve dealing with complex and competing demands and require them ‘to be available and work longer than a normal working week’. This is described as ‘greedy work’, and this notion is further reinforced by accounts in the media of senior academics starting their working day as early as three o’clock in the morning.

Further considerations about women’s career progression in higher education relate to the role played by research in the advancement of academic careers. Analysis of gender and research activity in the 2001 and 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) undertaken by Hefce shows that women had significantly lower selection rates compared with that of their male colleagues. A lower research profile may affect women’s ability to gain promotion at professorial level. An even more profound issue about women’s research activities has been raised by Rees. She argues that the under-representation of women in research-focused decision-making structures can lead to a ‘gendered construction of academic excellence’ that may ‘contribute, albeit inadvertently, to institutionalised sexism’. Thus she calls for the adoption of measures for ‘gender proofing’ the design of research assessment processes. Currently only 20% of professors are women; given that most vice-chancellors and pro-vice-chancellors are appointed from this pool of academics, it is difficult to see how gender equality can be achieved in these roles in the near future if male professors continue to outnumber female professors.

Other issues that may affect women’s advancement in higher education relate to self-imposed limitations in terms of career aspirations. Research shows that women are often more reluctant to put themselves forward for promotion even when they meet promotion criteria, and that fewer of them tend to plan their careers. However, when they do apply for senior roles they tend to have higher rates of success.

A number of factors have also been identified as enablers in developing careers. These include the importance of mentoring and coaching, accumulating social capital (eg, professional networks) and sponsorship from senior and influential colleagues as well as reliable career advice. Provisions for maternity leave and for childcare also play an important role in helping women to manage their caring responsibilities with their career aspirations. A qualitative study involving 81 interviews of male and female vice-chancellors and leaders in other senior roles in Australia found that interviewees believed that a ‘critical mass of women in senior positions, opportunities to network, encouragement and support from organisational leaders, friendly and collegial environments and strong organisational commitment to values’ are all factors of key importance to increase women’s representation in senior roles.

There is limited discussion in the literature about the career experiences of women working in professional roles in higher education in spite of the fact that a more managerial approach to universities’ governance has led to the development of a wide range of functions and jobs in non-academic roles. It has been highlighted, however, that career routes for these jobs are not always clear and well developed, although some universities have recognised this issue and taken action to address it. Another area that appears to be significantly under-researched is the experience of women (and men) entering higher education in their mid-career from other sectors and their career trajectory in higher education.

Finally in this section we summarise relevant literature on career decision-making processes, and on differences between men’s and women’s career patterns.

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48 O’Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria (2008)
49 Billing (2011) p301
50 Currie, Thiele and Harris (2002); Gronn and Lacey (2006), cited in Morley (2013)
51 Jump (2013)
52 Hefce (2006, 2009)
54 ibid p119
55 Doherty and Manfredi (2006; 2010)
56 Winchester, Shard, Browning and Chesterman (2006)
57 De Vries, Webb and Eveline (2006)
58 Kumra and Vinnicombe (2010)
59 Doherty and Manfredi (2010)
60 Ledwith and Manfredi (2000)
61 Chesterman and Ross-Smith (2006) p549
With regard to the process of career decision-making, social cognitive career theory proposes three main influences on career decisions: self-efficacy; personal goals and aspirations; and (imagined) representations of possible future roles and identities.\(^{63}\) Imagined ‘possible selves’ can shape aspirations, whilst the experience of trying out ‘provisional selves’ can help to shape self-efficacy as well as clarifying aspirations. These prospective role models are important since they provide images of ‘possible selves’. If there are few models, and if one’s own primary identity is stigmatised,\(^{64}\) individuals may struggle to construct a sense of what they can achieve.\(^{65}\) However, there might be a danger of ‘normalising’ discourses and unintended stereotyping if there are only a few token representatives from some under-represented groups.

The work of O’Neil and Bilimoria\(^{66}\) provides an interesting framework to explore women’s career patterns. The authors summarise research that indicates that women typically have different career patterns from men: ‘classic’ (male) career development models represent the middle and later career years as those of stability, maintenance and decline. Research on the stages of women’s development suggests that women find a renewed sense of purpose, energy and increased vitality for work pursuits in middle adulthood.\(^{67}\) Margaret Mead’s concept of ‘post-menopausal zest’ would seem to dispute the use of such words as stability, maintenance and decline to describe women aged 40 and beyond.\(^{68}\)

O’Neil and Bilimoria’s own research proposes a career model broadly distinguishing women’s careers in three phases: the early career phase, defined as ‘idealistic achievement’; mid-career, defined as ‘pragmatic endurance’; late career, defined as ‘reinventing contribution’. The model suggests that women move from an early career stage, largely based on their aspirations and driven by a desire for career satisfaction, to a mid-career stage where they may become disillusioned and dissatisfied with their work. It is suggested that at this stage women ‘are pragmatic about their careers and they are operating in a production mode doing what it takes to get it done.’\(^{69}\) The authors hypothesise that at this stage, women are facing up to the recognition that ‘to a large degree their career development is now impacted by others’ and ‘questioning the essential centrality of careers in their lives, given the other increasing demands on their time’. At this stage their career may plateau and risk ‘stagnation.’\(^{70}\) But if they avoid succumbing to ‘pragmatic endurance’ and move to the next stage of ‘reinventing contribution’, this may drive them to seek roles where they can live integrated lives and make a greater contribution to their organisations, their families and their communities.

Diversity issues in higher education

Morley\(^{71}\) highlights in her stimulus paper that the literature on gender treats women as a homogeneous group and often overlooks differences in age, ethnicity, sexualities, culture and social class. We add that differences tend to be understood as a one-dimensional issue and research often fails to capture the interplay of different equality characteristics and how these can affect an individual’s experience. We therefore extended our review to consider recent literature exploring diversity issues in higher education either individually or from an intersectional perspective.

BME staff

Despite increasing numbers of BME students in higher education, the number of black academics remains very low. Presence of an ‘ivory ceiling’, with black academics maintaining that they experience ‘passive racism’, need to work twice as hard as their white peers and are passed over for promotion is evident across a number of years. Common perceptions include the idea that looking or sounding ‘foreign’ can be a disadvantage, and different cultural backgrounds are felt to influence leadership styles, for example, having a strong sense of community.\(^{72}\) Furthermore, studies have shown that black female staff are likely to be disadvantaged, on lower pay with more short-term contracts and concentrated within lower status universities.\(^{73}\)

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64 Goffman (1963)
65 Ibarra (1999); see also Slay and Smith (2011) on black journalists in the 1970s
66 O’Neil and Bilimoria (2005) p184
68 O’Neil and Bilimoria (2005) p170
69 ibid p183
70 Sandberg (2013)
71 Morley (2013)
72 Mirza (2006); Sanders (2005); Jones (2006); Bebbington (2009); Bhopal, cited in Gibney (2013)
This, it is argued, means a loss of talented and able people from British academia, with estimates that 50% of black, male British social scientists are unable to find suitable posts in the UK, and a contention that promotion prospects are fairer for BME academics in the US.\(^{74}\)

Wright et al\(^{75}\) indicate a range of factors that contribute to unfair treatment through institutional racism, including lack of provision of services for BME groups, inequity in employment practices, an ethnically exclusive occupational culture, lack of positive action, excluding minorities from decision-making and lack of training. Furthermore a study undertaken by ECU about the experience of BME staff in higher education in England highlighted recruitment problems in attracting BME applicants, that UK national BME reported ‘lower level of support for professional development of administrative and management roles’ and that many BME staff felt that they were ‘deliberately ignored’ in their workplace.\(^{76}\) Jones\(^{77}\) points to: the adoption of equality policies simply for compliance; reporting systems that do not work or are not taken seriously; fear of victimisation; limited understanding of legislation at higher levels within the university and lack of BME presence in decision-making bodies. Although legislation has raised the profile of race and ethnicity, these have now been ‘de-prioritised and fallen down the [HEI] agenda’.\(^{78}\)

Wright et al further highlight a concentration of BME academics in lower grades, which can give strong messages and reinforce stereotypes.\(^{79}\) Under-representation of BME people on REF panels is also problematic.\(^{80}\) A study further shows disproportionately high numbers of white senior staff, with virtually all vice-chancellors appointed between 1997 and 2008 being white.\(^{81}\)

Strategies for overcoming the issues faced by BME leaders have included: identifying talented people at an early age and training them; including equality issues on training courses; and emphasising the business case for diversity. Lumby and Coleman further cite the pairing of senior (white) leaders with BME staff to offer support and learning,\(^{82}\) and a mentoring project to raise the expectations of women and BME leaders.\(^{83}\)

Disability

Issues surrounding disability in higher education careers are significantly under-researched. Ewens et al\(^{84}\) report on the lack of support for disabled staff, particularly as this lags behind that given to disabled students. Stone and Colella\(^{85}\) advocate training programmes to expose stereotypes, give colleagues clear information on how to treat people with disabilities and help address anxieties about working with disabled colleagues. Ewens et al\(^{86}\) state that having high-profile disabled people within higher education sends a strong message that reduces the stigma of disability.

Radar\(^{87}\) reported on senior (non-higher education) disabled individuals, highlighting the tendency of disabilities research to focus on inclusion rather than career advancement. Radar’s study identified support and sponsorship at a senior level, mentoring and role models as well as close relationships with trusted colleagues as key to success. In addition, successful disabled people at senior levels were identified as adopting proactive strategies, exercising leadership throughout their careers to change their organisations and educating colleagues. Furthermore, the experience of a disability could be an asset in achieving such success.

LGBT

The involvement of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in academia and higher education management is a further area that is significantly under-researched, as addressed by the ECU study of LGBT staff and students\(^{88}\) and subsequent guidelines to address inequality and discrimination for these groups.\(^{89}\)
The ECU study identified a number of areas affecting career progression by LGBT people, with a key concern for LGBT people being whether to come out. Prejudice against queer research interests, for example, had prompted some respondents to remove publications on LGBT research from their CVs to avoid discrimination. Coming out was also felt to prejudice the possibility of having contracts made permanent, extended or renewed, and expose LGBT staff to discrimination relating to promotion, pay and redundancy. The inability to come out restricted access to internal support mechanisms and the ability to report harassment or seek help. An earlier study, conducted in 2001, also found that LGBT people experienced discomfort in the workplace with low numbers being ‘out’, evidence of a ‘glass ceiling’, and reports of discrimination and harassment.\(^90\)

Some common practices were also felt to disadvantage LGBT people. The heteronormative privileging of ‘men with families to support’\(^91\) led to less favourable treatment in pay structures. LGBT staff further reported exclusion from important social networks.

No research was identified focusing on the experiences for trans people in senior management roles, though research by ECU\(^92\) about the general experience of trans staff working in higher education highlighted that trans staff reported a higher level of negative treatment compared to LGB staff. ECU has published guidelines\(^93\) for general good practice, including ways to create a trans-friendly, supportive environment and examples of discrimination such as refusing to promote trans staff.

Class
As a group traditionally under-represented in higher education, working-class young people are a target for ‘diversity’ initiatives,\(^94\) and there is a small body of work concerning working-class (primarily) female academics. Hey\(^95\) describes the alienation of being working class within a middle-class environment, needing to conform and ‘fit in’, and argues that the only ‘escape’ is with ‘self-publicity through volumes of publishing.’\(^96\) She urges academics to hold up their own practices to scrutiny, challenging a ‘natural academic order’ where the norm is a male professor directing female contract researchers.\(^97\) Archer’s work\(^98\) also found that young working-class academics (both male and female) perceive their background as a hindrance, employ strategies and pretence to fit into the ‘dominant middle class’,\(^99\) and need help to understand middle-class values and succeed as ‘authentic’ academics.\(^100\)

Age
A small number of studies on the impact of age look at younger academics. Bolden et al\(^101\) cite Deem’s ‘career track’ route, where younger/early-career academics decide at a young age to pursue a management role and seek out leadership tasks, places on committees, etc to achieve this. These are seen as a ‘new breed’\(^102\) of academics who wish to develop a more rounded set of skills in response to the evolution of senior roles as more strategic roles with power beyond a ‘pure’ academic. Bolden et al also found evidence of career-track academics moving between institutions to avoid a ‘glass ceiling’ at a younger age.

Maguire\(^103\) explored intersections of age and gender, and how being positioned as an ‘older woman’ can work to exclude, with some feeling invisible in the workplace and adjusting their appearance to avoid this. Others reported feeling empowered by age and experience, though for some their accompanying departmental longevity led to increased administrative burdens and pastoral work. Some participants had been stereotyped as ‘carers’ who were no longer interested in promotion or furthering their careers. There is also some evidence that patterns of discrimination for women academics continues into retirement, not least because of cumulative effects of interrupted careers and retiring on lower grades.\(^104\)
Religion and belief
A further under-researched area is the effect of religion and belief on leadership development, despite the ‘growing range of religiously oriented policy demands’ on HEIs and the challenges these might present for management and leadership roles. ECU’s research of staff and students (although not focussed specifically on senior leaders) found that there was some evidence of discrimination and harassment of some religion or belief groups, but little systematic work had been done to identify this across different religions and beliefs. Other publications in this area focus primarily on student support (for example, Bartram) and the promotion of good campus relations.

Final note
In terms of diversity issues, therefore, the literature shows experiences of bias and differential treatment by BME groups, sometimes exacerbated by gender. The importance of recognising individual differences is highlighted, with senior level leadership and support playing a key role in overcoming negative stereotypes. Development and mentoring programmes are also important for addressing an overall lack of diversity.

This overview of the literature enabled the research team to draw on a robust theoretical framework to develop the research instruments and inform an initial discussion with a sample of TMP alumni through a series of focus groups. Details about these focus groups and their purpose are outlined in the next section about methodology and research design.

1.3 Methodology and research design
A mixed methodology was adopted, which encompassed both a quantitative and a qualitative approach. This had the advantage of enabling the research team to combine the ‘specificity’ of quantitative data with the ‘ability to interpret idiosyncrasies and complex perceptions provided by qualitative analysis’, but also to achieve greater confidence in the research findings by using multiple methods. The methodology was articulated into two main stages which involved a preparatory phase followed by data collection as summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Summary of methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparatory Stage</th>
<th>Data Collection Stage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Literature review to develop a robust theoretical framework to inform research instruments.</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus groups to gather initial data to develop research instruments</td>
<td>Interview sampling strategy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>One-to-one interviews with a sample of TMP alumni and nominating managers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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106 Dinham and Jones (2012) p185
107 Weller, Hooley, Moore and ECU (2011)
108 Bartram (2009)
109 ECU (2005; 2007)
110 Zamanou and Glaser (1994) p478
111 Webb, Campbell, Schwartz and Secherest (1966)
Stage 1: literature review and focus groups
A comprehensive literature review was undertaken, as highlighted in the previous section, followed by an initial discussion with a sample of TMP alumni through a series of focus groups. The purpose of these discussions was to explore the range and variability of alumni's views on topics drawn from the research brief and to develop the research instruments for the second stage of the project. Overall, 26 alumni (14 women and 12 men) attended these focus groups. The number of participants in each discussion group ranged from a minimum of four to a maximum of 12. Each focus group lasted 90 minutes, and was facilitated by two members of the research team. Alumni who volunteered to take part in these discussion groups were also offered an opportunity for networking and reviewing the benefits of action learning sets from TMP.

Stage 2: surveys of TMP alumni and nominating managers and interviews
Two online surveys were developed: one aimed at TMP alumni, and one aimed at nominating managers. The overall aim of the survey for the TMP alumni was three-fold: secure a diverse sample of alumni to be interviewed; map alumni’s career trajectories; and identify themes relating to their career path and experiences. These themes were to be further investigated through one-to-one interviews. For data protection and confidentiality reasons it was not possible to access equality-related personal characteristics of TMP alumni through the existing database held by the Leadership Foundation. Thus, the only way to construct a diverse sample of interviewees, and capture possible issues raised by the intersection of different equality characteristics, was to invite self-disclosure as part of the survey design, and to ask respondents whether they would be prepared to be interviewed.

The survey was administered using SurveyMonkey and it was sent to all contactable alumni (465) by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. A short online survey was sent to 124 non-TMP alumni nominating managers who are vice-chancellors and principals to detect any patterns to be investigated more thoroughly through one-to-one interviews with a sample of selected participants from this group. Similarly to the survey of TMP alumni, a sample of nominating managers willing to be interviewed was identified through self-disclosure and an explicit offer to be interviewed.

The online surveys were followed by a series of one-to-one telephone/Skype interviews with a sample of TMP alumni and nominating managers. Telephone/Skype interviews were chosen partly because they are more cost-effective but also because this method provides greater flexibility for the participants. This can be especially useful when research participants are in very senior roles with many demands on their time. They may need to reschedule an interview at short notice, or may be located abroad.

Our sampling strategy, for selecting at least 30 alumni of both genders to invite for interview, involved reviewing survey question responses to identify individuals with one, or ideally a combination, of several characteristics which included: equality-related personal characteristics (eg gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc); different patterns of work (eg part time, full time); reporting incidents of ‘less favourable treatment’ relating to equality characteristics; late entry into higher education; different roles (eg academic, professional services); different jobs; and universities in different mission groups. The selected interview candidates therefore represented the diversity of the TMP alumni sample.

The final sample for this research was representative of the total sample of alumni and non-TMP nominating managers who responded to the surveys. Forty-two interviews were conducted with alumni (23 women and 19 men) and 12 interviews with four nominating managers who are not TMP alumni and with eight who are TMP alumni (in total four women and eight men).

Data analysis and research ethics
Survey data was analysed cross-sectionally to create descriptive and inferential statistics, whilst textual responses to open survey questions were content-analysed for common issues. Excel was used for basic descriptive statistics. SPSS (v.21) was used for inferential and descriptive statistical analysis.

For the purpose of conducting statistical tests, our sample of respondents was categorised into four groups: gender (males and females); age (younger and older); career development status (this included respondents who had successfully applied after attending TMP for more senior roles and those who had been unsuccessful); profession. On the basis of the different types of career reported by our sample of respondents, we divided this latter group into academics, non-academic professional and those...
who had ‘complex careers’; partly in the higher education sector as well as other sectors. Three types of analysis were run focusing on three key questions: barriers and constraints (question 7); enabling factors (question 4); and alumni career development after TMP (question 19). The first two analyses were the independent samples t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). These were used to see if the differences between the mean scores of different groups were statistically significant. The third one was the chi-squared test, which was used to test the independence between groups.

The interviews were analysed with the aid of QSR Nvivo (v.10), which was used for data management and topic coding and this helped to make sense of a rich and large dataset. A thematic approach was adopted for the qualitative data analysis which reflected a) the topics identified in the preceding literature review (which influenced the questions asked during interviews), and b) themes identified inductively from systematic (re-)reading of data followed by discussion and interpretation within the research team.

This research was potentially sensitive since it involved contact with a large number of TMP alumni throughout the sector, and it involved participants sharing their personal stories and their institution's decision-making processes. Thus, considerations about research ethics were taken into account throughout the different stages of the research process in order to ensure that the work was carried out to the highest ethical standards. Participants in this research were provided with information about the purpose of this study, research ethics and confidentiality, as well as a link to the Oxford Brookes University Research Ethics Committee which had approved this research.
Part 2: Research findings

2.1 Introduction
This part of the report presents the research findings from the questionnaires and from the interviews with both TMP alumni and non-TMP nominating managers. As outlined earlier, the research brief focused on five specific objectives which were, as follows, to:

- Map the career trajectories of TMP alumni with a focus on gender from a variety of institutional locations, professional backgrounds and demographic characteristics, including ethnicity and disability (where known).
- Explore the experiences of TMP alumni, in particular their view and experiences of how their ethnicity, disability, gender, etc may have influenced their career paths.
- Highlight factors that may have facilitated or hindered the career progression of TMP alumni.
- Explore gender and issues around motherhood, gendered subject areas and other factors that may or may not impact on career choice.
- Examine the process of nomination and follow-up to TMP in a selected sample of institutions.

As already mentioned earlier, during the preparatory stages we conducted focus groups with a sample of TMP alumni to explore the range and variability of alumni's views on topics drawn from the research brief. From this preliminary data we developed the research instruments, namely the questionnaires and interview protocols. A copy of the focus group discussion themes is available in Appendix 1. Table 2 provides a summary of the key findings from these discussion groups (for a full account of the findings from the focus groups see Appendix 2).

Table 2 Summary of key findings from the focus groups

- There is a significant lack of diversity in senior management roles in the sector, especially with regard to BME staff. This is likely to be perpetuated by all-male and predominantly white senior management teams across the sector.
- Some institutions have improved women's representation in senior roles but such progress is still fragile and women continue to be significantly under-represented among vice-chancellors.
- Women are less likely to put themselves forward for promotion and rewards compared with men.
- LGBT and disability are largely unseen and unspoken. Role models of senior people who are openly gay can have a positive effect on institutions.
- Experiences of bias in careers were reported, including as a result of gender, homophobic attitudes, social class and having entered the sector from a non-academic background.
- There are different views about the use of positive action measures to improve women's representation in senior roles. Some remain opposed to them as they are seen to undermine the principle of meritocracy; others, however, feel that 'we have run out of soft options' and these measures are now necessary to achieve results. However, there seems to be a lack of understanding of what kind of positive action measures would be permitted under current equality legislation.
- Career structures have changed a lot in the sector in recent decades. Most notably they have moved on from a system of rotating senior roles to increased managerialism but also greater opportunities in an increased number of universities. There is not a single career path in higher education but a variety of routes for progression.
- TMP was seen as providing an important credential for applying for senior roles. This programme was perceived as having a lot of strengths and the most commonly mentioned was the opportunity to network with colleagues from other institutions. Some weaknesses were also identified and most notably the absence of equality and diversity in the TMP curriculum.
- A number of suggestions were made to address equality and diversity issues in the sector which included: the need to promote a debate among senior managers about equality and diversity (E&D) issues that goes beyond legal compliance; covering E&D issues in the TMP and other training for senior managers; requiring departments to produce E&D action plans; and focusing on recruitment and promotion processes to secure a pipeline of potential applicants from under-represented groups.
- Greater attention needs to be paid to the diversity of institutional boards/councils. The lack of diversity can represent an obstacle to appointing more vice-chancellors from under-represented groups.
- Linking funding to E&D can help to achieve positive outcomes.
The questionnaires
A set of questions was developed for the online questionnaire with TMP alumni (see Appendix 3), which covered the following topics:

- Career trajectories and roles undertaken either within the higher education sector or in other sectors.
- Patterns of work (e.g., full time, part time).
- Factors which either enabled or constrained their careers.
- Equality-related issues experienced during respondents’ careers.
- Participants’ experiences of the TMP and how this had influenced their careers.
- Participants’ experiences of nominating other colleagues for TMP (The facility to skip this set of questions was used for those who are not nominating managers.).
- The equality-related personal characteristics of respondents.

A total of 183 responses were received, which represents almost 40% of the total contactable cohort of TMP alumni (465). Of these, 111 respondents, representing 24% of the total sample (61% of respondents) offered to be interviewed. This was a very positive response which indicates the commitment felt by alumni to the aims of this project.

The interviews with a sample of TMP alumni (23 women and 19 men) offered the opportunity to explore in more depth the areas identified in the research brief as well as the themes that emerged from the survey results. An issue that was raised both in the survey as well as in the focus groups was social class and how this might have affected individuals’ identities and their career experiences. Thus, the interviews started with a question designed to capture information about the socio-economic background of the interviewees, their early years and university education and how these had contributed to shaping their values and personal identities (see Appendix 4 for the full list of interview questions).

A separate questionnaire was administered to nominating managers and interviews with a sample of 12 of them (4 women and 8 men) were carried out. Both the questionnaire and the interviews (see respectively Appendix 5 and Appendix 6) with this group were designed to gain a better understanding of the process involved in nominating staff for the TMP and they covered the following areas:

- How does the nomination process work and who is normally involved in addition to vice-chancellors?
- To what extent do equality and diversity feature in the nomination process?
- What benefits are expected to be achieved from the TMP for individuals, institutions and the higher education sector as a whole?
- What are respondents’ views about diversity in leadership roles within the higher education sector?

An integrated approach has been adopted to discuss both survey results and the findings from the interviews. Thus the two sets of results are presented by taking a thematic approach, rather than separately, focusing on ‘the substantive issues rather than on the different methods.’ We have used quotations from the interviews with both TMP alumni and nominating managers throughout this report to give our participants a voice. The following sections start with an outline of the demographic profile of the alumni who took part in this research, followed by an account of their early years, university education and career trajectories. The following areas are then discussed: career journeys and families; barriers and constraints on career progression; enabling factors and qualities; and the nomination process. This section concludes with views from TMP alumni and nominating managers about what should be done to increase diversity in leadership roles and alumni’s future aspirations.

Demographic profile of the alumni who responded to the survey

Gender
The demographics of survey respondents are similar to what is known about TMP alumni generally. The proportion of male to female alumni who responded to the survey was respectively 55% and 45% — roughly similar to that of the total cohort of alumni (42.8% women and 57.2% men based on a total of 612).
Ethnicity
In terms of ethnicity, 95.5% of respondents were white and 3% described themselves as being from a BME heritage (1.7% preferred not to say). This proportion is slightly lower than that of all BME alumni of the TMP (4%). It should be noted that this is still higher than the proportion of UK BME senior managers in the whole of the higher education sector currently, which is just 1.2%.

Age
The age profile (Figure 2 (survey respondents) and Figure 3 (interviewees)) shows a younger profile in favour of women (25% were in their 40s compared with 19% of men).

Figure 2 TMP alumni survey respondents’ age profile split by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Birth</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
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<tr>
<td>Before 1953</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-1962</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-1972</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 TMP alumni interviewees’ age profile split by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Birth</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 1953</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-1962</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-1972</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other equality-related characteristics
Very low levels of disability were reported, well below the overall proportion of self-reported disabled senior managers working in the higher education sector, which currently stands at 2.8%. Disclosure of other equality-related characteristics was also very low and due to the small numbers involved, these figures are not included in this report in order to protect participants’ confidentiality. The reasons for this may include reluctance to disclose a disability or long term health condition; in the case of this study, this may be partly because this cohort of participants has an age profile that has not benefited from any improvements to the climate for disabled staff. There could also be a lack of understanding that some conditions, for example those that are degenerative, fit the legal definition of disability (for example cancer from the point of diagnosis). It is likely that it is still exceptionally difficult for a disabled person to achieve a very senior position and that there were few disabled people in our sample.

115 ECU (2013)
116 ECU (2013a)
Early years: the development of identity

More than half of the TMP alumni who took part in the interviews were the first generation in their family to go to university (26 out of a total of 42 interviewees). Most of them went to state schools (30 in total, of which just about half attended a grammar school and the other half mainly comprehensive or secondary modern). Only a few went to independent schools or attended schools overseas.\(^{117}\)

Many alumni were born into working-class/lower middle-class families, with fewer into families where the parents were professionals and had either been at university or received further education. Most of them said that they had received significant encouragement from their parents to get an education and to go to university, even if the parents themselves had not had the benefit of a full education and in some cases left school in their early teenage years. The following quotations provide some typical examples:

My mum and dad came from ordinary working-class backgrounds...neither of them were educated beyond 14 or 15...we were always encouraged to read and we were always encouraged to talk about school and to talk about what we were doing.

Female respondent

My father was a very bright, very intelligent man who was a product or a victim of the era in which he was a young man. He was head boy of the Roman Catholic school...but had to leave school at 14 because his income was necessary to support his family. Clearing his papers out a few years ago I realised he'd got the kind of school reports that I'd only ever dreamed of getting...I was always in an environment where education was valued highly – my mother also went out to work, she was a kitchen assistant.

Male respondent

A few also paid tribute to their teachers, as one male interviewee said:

I went to a primary school where we had an inspirational headteacher who believed that every kid that stepped through that door could conquer the world. And you were always given the confidence to believe that you had the capacity to be what you wanted to be.

Male respondent

A couple of female interviewees, who had attended state schools where very few pupils went to university, recalled that they would not have gone to Oxbridge had it not been for their teachers' encouragement to apply.

Several interviewees were brought up in rural parts of the UK and some felt constrained by their environment: ‘the main struggle for me was living in quite a remote community and friendships could often be quite distant’ (male respondent). However, what was perceived as a constraint often became a strong drive to go to university which was seen as ‘a good way of escaping’ and to broaden one's horizons. Conversely, others recalled how their upbringing in large cities helped to shape their belief and values, through exposure, for example, to ‘cosmopolitan’ living and different classes of people, which raised their awareness of social justice.

It was clear from these accounts that parents and in some cases teachers had a decisive influence in shaping identities and views about the transformative value of education. This group belongs to a generation where a low proportion of the population went into higher education and their own experience of going to university meant that for many they were able to move up the social ladder:

\[\text{\ldots in terms of social mobility I was able to move on quite well as a result of being able to go to University.}\]

Male respondent

\(^{117}\) Out of the remaining 12 who did not attend state schools, only three attended an independent school in the UK; five went to school in other countries but did not provide information as to whether these school were state- or privately run; one attended a state school and then won a scholarship to attend an independent school; three did not disclose whether their school was in the state or independent sector.
Furthermore, from a gender perspective it is worth highlighting that most of the women in our sample were not only the first in their generation to go to university but also to have highly successful careers. Most of them, save for a few exceptions, had no role models of women pursuing a career in their early years since their mothers either did not work or, if they worked, they seemed to have jobs as opposed to professional careers. The only female role models these women were exposed to were teachers, who were often single women with no children, whereas several women in our sample were married and had children. Moreover, they belong to a generation where women were expected to prioritise marriage and family and, if they worked at all, to give this up once they started to have children, as exemplified by the comments of one female interviewee:

I’m from [X]...which is an area of considerable social and educational deprivation...[from] a very large family, boys as well as girls. We were encouraged to pursue ambitions and have successful careers. That was not the norm at the time...so it was very much the girls were expected to leave school and go and help to support the family, the boys were encouraged more into education, but luckily that did not happen in my family. They were aware of the benefits of education so they encouraged us all to keep going and they wanted us all to go into professions. That to them was the very peak of what they wanted for us all to achieve. So I didn’t feel any disadvantages throughout my schooling whatsoever really.

Very few interviewees were not actively encouraged to go to university either by their parents or their teachers, although they seemed to have developed their own determination to attend university almost as a reaction to their environment. A few interviewees of both genders had not completed their A-levels or had left school early but at a later stage in life had the opportunity to enter higher education as mature students.

University education

The majority of the interviewees went to university straight from school to read a range of different subjects spanning humanities to social sciences to science, engineering and technology (SET). Some developed a passion for the subject that they studied at university when they were still at school. Moreover, quite a few women in our sample did degrees in SET subjects in spite of belonging to a generation where it was uncommon for women to pursue studies in the natural sciences. Only a few had an Oxbridge education. Most of them did postgraduate studies, typically a Master’s followed by a PhD, sometimes funded by scholarships. Also a few of them were offered a position as research assistant straight after completing their first degree and did their PhD on a part-time basis.

A few interviewees of both genders left school with no A-levels, and undertook degrees as mature students. One man and one woman were working for the NHS and when NHS education was incorporated into higher education this offered them the opportunity to read for a degree and subsequently develop their career in higher education. Another male interviewee started his career in the public sector, then left and found a job as a social worker, did an MA and subsequently a PhD. It was his social work experience that led to his developing an interest in training and education in higher education and undertaking research in social policy. Another interviewee left school at the age of 16 and got an apprenticeship. He explained how it was almost ‘by accident’ that in his early 20s he was selected to become a shop steward and subsequently offered a one-year scholarship for young trade unionists by the TUC. He also said that after completing this one-year course ‘rather than go back on the tools and go back to being a shop steward through education my horizons were totally changed’ and he was ‘totally lost to the trade union movement because I discovered education and couldn’t get enough of it’.

The experience of joining higher education as mature students had a profound influence on some of the sample and their outlook on higher education and made them realise the importance of ‘the recognition of diversity of education both in terms of need and in terms of how people engage with HE’ and of having ‘different access routes’ into higher education.

Contrary to the belief that higher education is populated by people from a narrow, upper-/middle-class stratum, these accounts show that our sample of alumni came from a range of social backgrounds and that some came to higher education through unconventional routes.
2.2 Career trajectories and key turning points: the establishment of professional and academic identity

The results from the survey, which are summarised in Table 3, show that a higher proportion of men (61%) developed their entire career in the higher education sector as academics than women (36%). By contrast, a significantly higher proportion of women (70%) developed their entire careers in higher education in professional non-academic roles, compared with men (26%). There were a few respondents who spent a short spell of time in their 20s working outside higher education, for example as research assistants in other sectors. Furthermore, a slightly higher proportion of women (59%) than men (41%) joined higher education in service/professional roles after having spent a period of time in the early years of their careers in other sectors (e.g., commercial or public sector).

Table 3 Type of career trajectory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of career trajectory</th>
<th>Total no. of respondents</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Not known</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic career, including lecturing/research, and mainly in HE (except perhaps in 20s)</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early non-HE experience (e.g., commercial or public sector), then professional services role in HE</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always in HE (except perhaps in 20s), in various professional services</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late academic, with lecturing/research, beginning from age 36+</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early commercial/public sector role, then academic role, then returning to commercial/public sector role</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Percentages not provided because of low numbers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic, but now non-HE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Percentages not provided because of low numbers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early academic role, then commercial/public sector role, then returning to HE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Percentages not provided because of low numbers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A significantly higher proportion of women in our sample are in registrar roles (14%) compared with male respondents (5%). There is also a higher proportion of women as directors of professional services (e.g., HR, finance, marketing) (19%), as opposed to 2% of men (see Table 4). The results presented in both Table 3 and Table 4 could lead to two conclusions: either that a higher percentage of women undertake professional services roles in the sector, or that the female TMP alumni that participated in our research are disproportionately represented in professional services roles.

The proportion of men and women in pro-vice-chancellor roles in our sample is almost equal, although slightly higher for women (respectively 24% and 28%); however, there is a significant drop in the proportion of women who are deputy vice-chancellors and vice-chancellors or principals. It is difficult to draw conclusions about the differences between the proportion of men and women in deputy vice-chancellor roles since it is not clear what the relative status of pro-vice-chancellor and deputy vice chancellor is in different HEIs in terms of seniority. Nonetheless, these findings show a significant drop between the role of pro-vice-chancellor and vice-chancellor/principal. This both suggests that something is happening to women’s careers at or above pro-vice-chancellor level specifically, and reinforces the view that there is a question to be asked about whether women at senior levels are more likely to be unsuccessful in their applications for new roles – and, if so, why this might be the case.

Further, of the 45 people in pro-vice-chancellor roles, only two have a career background in professional services roles. Of these, one is male and one female. Of the 32 people in deputy vice-chancellor roles, four (two men, two women) were from professional services backgrounds. All the vice-chancellors and principals in our sample, except for one male vice-chancellor who had a professional background, had academic backgrounds.
Table 4 Respondents’ role at the time of the survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current job role</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VC or principal</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy VC</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-VC</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of department</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of prof. services</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other roles</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews offered the opportunity to explore in more depth the career trajectories of men and women, to ask them about key turning points that had really made a difference in advancing their careers, and also to ask them to what extent they had planned their careers. As seen earlier, alumni in academic and professional services roles present different career paths, so we shall discuss the findings relating to these two groups separately, starting with those with an academic background.

TMP alumni with an academic background

Most of the academics of both genders pursued what could be described as a ‘typical’ linear academic career which started with moving from a PhD to a post-doctoral position including, in a few cases, working overseas in order to establish their credentials in their discipline. This initial period of time was characterised by precarious, fixed-term jobs where their employment often depended on the ability of more senior researchers to win research grants to continue to fund their posts. Nonetheless, this was rather a crucial period where they started to publish, build up their CV and make important connections with research teams and more senior academics that helped them to develop their work. For almost all of them, a major turning point in their careers happened when they got their first academic post. Several interviewees from different disciplines reported that they found it difficult in the early 1980s to find a permanent academic post, probably due to the cuts in funding to the higher education sector. For example, one female interviewee said that in her early career she had a lot of hourly-paid jobs. Eventually she was appointed to a fractional post; this was a major turning point for her and three or four years later she was appointed head of department. Another factor that made it difficult for some to get their first academic post was a certain degree of patronage which appeared to exist in the sector. For example, one male interviewee said that when he started to look for a university lectureship he applied for posts thinking ‘I know that so-and-so is probably going to get this, because they were the post-doc of somebody whose job it was in some sense’.

Once they got a permanent academic post, many alumni we interviewed progressed rapidly from lecturer to senior lecturer, reader and in several cases to research professor. Getting research grants, publications, external policy work and becoming a research leader feature as key stages in the narratives of those who were awarded a professorship. For most of them, the breakthrough into management and subsequently leadership roles happened when they were appointed head of department, which was then typically followed by the position of head of school or dean and, for some, by progression to pro-vide-chancellor, deputy vice-chancellor or vice-chancellor. What emerges from most of the interviewees’ accounts is that many, of both genders, accessed these posts through, in interviewees’ own words, being ‘spotted’ and ‘asked’ to take up these positions or apply for them. It appears that it was not uncommon for these posts, save for vice-chancellor roles, to be allocated on a rotation and elective basis, often through some kind of ‘uncontested conclave’. Below are some typical examples:
[I was] spotted and asked to apply for a head of department job at a university and that was the trigger point that started to take me down the road of academic leadership.

**Male respondent**

…the institution appointed a new dean who then asked if I would work with him as an associate dean and I actually got on very well with him, I thought, ‘I could learn a lot from this chap’, and that was a key turning point for me within my current institution because it allowed me to initially do a cross-faculty role and then my position changed to cross-institutional

**Female respondent**

Others were encouraged by friends and colleagues to apply for senior roles. Marginally more women than men recalled that such encouragement was instrumental in persuading them to make their next career move, as exemplified by this comment:

...a colleague and a close friend of mine drew my attention to a job in [xxx] at [xxx] as head of department, and he said, ‘I think you should apply for this’, [and] I said, ‘It’s a bit early isn’t it?’, and he said, ‘No, you should apply for it’, so I applied for it and I was surprised but I got the job as head of department.

**Female respondent**

From firm academic identities to shakier leadership identities

The narratives from this group of alumni about their career turning points into a management role also revealed an important psychological dimension about the transition from a ‘conventional’ academic career path to one in management and leadership. This aspect is well captured by a female interviewee who said:

…the big transition in an academic career is if someone is interested in moving into leadership; that could be in research or it could be across the range of [senior] roles or even becoming head of department or whatever; there is a kind of moment when you make that transition, when you’ve got to re-imagine yourself as capable of being the next thing.

**Female respondent**

This resonates with literature on career theory, discussed in the literature review, about the importance of representations of possible future roles and how imagining ‘possible selves’ in the next role can shape aspirations.119

Another significant finding that emerged from the interviews with this group is that there can be a tension when moving from a research-focused academic career into a management and leadership career path. This issue is clearly articulated by one male respondent who highlighted that:

I think sometimes the characteristics you need to build a successful career as a contemporary research-led academic requires characteristics which are almost the antithesis of what you need to do in order to be a successful academic leader and academic manager. Because the former is all about yourself, your research, your outputs, your networks, your publications, your citations, and it’s all about how you get all those things working for you. In academic leadership and management it’s about how do you create environments in which other people can achieve things, rather than how you can achieve them.

A further dimension of such tension was highlighted by a few academics who pointed to the difficulty of maintaining an identity as a researcher while being in a leadership role: ‘I don’t consider myself a serious researcher anymore’, said one male respondent. Maintaining a researcher identity while in a leadership role was also deemed important to have an academic career to fall back on, as exemplified by this quote:

So there’s always going to be the pressure around maintaining some academic career to fall back on, and I think what that means is, well, do individual institutions need to be supporting those individuals rather than they do?

**Female respondent**

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Another area of tension was identified for those who originated on a clinical career path, since moving into management and leadership would make it difficult to keep up with the clinical aspects of their work.

Overall, alumni in the academic group appeared to have had a relatively rapid progression early on in their careers, which slowed down as they got higher up the career ladder and opportunities for progression diminish. Another feature that emerged from the accounts of their career trajectories is that several of them made relatively few moves. Also, it was not uncommon for interviewees of both genders to have worked for the same organisation for a very long time, as summarised by these comments:

*I'd assumed I was very unusual to have been at the same institution for more than 20 years and in fact not quite all but many of the people on [TMP] were in a very similar situation and that was massively liberating because I thought I'll never go anywhere else because I'll look like I've been at one place too long and to find that...a large majority of the people had also been at their own institutions a long time, made me think, 'Actually I'm not that unusual'.*

Female respondent

*I stayed here for 20 odd years...my big university career has been to help build this place up to what it is now.*

Male respondent

These experiences suggest that mobility has not necessarily been experienced as an essential factor in career development. When people did move to other institutions, these decisions were typically prompted by the fact that promotion could not be gained internally. These changes also involved some movements between universities in different mission groups. Typically, alumni who started their career in Russell Group universities would be appointed in a more senior role in another mission group university or even be invited by these universities to join their executive teams or to develop a new school or faculty. However, no evidence was found of upward career movements from other mission groups to Russell Group universities. Moreover, we found very few cases where people were prepared to leave Russell Group universities, even if this meant limiting their chances of progressing into a leadership role.

Both female and male interviewees in this group appeared to have followed very similar career trajectories. The only noticeable differences were for those who came into academia from a professional path, for example health or the performing arts, who tended to be women, and those who did their degrees as mature students or had a short period of research work in sectors outside higher education, who tended to be men. However, once these individuals started working as academics in higher education, their career path was similar to that of other alumni in terms of career progression. There was also the case of a female interviewee who found it very challenging to pursue her academic career while having to move to different parts of the world because of her husband's job. Nonetheless, she managed to maintain her academic tenure by taking unpaid leave and, for example, by doing some unpaid work abroad for her university relating to international recruitment. Thus in spite of significant periods of disruption to her academic career, she managed to progress into a leadership role.
Figure 4 shows some examples of academic career trajectories based on our sample of interviewees.

**Figure 4 Examples of academic careers**

**Academic career progression 1**

- University degree/PhD/post-doctoral researcher
- Post-doctoral research fellow
- Head of school
- Deputy VC of university/senior role in Research Council
- Vice chancellor

**Academic career progression 2**

- University degree/PhD/lecturer/senior lecturer
- Head of department/sub-dean
- Change of institution - Head of department
- Head of school
- Senior role in Research Council
- Executive dean

**Academic career progression 3**

- Vocational work, eg. police and/or social work (straight from school)
- Vocational qualifications, MA, PhD
- HE lecturer and researcher
- Head of department
- Executive dean

**Academic career progression 4**

- University degree/professional qualification
- Work in industry related to degree + MBA
- Lecturer/senior lecturer and PhD reader
- Associate dean, dean
- Pro-VC, deputy VC

**TMP alumni with a professional services background: multiple professional identities**

TMP alumni with a professional services background appeared to have more varied career trajectories compared with those with an academic background. A few had long periods of work outside the higher education sector. For example, one male interviewee spent many years working in the private sector in HR and then in general management. During this period he also did a secondment overseas, which gave him a lot of confidence and transferable skills. He was headhunted for his higher education role. Other examples include a few women who started their career working as chartered librarians but then became disillusioned with cutbacks during the 1980s and decided to move to different sectors. During this period some of them were able to gain further postgraduate qualifications which sometimes were sponsored by their employers, and then subsequently moved into higher education.

The reasons for moving into higher education varied and included developing an interest in staff development and tutoring, no longer feeling in tune with the values of the organisation they were working for, or negative experiences in the private sector. Other examples include a few women who started their career working as chartered librarians but then became disillusioned with cutbacks during the 1980s and decided to move to different sectors. During this period some of them were able to gain further postgraduate qualifications which sometimes were sponsored by their employers, and then subsequently moved into higher education. One woman worked in the media industry before higher education, but had an unpleasant experience there which made her change her career plans. She thought that she could have a better work–life balance in higher education, unlike in the private sector.
where ‘employees get squeezed when things aren’t going well’. These examples provide a snapshot of the kind of diverse career backgrounds that some of the interviewees in professional services had before joining higher education and suggest that the sector offers a wide range of jobs in its professional and service areas that can attract people from different sectors with diverse expertise and skills.

Some instead started their career in higher education and worked their way up in the same institution, whereas others benefitted for example from the opportunity of being seconded to another institution or to move into posts in other universities. One man for example explained how he never fixed his mind on a particular job and moved in six different new roles which enabled him to gain a lot of experience by starting ‘from scratch and building them up’.

Several interviewees in this group too, both males and females, received ‘a tap on the shoulder’ in terms of moving into more senior roles, though others expressed surprise that this happens and said they had never been approached.

Overall, the findings for this group show that the wide range of functions existing in HEIs can attract a professionally diverse group of people. However, although the sector appears to be open to people with diverse professional backgrounds, there is a perception that having a professional background but a lack of academic credentials can act as barrier to accessing leadership roles. This issue is explored in more detail below (under ‘Career plans’). Finally, it was noticeable that several of the women in this group had a background in librarianship, as highlighted by the examples of career trajectories outlined in Figure 5.

**Figure 5 Examples of careers in professional services**

**Career progression 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration/education/learning and development role outside HE</th>
<th>HE administrative role in an academic department</th>
<th>Senior HE administrative/management role, eg. director of research and enterprise (university-wide)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Career progression 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocational/professional degree (first and higher), eg. accountancy, management science, economics</th>
<th>Industry relating to degree, eg. accountancy, HR, library management in public or private sector (not HE)</th>
<th>HE administrative role, eg. library services, assistant secretary</th>
<th>Senior HE administrative role, eg. director of finance, registrar, chief operations officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Career progression 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocational/professional degree (first and higher), eg. accountancy, management science, economics</th>
<th>Employer-sponsored Master’s-level study</th>
<th>HE role relating to studies, eg. library and information management</th>
<th>Senior HE administrative/management role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Career progression 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocational/professional degree, eg. library services</th>
<th>Non-related career role (which includes management experience, eg. armed forces)</th>
<th>Tutoring experience/teacher training</th>
<th>Senior HE administrative/management role, registrar and secretary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Career plans
Interviewees were asked to what extent they had planned their career. Most of them responded that their careers were largely unplanned and some felt that their career moves had been partly a matter of ‘luck’ and ‘being in the right place at the right time’. Nonetheless, as interviewees reflected back on their career, a number of recurrent themes emerged that appeared to have influenced their career decision-making process. Some were guided by personal goals and aspirations, for example a female interviewee said ‘I think I’ve always planned to become a professor, that was always part of my plan’, although she added:

…it was never part of my plan to become an academic leader, but you know, in terms of being a professor I achieved that goal and now I’m looking back I can’t think why I didn’t ever think, ‘I want to become an academic leader,’ because I enjoy it tremendously.

Another female interviewee observed: ‘You know, you always put yourself in the line of things that you enjoy or you try to, so I guess in that sense you plan it, but I don’t think you do it explicitly really’.

Several interviewees appeared to be skilled lateral thinkers and able to identify and evaluate opportunities. Some displayed entrepreneurial attitudes and enjoyed the challenge of developing new departments or service areas or becoming involved in major restructuring projects, and these experiences often provided them with the track record that propelled them into more senior roles. A few others were clearly guided by their belief, values and passions as, for example, evidenced by these quotes:

I’ve had opportunities to move sideways, out of the sector, but the attitudes and the values that I hold meant that the opportunities within the sector were always more compelling because I believe passionately in what we do because I believe higher education is so important.

Male respondent

...the enormously strong sense that I adored teaching and that I thought education was really important has kept me going.

Female respondent

One female interviewee made an interesting observation which questioned the essential centrality of careers, emphasising the importance of broader involvement (including work–life balance) over and above career progression alone. Her comment resonates with the ‘reinventing contribution’ stage of women’s careers identified by O’Neil and Bilimoria.\textsuperscript{120} It also echoes the findings from a study looking at women’s career progression in higher education,\textsuperscript{121} which suggests that women are more likely to be concerned with their work–life balance and this could influence their decisions about career progression.

A number of practical factors were also mentioned; for example the difficulty especially for academics of doing any planning in their early career years, since as we saw earlier, during this period many were employed on precarious, fixed-term contracts, as exemplified by the following quote:

When I was on short-term contracts in the first seven years I felt very much at the vagaries of research councils and peer review panels and funding of research projects and the vagaries of other people’s careers, people who have the track record of bringing the money in.

Male respondent

One female interviewee also mentioned the necessity of ‘pragmatic’ planning for couples with dual careers. A few women felt that being able to move jobs was an important factor that enabled them to move into roles that they enjoyed. Finally, a few highlighted the importance of having an alternative career plan. The latter was seen by several academics as the ability to revert to a research career when stepping down from a leadership role.
Overall these research findings indicate that identity and careers develop differently between academics and those in professional services. The latter group had more varied career trajectories as several of them joined higher education after having a period of time in other sectors. The academics largely had very similar career trajectories as they progressed through the promoted grades until they reached the role of head of department. In most cases this position was identified as a key turning point into a management role. Also, leadership identities seem less clearly defined than earlier personal and professional identities. No significant gender differences have emerged from the analysis of past career trajectories and approaches to career plans or lack of career plans. This is contrary to the belief that women tend to have more ‘atypical’ career trajectories, often due to interruptions for career breaks to look after children. It is important to bear in mind, however, that our sample represents a group of particularly successful senior men and women working in higher education and that by implication this may confirm anecdotal evidence which suggests that women with ‘atypical’ careers may find it more difficult to move into senior management roles.

2.3 Career journeys and families
Interviewees were asked about balancing their career with family and childcare responsibilities. Most had children, and the accounts of their experiences of combining childcare responsibilities with their careers, not surprisingly, has a gender dimension. Several women in our sample shouldered most responsibilities for childcare as well as for other caring responsibilities within their family. These accounts provide some context that explains the results of the survey, which shows that 61% of female respondents indicated that they had ‘significant other responsibilities’ outside work, compared with 21% of male respondents. Furthermore, 42 female respondents (53%) out of a total of 79 reported that childcare responsibilities, to different degrees, have been a ‘constraint’ to their career development, as opposed to 29 male respondents (30%) out of a total of 97. The findings from the interviews offer an insight into the experience of both women and men of combining work with caring responsibilities and to what extent this has impacted on their career. This is discussed in the sections below.

Women’s experiences of maternity leave and childcare
Most female academics took short periods of maternity leave ranging from three to six months. This was partly because they felt that longer periods could have a negative impact on their career: ‘I don’t think in an academic world you could take a significant career break...you would find it very hard to get back into an academic environment, particularly in a research-intensive university’; and partly because their work and professional identity were important to them. There was also a sense that retaining their professional identity made them feel they were better mothers: ‘I instantly became a better mother when I…went back to work’.

All the women with children in our sample had little or no access to flexible working arrangements. It was clear from their accounts that at the time when they had young families, their working environments were constructed as a ‘care free zone’: ‘it was just quite simply you do not mention it that you’ve got a family, you get on with it because it is your choice’. It was noted however that working environments in higher education have become much more family friendly and that flexible working is now much more available. It was highlighted that acknowledging women’s childcare responsibilities and making allowances for them, especially in the context of research outputs and career progression, were important, as expectations in terms of work performance in the higher education have become much higher.

Opinions as to whether childcare had an impact on career progression were divided: some felt that it did not have much of an impact, especially as they took a short period of maternity leave; whereas a few felt that it had slowed down their career although they did not resent it: ‘if I hadn’t had a family I would be a lot further on in my career but I would be much more impoverished personally by not having [had children]’.

There was overall consensus among female interviewees that combining childcare with a career was ‘hard work’ which required a lot of planning and organisation. Some, however, said that this balancing act made them better workers and helped them to build up resilience. This suggests that the interaction between family and work should not just be seen in terms of competing demands between the two different domains of work and private life, but should also be seen in terms of possible enrichment between these two domains.123

122 Lynch (2010) p7
123 Greenhaus and Powell (2006)
Case study 1: ‘L’: Combining childcare with an academic career

After completing her PhD, ‘L’ started a family and had five children. The flexibility of working part time, especially in the early part of her career, was very important to her. Her working patterns varied from one day to two days to three days a week. At the time when L had her children in the 1980s and early 1990s, there was very little support available for women taking maternity leave: ‘There was no risk assessment of working conditions, it was statutory maternity leave, there were no ‘back to work taster days’ or whatever they are called’. L was the only one in her department to work part time as well as having small children.

When L was expecting her fourth child, she recalls the reaction of a colleague when she announced that she was going to have another baby: ‘Oh...how could you do this to the department?’ So despite being enabled to work part time, L felt that ‘there was the slight horror of this woman with so many children, and how could she possibly be a serious academic? One of the reasons I was so pleased to take on a dean role was that it was great to get that far in the university, having had children. Other women have said to me that it’s been inspirational to realise that these things can happen’.

A big turning point in her career was when L was asked to take over the role of head of department. When she started this work, she increased her three days a week to four. Eventually L went back to full-time work when she took over the role of head of school; subsequently she was elected dean and became part of her university’s senior management team.

L received a lot of support from her husband who works at home and was also helped by having some good support mechanisms in place like ‘a wonderful part-time nanny’, who worked for her family for 10 years, and living close to the university where she worked. Thus she described all these things as being ‘very much part of the package that made it possible for me to do what I’ve done’.

L’s experience of combining work and family made her realise ‘how important it is...to offer lots of support to younger people that are wanting to work, as well as look after young children. When I was a dean I was very keen on finding solutions for those – it was nearly always women – wanting to work flexibly, with the support of HR, I have to say’.

Combining work with childcare: the men’s experiences

None of the men with children in our sample made use of paternity or parental leave, save for one who used adoption leave. This is probably attributable to the fact that at the time many of these men had young children, these kinds of arrangements were not available. With regard to combining work with childcare, most said that their partners had taken the main responsibility, especially when the children were young, either by reducing their working hours or, in some instances, giving up work altogether.

The following quotes provide some typical examples:

Frankly it is just an awful lot easier when you’re a bloke as well...[my wife] is the one who decided to work less than full time rather than me and I think it is just – I would find it very difficult to do that. I could theoretically have done it, but I would find it much harder to do.

Male respondent

My wife certainly is more highly qualified than I am, has pursued her own career, we have three children and certainly on the birth of the second of those children, as a unit, we had some choices to make...the fact that she was prepared to do that [looking after the children] enabled me to pursue my career unfettered.

Male respondent

These experiences suggest that some men made little or no adjustments to their working lives and were able to continue to pursue their careers as their partners shouldered most of the responsibilities for childcare. A few, however, had different experiences as they shared childcare responsibilities more equally with their partners, who also had careers. For example, one man explained that once he had had his first child and his wife went back to work after three months of maternity leave, they had to negotiate a division of labour in terms of housework and parenting. He admitted that in the early stages he found it difficult having to adjust his working patterns and to recognise that his wife was right when ‘she argued that it wasn’t acceptable for me to be writing papers at weekends’. He commented that this experience over time had a positive impact on his family life as he said that: ‘we much more precisely protect family time and time off and that evolution has been good for my work and good for family life’.

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124 Current legislation on maternity, adoption and paternity leave provides that employees while on leave can work up to 10 paid days. These days are optional and they are called ‘keeping in touch days’. For more information see https://www.gov.uk/employee-rights-when-on-leave

125 It is worth noting that legal entitlements to parental leave and paternity leave were introduced in 1999 and 2003 respectively. Therefore, these arrangements were not available to some of the male participants to this study when they had young children.
Another took the decision not to apply for the role of head of department at the time when he had a very young family because he thought that getting that post would have taken him away from his family too much. He pointed out that this did not have much impact on his career anyway since in his institution these roles were on a three- to four-year basis and therefore he was able to apply for it a few years later when it came up for renewal.

The experiences of these men were closer to those of the women as they recognised that their childcare commitments put some constraints on their working lives but they did not resent it, as exemplified by this quote:

*I don’t want it to sound all formalistic but my wife and I always wanted to have equality in those sorts of things, having children restricts one’s ability to go off to any conference that I might want to do, and be away from home for periods of time, especially when your children are young. So I think there is a constraint there, it’s a constraint that I recognise, it’s not one that I had any worries about, but it’s definitely there.*

Male respondent

**Dual career couples**

Several interviewees, especially woman, spoke about the challenges of having to balance dual careers. For example, one recalled how this caused ‘enormous barriers, the fact that every three or four years we upped sticks and went...’ Others talked about how they had to carefully negotiate career moves to find two good jobs within a reasonable geographical distance. Others ended up living apart for periods of time as they had jobs in different cities or even countries. Some also described the careful planning that they often had to do when they both had important work commitments, such as in this example:

*When your children are younger and you're sharing childcare, there might be the day that you've both got important meetings – there's a whole set of planning around both being away from home for a period of time.*

Male respondent

**General experiences of work–life balance**

The literature review on gender and career, discussed earlier, highlighted that women may be deterred from applying for leadership roles which are seen as jobs that put exceptional demands on people’s time and require them ‘to be available and work longer than a normal working week’.\(^{126}\) In order to investigate to what extent this perception of ‘greedy work’\(^{127}\) corresponds to reality, we asked all interviewees about their experiences of work–life balance in senior roles. Their responses could be grouped into three categories, which are outlined in Tables 5 to 7.

**Table 5 Category 1: the boundaries between work and life are almost entirely blurred**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Those in this category are likely to be academics that feel passionate about their research and see it as part of their academic endeavour to work in their private time. They seem to derive a strong sense of self-worth from their work.</td>
<td><em>There is a certain deal you get when you decide to be an academic and part of the deal is you get to travel and you go to conferences and you get to do what interests you, you can pretty much choose what you do as a researcher, but the other part of that deal is don’t expect to do it from 9 to 5 Monday to Friday.</em> Male respondent</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>All of the excellent academics that I know work all the time because that's what their passion is and that's their choice.</em> Female respondent</td>
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Table 6 Category 2: work and private life dilemma

<table>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<td>Those in this category tend to be both in academic and professional services roles. They struggle to achieve a work–life balance and find it difficult to draw boundaries between their work and their private life.</td>
<td>One interviewee said that she has to remind herself that ‘you don’t live to work but you work to live’.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>One male interviewee reported that he found it very difficult to say no to work-related commitments and this is at the expense of his family life which ‘gets squeezed’. He also added that: ‘If there’s one thing that I have to work really hard at and don’t think I’ve got it sorted yet, it’s that work–life balance.’</td>
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Table 7 Category 3: some clear boundaries drawn between work and personal life

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<td>Those in this category have managed to draw some clear boundaries between their work and their personal life. It is interesting to note that to a certain extent, for some, being in a senior management role has helped them to achieve a better work–life balance.</td>
<td>A response from a man with an academic background was: I've got a good work−life balance, I exercise, I see my family, I go on holiday, I don't work on weekends unless there is open days...Where I had it wrong was when I was a research-active academic, because when you are a research-active academic and you are in a senior position like a professor there is always something to do...I would be working late, I would be working on planes and trains and travelling...I gained a lot of weight, I was unfit, now I am perfectly healthy.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Similarly, a woman respondent said: I've got a healthy work−life balance...I work really hard while I'm here. I go home in the evening, I don't look at emails, I don't look at emails on the weekend, I don't look at emails when I'm on holiday...So it is self-discipline and forcing yourself not to do those things.</td>
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</table>

As the categories above show, gender did not appear to be a factor with regard to attitudes towards work–life balance and in relation to the question about what the sector can do to help people achieve a work–life balance, responses were influenced by people’s personal experiences. Those who fell into the first category thought that this was largely a private matter and that there was little that institutions could do, as evidenced by this comment from a male respondent: ‘I think people have to work [out] their own solutions to work–life balance’.

Those who fell into the second category, though acknowledging that helping people to achieve a work–life balance was important, believed that it would be very difficult to achieve this in senior posts as such roles were not possible to fulfil on a flexible basis and did not allow for career breaks or time out.

While those in the third category had developed strategies and some tried to help others, it was not clear to what extent they saw themselves as role models who could initiate change and influence organisational culture in this respect.
Finally, the influence of technology on either helping people to achieve a better work–life balance or hindering them was raised by a few interviewees. On the one hand it was highlighted that wise use of technology can make it easier for people to work from home, for example reducing the need for commuting or for relocating a family. On the other hand it was noted that it was making it much more difficult for people, especially those in senior roles, to maintain some clear boundaries between work and personal life as highlighted by this interviewee:

_In our senior team, we are just about all on the email on Sunday afternoon getting ready for the Monday morning…20 years ago that would not have been the case, it might have been a phone call, but not several hours of every Sunday afternoon...certainly mobile phones or social media doesn't necessarily help that. I think that is a really tough one about how do we keep working lives to 65 hours a week, let alone 37._

Male respondent

### 2.4 Barriers and constraints

In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they thought that a series of factors, largely drawn from the literature review, had constrained their career development:

- Lack of academic background
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of opportunities for training/development
- Lack of role models
- Lack of mentoring
- Lack of career advice
- Lack of career planning
- Lack of networks within higher education
- Lack of opportunities for taking additional management
- Lack of opportunities for external exposure/responsibilities
- Childcare responsibilities
- Caring responsibilities for an adult

Responses to this question were analysed by gender, occupational group and age. Statistical tests were run to identify any statistically significant difference in the responses from alumni in these groups.

This analysis highlighted that in relation to gender, only three constraining factors showed a statistically significant difference: the mean scores of women for ‘lack of confidence’; ‘childcare responsibilities’; and ‘limited opportunities to change employer’ were significantly higher than those of the men. This suggests that women are more likely to consider these factors as constraints to their career development compared with men. In the occupational groups, ‘lack of mentoring’ was the only constraint shown to have a statistically significant difference for the three groups, although the actual difference in mean scores between these groups was quite small. However, for the academic occupational group it was significantly higher than for the other two groups, which suggests that they are more likely to consider ‘lack of mentoring’ as a constraint to their career development. No significant differences were observed with regard to different age groups.

The interviews provided an opportunity to explore the issues highlighted above and to gain a richer picture about the kinds of barriers and constraints encountered by our sample of TMP alumni in their career journey. A significant finding that emerged from the alumni’s accounts is that whilst most of the female interviewees reported having encountered some barriers in their career, which mainly related to their gender, very few men felt that they had encountered any barrier at all, if they did, these did not relate to their gender but either to their social class, cultural background or ethnicity. The findings from the interviews therefore point to the existence of a ‘glass ceiling’ in higher education possibly as a result of two main factors: gender bias, which may permeate the selection and recruitment process for leadership roles; and having a professional/services background, which, although it is not gender related, can disproportionately affect women who tend to be over-represented in this group as seen earlier.

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128 For the purpose of this analysis and on the basis of responses to question 1 in the TMP alumni survey, respondents were grouped into the following three occupational groups: academic careers; professional services careers; complex careers, which includes respondents with a mix of professional and academic careers.

129 The analysis for question 7 (career development constraints) was conducted using SPSS software (v.21). Three types of analysis were run. These were the independent-samples t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and chi-squared test for independence.

130 at the p<0.05 level in the mean scores for men and women

131 at the p<0.05 level in the mean score for the three occupational groups
In the following sections we explore interviewees’ experiences and perceptions of ‘hitting the glass ceiling’ and of other barriers and constraints to their careers.

**Gender bias and leadership: views from senior women**

Several female interviewees discussed their experiences of applying for senior roles and expressed concern that recruitment processes for these posts may be permeated by gender bias. For example, one female interviewee pointed to the way that sometimes advertisements for senior appointments are constructed according to what she described as the *language of power in appointments*, which is a ‘very macho language’, often including words such as ‘ego’ and expressions, used in the context of appointment processes, such as ‘dealing with the bear pit’, ‘using sharp elbows’. She felt that this kind of language is problematic because it reflects the fact that leadership is ‘too narrowly defined in contemporary HE’ since it does not acknowledge that there are different ways of leading. It was highlighted that this could force women into adopting certain types of behaviour in order to appear credible contenders. She commented that:

> …there is [a] danger that the women who do break through have to sacrifice so much of themselves in the process. Not quite honorary men but an element of it.

These views are supported by the accounts from other women who, as they moved into more senior roles, explained that they became more aware of gender differences and felt that they did not fit the image that some people on appointment panels may have of HEI leaders – that some panel members could not ‘see’ them in a senior role.

Another interviewee highlighted that women in her age cohort were more likely to be in deputy roles doing a lot of the groundwork but that there is still a perception that men are more likely to fit the role of vice-chancellor, as she put it:

> We’ve got the man at the front, you know, grey suit, grey hair, looks tall and good in a suit, white shirt, coloured tie...but would we have somebody with a dress on and high heels being the leader, is that mentally what people think a leader looks like?

Another couple of interviewees mentioned that sometimes women are seen as lacking ‘gravitas’, a word likely to be associated with older men. The point was made that the association of leadership with perceived male traits, coupled with the lack of diversity both in terms of gender and ethnicity in senior roles, can lead to a process of ‘cloning’. For example, one female interviewee believed that there are huge gender barriers related to unconscious bias which led to individuals not putting themselves forward. This, she argued, perpetuates cloning in the system.

This is compounded with the experiences of other women who felt that they had to work harder in order to prove themselves capable of working in senior roles:

> …so I think that there are barriers that don’t exist for a man but it depends on your willingness to really prove to people that you can do as well as anybody else whatever your gender, whatever the job.

Female respondent

It is interesting to note that some of the comments made above were echoed by nominating managers when asked about what they saw as the main blockages that militated against increasing diversity in leadership roles in the sector. They pointed to selection and recruitment processes being gendered as evidenced by the following comments:

> …a pervasive culture which values the qualities of the old boys’ network and diminishes the value of other approaches.

> Many of the selections are made by white-haired, ageing, middle-class men.

> Too many appointing committees are impressed by what I might call male over-assertiveness compared to (some) female honesty. We are not getting into top jobs for that reason.

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132 Note that for the non-TMP nominating managers, gender has not been reported: this sample was small so this was omitted to preserve confidentiality.
The views expressed by senior women and by some of the nominating managers reflect the findings from the academic literature, which highlights the point that management is still associated with ‘being male’ and that both men and women still hold implicit associations about men and leadership.133

Another issue raised by several interviewees of both genders, was about the role of executive search firms (ESFs) in the selection and recruitment process for leadership roles in higher education. There was a widespread perception among these interviewees that ESFs have too much influence on the recruitment process for leadership roles and that overall they are not helping to increase diversity in these posts but that instead they contribute to reinforce the status quo. One female interviewee reported that the kind of feedback that she had received from ESFs when unsuccessfully applying for vice-chancellor roles often suggested that she did not come across as being sufficiently ‘forceful’. This echoes the points made earlier by other interviewees about the tendency of the recruitment process at leadership level to reflect a ‘macho’ approach. Another important point raised by a couple of interviewees was that although a reasonable number of women are often placed on long-lists of applicants for leadership roles, many of them do not seem to make it to the short-listing stage. This in the minds of some interviewees raised the following questions: whether the inclusion of women in long-lists (usually representing between 20% and 30% of the total applicants) is the result of a tokenistic approach; whether ESFs advise women to apply for the wrong roles; and what kind of influence ESFs have on decisions relating to the composition of short-lists. A few others, while they expressed reservations about ESFs, felt that it was necessary for them to engage with ESFs to make their next move into a vice-chancellor role.

By contrast, a few interviewees of both genders had positive experiences with ESFs and found their advice helpful to moving into a more senior role.

These findings show that participants’ experiences of ESFs are mixed and might have been influenced either by positive or negative experiences. However, Breakwell and Tytherleigh’s134 study of the selection of vice-chancellors notes that ESFs tended to look for characteristics including the potentially essentialist ‘natural leadership’ – ‘gravitas’, ‘forceful personality’ and ‘confidence’, which supports the perceptions and experiences reported by some of our female interviewees as discussed above. Research commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to examine the corporate board appointment process135 suggests that ESFs’ practices can be mixed and that while there is some good practice, there are also shortcomings. Furthermore, a recent report published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills136 has recommended greater transparency in the way ESFs operate and that they should publish data about women put forward for company board roles. All this evidence, including our participants’ observations about the role of ESFs in the selection and recruitment process for leadership roles in higher education, points to the need for gaining a better understanding about the part that ESFs play in helping institutions to construct advertisements for senior appointments and specifications for these roles, and in the short-listing process.

Professional barriers

Several interviewees with a professional/service background who came to the higher education from other sectors felt that this could operate as a barrier, as highlighted in this quote:

I suppose one barrier is switching between sectors, or trying to switch organisations and some people are quite closed in terms of, ‘Oh – I want you to have done exactly the same job as this in the past or else I’m not going to recruit you’. So I think it’s more about ‘closed mindedness’, and people not being aware that they are just trying to get either what they had previously, or a carbon copy of themselves.

Female respondent

Furthermore, several interviewees with a professional background, including men and those who had developed their entire career within higher education, also felt that because of their lack of academic background, they might not be seen as credible higher education leaders. Their views were echoed by the comment of a nominating manager who said:

In my view it is hard, but not impossible to find people who can be successful if they have not done a solid academic job.

133 Berthoin Antal and Izraeli (1993); Valian (1999); Alimo-Metcalfe (2007); Kandola (2009); ECU (2013)
134 Breakwell and Tytherleigh (2008)
135 Doldor, Vinnicombe, Gaughan and Sealy (2012)
136 Sweeney (2014)
However, on a more positive note, one of the interviewees in our sample succeeded in becoming a vice-chancellor. His experience had not been an ‘easy transition’ and he identified that few individuals move from professional services to university leadership, despite the business focus of modern universities.

These findings are supported by the survey results, which show that only a few alumni in the whole of our sample, with a background in professional services, are in pro-vice-chancellor or deputy vice-chancellor roles.

Case study 2: ‘J’: Overcoming barriers

‘J’ has a professional services background and describes how she found it difficult to be seen as a credible candidate because of her lack of academic background:

A major barrier has been my professional services background. I think universities find it very hard to believe that somebody from the sort of background I’ve got can be a senior executive in a university. If you’ve taught geography you can be a VC, but if your experience is in the management and leadership of professional services, you can’t. After deciding that I’d like to move into an executive-level position I applied for quite a lot of posts and struggled to get onto short-lists. The feedback was that my experience was ‘limited’. A reflection, I believe of bias and lack of understanding regarding senior professional service roles. Ironically, I was approached by a significant number of head-hunters in Australia and New Zealand, but I decided the domestic upheaval was too great. In the UK…[if] you don’t come from an academic background you don’t seem [to] have the credibility. So, that I think is the only real barrier I’ve faced.

J then explained what steps she took to overcome this barrier:

I went to see the VC when I was at [name of institution]...and said I would appreciate his views on whether he believed I was capable of moving into an executive role. I told him that I was keen to move up and would appreciate his feedback and his help in doing so. He gave me a really positive response and, most importantly, arranged for me to be seconded onto the university’s executive to lead a major change programme. He also put me forward for TMP and that gave me the beginnings of a broader network and an understanding of a different web of influence, which was really helpful. I also made efforts to engage in a much broader range of professional associations, to widen my understanding and networks. I have always published accounts of professional practice in my field and have contributed to conference papers, seminars etc as well as being on national committees and groups where possible. I think it helps your own practice, it is interesting and I think it helps on the CV and with personal credibility in academic institutions. I also had some coaching… I’ve taken opportunities to have personal coaching over the last five years or so, which I think helped me think things through....[a professional coaching expert] actually helped me a lot with my application for my current role and with the way that I presented myself, which I think probably just tipped the balance for me.

Other barriers

Other factors that acted as barriers or constraints and mentioned primarily by women include:

Lack of confidence: Although the survey results showed that more women than men were likely to consider this a constraint to their career development, in the interviews it was mentioned by both men and women, but it did not feature very prominently. One female interviewee was keen to emphasise that too often women’s under-representation in senior roles is justified by a perceived lack of confidence, but she did not think that this was the case, especially when women had reached a certain level of seniority in their career.

Lack of qualifications: Those who had entered higher education as mature students from the health sector or from the performing arts, for example, felt throughout their career the need to prove themselves by gaining further qualifications. Also, one woman indicated in her response to the survey that lack of a PhD was detrimental in applications for vice-chancellor roles.

Lack of role models: A couple of interviewees from both genders highlighted that sometimes people in leadership roles can be bad role models and have a negative impact, as in these examples: ‘And my only negatives were two women leaders have been
negative influence[s] on my career which is rather unfortunate’ (female respondent); ‘Many who see themselves as role models do not send out good signals’ (male respondent). This is consistent with the survey results, which do not show any significant gender difference in relation to this factor.

**Lack of career advice:** This was also identified by some as a constraint although not a major one. In particular, one male interviewee referred to the ‘invisible rules’ about developing an academic career; he commented: ‘So nobody ever told me, “You should apply for a research grant,” or “You should get lots of PhD students,” I had to find that out for myself.’ However, as discussed above, our survey analysis shows that ‘lack of career advice’ is more likely to be considered a constraint by women who have unsuccessfully applied for more senior roles. Therefore, this factor may be more prominent than our interview findings suggest.

**Limited opportunities to change employers:** This was raised by several female interviewees, who felt that their lack of mobility due to family commitments was a major constraint on career progression. For example, a couple of interviewees commented:

> There are barriers now in going forward though and they relate to my immobility due to having the children and being a single parent. I can’t uproot the family to take a job anywhere in the country.  
>  
> Female respondent

> That my career to date has been at one university is a negative factor.  
>  
> Female respondent

A few male interviewees also felt constrained in their choice of employer because of caring responsibilities. However, as we saw earlier, it is not clear from the evidence to what extent this is an actual barrier or more of a perceived one, since some alumni of both genders pursued successful careers in spite of staying in the same institution for a long time.

**Social class:** Issues around social class and how this affected careers were raised by a few men (although one woman with a working-class background talked about having encountered significant class barriers when she joined the armed forces). For example, one male interviewee recalled how he felt uncomfortable when he went to university which, in the late 1970s, was a very middle-class environment and made him feel like ‘a fish out of water’. He considered leaving university but then he was offered a scholarship to go to the United States, where his social class and background no longer mattered:

> I was English, and class and background and all those sorts of things became irrelevant and I was free to do anything academically that I wanted.  
>  
> Male respondent

Another highlighted how social class and class cultures can make people feel excluded in certain environments:

> I think those things play out in certain environments, either through confidence or through how people accept you.  
>  
> Male respondent

In contrast, a male respondent indicated in the survey that because of his social background, it took him longer to feel that he had ‘legitimate aspirations to an academic career, let alone academic leadership’.

**Lack of religion:** This was raised by one male interviewee as a possible barrier to accessing leadership roles in HEIs with a religious ethos.

**Women’s experiences of less favourable treatment**

In the survey we asked whether respondents believed that they had experienced less favourable treatment because of a legally protected characteristic such as age, disability, sex, etc. Thirty-six women responded to this question out of a total of 79 and, in order of frequency, they indicated that they had received less favourable treatment because of their sex, age, pregnancy, marital status and maternity. Most respondents in this group believed that they had received less favourable treatment because of their sex, especially in relation to gaining ‘opportunities for more management responsibilities’ and ‘promotion’ (Figure 6).
Eighteen female respondents provided further details about the kind of incidents where they believed that they had received less favourable treatment. These are summarised below.

- **Sex**: male candidates were being preferred and were being seen as part of the establishment.
- **Marital status**: married men were being preferred to single women for senior management posts.
- **Equal pay**: male colleagues were being paid more.
- **Childcare**: a single parent was unable to meet expectations for attending external training or evening events because of having to prioritise teenage children’s needs.
- **Age**: women were being perceived ‘too young’ or ‘too old’ for promotion.
- **Age and gender**: women experienced a combination of being female and perceived as ‘too young’ to manage older, male colleagues.

The interviews provided an opportunity to explore further women’s perceptions of less favourable treatment in their careers.

<4> **Sex discrimination**

Several women reported instances of sex discrimination mainly related to their marital status. For example, one interviewee found out that her interview for promotion was unsuccessful in spite of the fact that she was the best candidate (she was told this off the record by her head of department, herself a woman who had experienced similar discrimination) because the interview panel decided that a married woman with a husband did not need the job as much as the male candidate who got promoted instead. She commented about this experience: ‘It really set me back a lot, because it was very rare that posts came up…[it] made me very, very angry’. Other instances of less favourable treatment included: being asked questions at interviews on how they would manage a job with the demands arising from having a family; being discouraged to apply for senior management roles; being
refused an extension to finish a PhD by a university on the grounds this would not be needed by a woman who had a husband who could provide for her: ‘I was not [being] taken seriously as an academic in my own rights,’ said one female respondent; and one respondent reported instances of sexual harassment at work.

All of these instances, however, took place two or three decades ago and there was a perception among female interviewees that although there is still gender bias in the sector, women are no longer likely to experience direct sex discrimination. For example, one female interviewee commented that though issues remain for women leaders, this is not as overt as in the 1970s.

Although most of these instances of sex discrimination relate to the past, it is important for institutions to remain vigilant as anecdotal evidence suggests that direct discrimination on the grounds of sex has not been fully eradicated yet.

**Age and gender discrimination combined**

A few women also reported issues around gender and age, including the difficulty young women faced in achieving credibility. Another woman was trying to get back into a senior management role after having taken a sabbatical and found it very difficult because others saw her as being too old: ‘I’m the past, not the future and that’s very challenging.’ These experiences suggest that the intersection between age and gender and being positioned either as the ‘older woman’ or as being ‘too young’ can work to exclude women from achieving leadership roles.

**Men’s experiences**

Thirty-two out of 97 male respondents believed that they had received less favourable treatment mainly because of age in the promotion process (Figure 7).

**Figure 7 Male respondents reporting less favourable treatment**

![Male respondents reporting less favourable treatment diagram](image-url)
Thirteen male respondents provided further details about the kind of incidents where they believed that they had received less favourable treatment. These are summarised below:

- **Age:** potential candidates were considered too young (possibly combined with ethnicity); one respondent spoke of ‘early career progression being hampered by being seen as too young’, or there was pressure to advance quickly when joining academic life in middle age.
- **Lack of religion:** not being a practising Christian was said to be an ‘implicit or explicit bar to several VC posts’.
- **Nationality:** a different culture and approach was said to produce bias.
- **Sex:** there was positive discrimination in favour of female candidates.

Once again the interviews provided an opportunity to explore further men’s perceptions and experiences of less favourable treatment which related mainly to age. A few of them reported experiences of applying for promotion in the 1980s and 1990s and being turned down as there seemed to be an unspoken convention among academics about having ‘to do your time’ before applying for promotion. However, they did not feel that overall this had much of an impact on their career. They thought that such behaviour is ‘fading away’ and that people are now more likely to move through the promoted lecturer grades on the basis of what they have achieved rather than their age or the time they have been in post. Only one interviewee felt that his lack of success in applying for a senior role was due to being perceived as too old.

One interviewee also reported that when he applied for a senior role he felt he was ‘the wrong gender’ as he believed that the institution was keen to appoint a woman. However, he did not perceive this as an actual barrier and commented that ‘it meant that I had to do as well as I could in the application’.

### Ethnicity and cultural diversity

A few interviewees raised issues around ethnicity and cultural diversity. The views and experiences of these individuals may not be representative due to the small numbers but they do resonate with findings from other studies. One of the main problems identified by one female interviewee was that issues around ethnicity can be very subtle, which makes it difficult to provide concrete examples and take action to tackle them. However, she said that on a number of occasions she felt that her ‘ethnic background was a problem, especially if you are applying for a job or being interviewed and all of a sudden your standard of English is being questioned’. Another powerful example of how subtle racism can operate is captured by the experiences of one BME participant who has been physically excluded from group discussions in the past. There was a sense that there is ‘unspoken racism’ which is difficult to tackle if it is not identified and that it is hard for BME leaders to identify racism openly: it was noted that there is a reluctance to raise issues about race, especially at senior level. It was also noted that it may be easier for people from a BME background to work in urban universities rather than in institutions situated in more rural locations that are demographically very homogeneous.

Interesting cultural issues were also raised around style of communication, for example, where British colleagues are considered more ‘diplomatic’ in their approach. One participant commented:

> I’m from [another country] and you’ll already have picked up from this conversation I’m pretty direct and I speak openly, that’s not very British. It doesn’t go down well in an interview panel and frightens the living daylights out of [those involved in the] appointment processes.

**Male respondent**

Another key issue that emerged from cultural and ethnic differences related to what was described as a very ‘Western’ style of leadership, as highlighted by one interviewee, who compared the ‘strong’ Western leadership style with the more ‘humble’ approach of, for example, Eastern cultures. This is a very similar issue to that experienced by the women who felt that higher education leadership styles were too narrowly defined and often reflected what was described as a ‘macho’ approach that women felt uncomfortable with.
Other equality-related characteristics
It is striking that, save for two female interviewees who referred to long-term illnesses, none of the interviewees mentioned disability or other equality-related characteristics. However, this is not surprising because very few respondents disclosed disability in the survey and similarly in the focus groups only one person disclosed a disability and a couple of people chose to disclose specific sexual orientation. It is difficult to explain why other equality-related characteristics remained invisible: it may be due to the fact that people with these characteristics were not represented in our sample or that this group belonged to a generation where people would be expected not to talk about these issues.

2.5 Enabling factors and qualities
In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate to what extent their careers had been enabled by a number of pre-selected factors:

- Positive role models in senior management positions
- Mentor relationships
- Coaching support.
- Career planning.
- Good careers advice.
- Opportunities for training/development
- Sabbaticals
- Opportunities for taking management responsibilities
- Opportunities for external exposure/responsibilities.
- Experience of working for different HEIs.
- Networking within higher education.
- Experience across multiple mission groups.
- Networking outside the higher education sector.
- Experience outside the higher education sector.
- Having worked for different sectors.

A free text box was also provided to offer respondents the opportunity either to expand on their answers or to identify additional factors that were not included among those listed in the question. Responses to this question were analysed by gender, age group, career development status (this included alumni who after attending TMP had either successfully or unsuccessfully applied for more senior roles) and different occupational groups. Statistical tests were run to identify any statistically significant difference in the responses from alumni in these groups.

With regard to gender, the only enabler that was shown to have a statistically significant difference was ‘opportunities for training and development’. This result suggests that women consider that this particular enabler helped with their career development more than it did for men. This is supported by other survey results and the findings from the interviews, which indicate that marginally more women than men asked to be nominated for TMP, which suggests a possible different disposition between men and women towards training.

Once again no statistically significant differences were observed in relation to different age groups. This analysis, however, highlighted that those in the academic careers group were more likely to indicate ‘opportunities for external exposure/responsibilities’ as an enabling factor and those in the ‘complex careers’ group were more likely to point to ‘having worked for different sectors’ as an enabling factor. The latter may be partly explained by the fact that this group included academics who had a mixed career experience which combined vocational and professional roles with academic ones. The findings from the interviews suggest that participants in this group found their non-academic background useful in many different ways; for example to develop their research specialism or to feel ‘financially confident’ in a management role.

142 For the purpose of this analysis and on the basis of responses to question 1 in the survey respondents were grouped into the following three occupational groups: academic careers; professional services careers; complex careers which include respondents with a mix of professional and academic careers.

143 The analysis for question 4 (career development enablers) was conducted by SPSS software (v.21). Three types of analysis were run. They were the independent-samples t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and chi-squared test for independence.
The responses to the free text box in the questionnaire showed a lot of similarities with those given by the interviewees (some of these may have been the same who responded to the free text box but not all). The interviews, which offered an opportunity to explore enabling factors in more depth, highlighted that there is often a concatenation and some overlapping between what the interviewees described as enabling factors and positive influences from their early years (eg parents, teachers) and from their graduate education.

Overall, the responses both to the survey free text box and the findings from the interviews show no significant differences between men and women and could be categorised as personal enablers; positive influence of others; education and professional qualifications; and professional development and institutional factors, as outlined in Table 8.

Table 8 Enabling factors and positive influences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal factors</td>
<td><strong>Support from family</strong> or partner; flexibility; willingness to challenge behaviours; determination; commitment; good relations with colleagues and line managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and professional qualifications</td>
<td>Rigorous way of thinking acquired through academic studies; professional qualifications (eg accountancy), which helped people to feel ‘financially confident’ in leadership roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influence of undergraduate studies, eg one female interviewee who took an independent studies degree felt that this was ‘quite influential’ in informing her views ‘about the need for breadth and depth in education generally’. Furthermore, being an undergraduate in a newly established department shaped her future outlook on academic management: ‘I think it has given me a lot of ideas about balancing of staff and inducting staff and inducting students and building communities’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive influence of others</td>
<td>Positive influences from their immediate line managers; having learned from them being given good advice and encouragement to apply for posts; <strong>role models, mentors</strong> (often informal) who give ‘a fairly professional vote of confidence’ (male respondent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sponsorship</strong> from senior and influential colleagues (more likely to be men)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Peer support</strong>: ‘I have always managed to appoint my own team and grow my own team and I have appointed some excellent people, so peer support has been really key’ (Female respondent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professional development

**Transferable skills** and breadth of experience; importance of ‘seeing the bigger picture’; attending TMP and **networks**

Experience from a portfolio career and from other sectors, e.g. economic development. One male respondent indicated that he was positively influenced by leading an Athena SWAN initiative and receiving training about working in a multicultural working environment.

Ability to be highly applied in research and interact with businesses and industry

**Building networks globally**

Institutional factors

**Opportunities for cross-institutional work;** being a member of university-wide committees, as one participant said: ‘a training ground for future leaders and so I was at various points on everything from car parking and staff development to finance and estates and academic board and I think you learn the craft there of institutional leadership and management and day-to-day operations’. (Male respondent)

Being approached by other institutions to take up senior roles or develop school/faculties

Alumni were also asked both in the survey and in the interviews about personal qualities and skills that they felt helped them most in management and leadership careers. The findings from both the survey results and the interviewees showed a lot of similarities between men’s and women’s responses, as summarised in Table 9.

**Table 9 Personal qualities and skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most cited personal qualities by both genders</td>
<td>• Hard work, flexibility and adaptability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emotional intelligence, empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-confidence, determination, enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Resilience, perseverance, commitment, stamina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Honesty, fairness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most cited experience or skills by both genders</td>
<td>• People skills, caring for staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Good communication skills, listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Experience of working in a range of institutions, in different roles, working across disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Taking up projects and opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Networking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The similarities in responses between men and women challenge stereotypical views that associate men and women managers with different sets of managerial skills and qualities and confirm the findings from empirically based research, discussed in our literature review, which points to the absence of significant differences between men and women.144
It is interesting to compare the alumni responses with the views expressed by the nominating managers on what personal characteristics and qualities they felt are useful for leaders in higher education. The characteristics and qualities mentioned by the nominating managers have been categorised as follows: vision, leadership ability, big-picture thinking, sharp intellect, confidence, communication skills, humility, being compassionate and approachable, resilience and energy. These are quite generic but some clearly resonate with qualities mentioned by the alumni, for example communication skills and resilience.

In terms of skills and experiences that nominating managers thought were useful for leaders in higher education, responses indicated some overlap with those mentioned by the alumni which included decision-making, political understanding, business planning and strong analytical skills. Nominating managers also emphasised contextual skills and knowledge.

Management experience outside higher education and international experience

A breadth of experience was mentioned, including being employed outside higher education to appreciate other ways of working, experience of working in more than one institution and short-term experiences within other public or private sector organisations. This is somehow surprising as those senior managers most likely to have significant external experience and a breadth of experience across higher education are in professional services rather than academic roles and they express most difficulty in the likelihood of achieving the most senior positions. It may be that the nominating managers are thinking about academic staff here. If academics are less likely to have experience outside the sector or outside their own institution, but that experience is valuable, it is not so surprising that nominating managers would articulate the value of such experience. International experience was felt to provide a global outlook and understanding of the developing world sector.

Sector experience

Sector experience of all facets of higher education was also valued and included: teaching, research and administration, including experience of running a large academic department and working in a pan-university role. Academic credibility is also mentioned, which may militate against those senior managers from non-academic backgrounds and those academics with professional and vocational degree backgrounds progressing to senior roles. Examples are found in interviews from both these groups where participants expressed a strong need to prove their academic credibility. The strength of this bias is captured in the quote below:

*In my view it is hard, but not impossible, to find people who can be successful if they have not done a solid academic job.*

2.6 The nomination process: views from alumni and nominating managers

Experiences of TMP and the nomination process

This section presents the key findings relating to the TMP nomination process including the alumni experience of TMP as well as the findings from the questionnaire and interviews with nominating managers to explore the nomination process.

A separate questionnaire was sent to 124 nominating managers who are either vice-chancellors or principals but have not been on the TMP. Out of this total sample, only 19 nominating managers responded to the questionnaire. Although the sample of non-TMP nominating managers is small, nonetheless responses were received from individuals based in a broad range of mission groups. The majority of those who responded (16) were vice-chancellors (three of whom had additional titles such as: chief executive, principal and executive director). The three other nominating managers identified their roles as HR-related: head of organisational development and learning, HR director and head of staff training and development unit. Nominating managers represented the broad range of mission groups with a balance of Russell Group (six), non-aligned (five) and the 94 Group (four).

In addition, 58 TMP alumni identified themselves as nominating managers. It is interesting to note that only a few of these were either vice-chancellors or principals, which suggests that, although vice-chancellors and principals formally nominate staff for TMP, in reality other senior staff are likely to be involved in the nomination process. This is supported by the results outlined in Table 10, which compares responses from nominating managers with TMP alumni. For example, a significant proportion (42%) of nominating managers indicated that other senior staff, such as pro-vice-chancellors and deputy vice-chancellors are involved in the nomination process. For analysis purposes, the responses of non-TMP nominating managers and alumni who identified themselves as nominating managers were merged. Furthermore, a series of one-to-one interviews was carried out with a sample of 12 nominating managers: four with non-TMP alumni and eight with TMP alumni, with a gender split of four females and eight males.
Table 10 Role-holders involved in nomination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which of the following role-holders are generally involved in nominating people for the TMP?</th>
<th>Nominating managers’ responses</th>
<th>Alumni responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VC only</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC plus PVC or DVC</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC plus HoD or dean</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC plus line manager</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC plus someone who has previously done TMP</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC plus HR/staff development</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC plus other colleague</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered question</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alumni who took part in the survey belonged to a wide range of institutions, which is representative of different mission groups across the sector (Table 11).

Table 11 Mission groups represented by HEIs surveyed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What mission group(s) did the HEI belong to from which you were nominated for the TMP? (n=174)</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94 Group</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guild HE</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Million+</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Group</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Alliance</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-aligned</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alumni were asked at what point in their career they were nominated for TMP and just over half (52%) indicated that they were nominated for TMP early on in a leadership role (most of the interviewees also fell into this category), while 31% were nominated when applying for a leadership role. The nominating managers were more likely to report that people would be nominated for the TMP early in a leadership role (70%) (Table 12).
Both alumni and nominating managers were asked about the usual process of nomination in their institution and 70% of nominating managers indicated that ‘needs are identified after discussion’. Alumni responses varied, but a significant proportion of them (32%) gave greater prominence to the agency of the individual candidate to initiate an ‘informal discussion after personal request’. This was corroborated by qualitative responses to the survey as well as findings from the interviews which confirmed that several alumni took the initiative to ask to attend TMP. Furthermore, marginally more women than men were likely to say that they had asked and, in a few cases, they were nominated as a result of ‘personal insistence on my part to participate in a sector-relevant training and development opportunity’ (female respondent). This is an interesting point because as seen earlier in section 2.5, women are more likely to consider opportunities for training and development as enabling factors for their career progression. Thus the evidence may suggest that women and men may have a different disposition towards career development.

The interviews with nominating managers offered an opportunity to explore further what criteria would be used in decisions to nominate for TMP. Nominating managers said that a person might be nominated when they are applying for more senior roles or when they are considering their career options with no specific roles in mind. Nominating managers preferred to nominate those with ‘potential’, which they variously defined as: those who know what they want to achieve and ‘just don’t have the tools’; openness of mind, ability to engage as a leader and as a follower, who can listen, hear and reflect critically; and evidently respected by colleagues, taking initiatives already.
For example one interviewee said:

We're looking at candidates who we believe have the potential to move into senior positions within the sector...who either already have or have the ability to learn to motivate teams using a balance of consultation, the authority of their personality, and effective clear communications...absolute openness and honesty, part of our institutional value system...who are motivated to uphold the institution's values...who are consistently seeking to develop their own professional skills, but also the professional skills of the staff who report to them...who are going to show a measure of international and cultural understanding because we look at creating global citizens as opposed to UK citizens.

Male respondent

These findings compared with the alumni responses to the survey and gathered through the interviews suggest that overall, institutions take different approaches to the process of nomination.

Nominating managers were asked to what extent equality and diversity considerations featured in the nomination process. Overall, 74 participants responded to this question and 43% indicated that equality and diversity considerations are not explicitly mentioned in the documentation; 35% that they are actively considered when making decisions about nomination; but only 4% that they are explicitly mentioned in the documentation and 3% stated that they do not know (the remaining 15% did not answer the question).

The findings from the interviews suggested that some nominating managers clearly had equality and diversity considerations in mind in their nomination process, nominating participants from under-represented groups or encouraging people from these groups to put themselves forward. Others did not consider equality and diversity specifically when making nominations, but confirmed that equalities considerations were on the agenda such as in recruitment and promotion processes. One nominating manager felt there was no consideration of equality and diversity in the nomination process, using the discourse of identifying ‘potential’ as the main selection criterion. In contrast, there was support for more diverse cohorts:

What we tend to find is that there is a gender bias, so we have to work a bit harder to encourage our female members of staff to put themselves forward or to be encouraged to think about this.

Male respondent

Benefits of TMP for career development

Overwhelmingly, respondents and interviewees cited ‘networking’ outside their own institutions as the most helpful aspect of TMP in their career development (60% of female respondents and 70% of males), and the opportunity this gave for meeting people from different backgrounds and sectors to develop a better understanding of higher education. For example, one female and male participant respectively commented about the value of networks:

For the first time I looked at myself outside of the context of my current institution and considered moving.

and:

[Networking allowed] dialogue with others who faced the same challenges and predicament.

The action learning sets associated with TMP were also highlighted as an important aspect, since these offered opportunities for developing communication skills, sharing experiences, ideas and leadership styles, and exposing participants to individuals from other mission groups and disciplines, and levels of seniority. Specific examples highlighted the ‘opportunity to watch other senior managers react to and learn from the activities’ (female respondent), which was in ‘an environment in which we are all reflecting, openly, about our own leadership’ (female respondent) and the importance of ‘others challenging one’s own preconceptions’ (male respondent). For many, a strength of the action learning sets was the ability to continue meeting and supporting one another. Another key benefit of the programme was the opportunity for self-reflection. For some this helped them to confirm their interest in moving into a leadership role, while for others it made them realise that leadership was not the way they intended to go.
Other benefits identified included the coaching, 360-degree assessments, personality assessments, an increased understanding of finances, HR and governance; exposure to the broader leadership and management literature and ideas on change management; access to sources via the Leadership Foundation; and for some the overseas visits. One contribution to career progression that two men highlighted was the benefit of simply attending: participation in the programme contributes to career progression ‘because it is a “badge”’, while for another, ‘even just having TMP on my CV has, I believe, opened doors’. This was echoed by similar comments made by interviewees.

From the point of view of the nominating managers, the most important expected benefits of the TMP were seen as being primarily for individual development, as outlined in Table 14.

**Table 14 Most important expected benefits of TMP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Realising potential</th>
<th>Supporting career development</th>
<th>Making contacts and provision of a support network of peers</th>
<th>Personal development</th>
<th>Confidence boosting</th>
<th>Enhanced and deeper understanding of the complexities of higher education leadership and management</th>
<th>Exposure to aspects of best practice</th>
<th>New ways of thinking</th>
<th>Knowledge of specialised areas (such as finance)</th>
<th>General leadership and management skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This list mirrors well participants’ responses to benefits gained from TMP. They highlighted the networking aspects, ongoing support achieved through action learning sets and, for some, broadening experience through the international visit.

The majority of nominating managers felt that the benefits of the programme had been realised fully or broadly, although there was some reference to individuals for whom the programme had not worked so well. Follow-up after attending TMP seems to vary: in two cases there was no follow-up with alumni, in two cases alumni were simply encouraged to stay in touch with their learning set or others they had met on the course, and three used appraisal/PDR discussions for follow-up.

**Alumni career development after TMP**

The survey data shows that after attending TMP, just over half of the male respondents (51.1%) and nearly half of the female respondents (47.3%) were appointed to more senior roles (see Table 15). A significant proportion of both male and female respondents, respectively 34% and 36.5%, stayed in the role that they held at the time of attending TMP, which is consistent with the fact that many were nominated when they took up a leadership role.

The data also shows that a significant proportion of female respondents (21.6%) had unsuccessfully applied for a more senior role in higher education, compared with 8.5% of male respondents. Statistical testing of these results showed that women in our sample were more likely to be unsuccessful when applying for more senior roles in higher education. A chi-squared for independence test was run to test whether women were more likely to be unsuccessful when they applied for senior roles in higher education and the result confirmed this hypothesis \( \chi^2(1)=4.78, P=0.029 \). Also, further analysis comparing the group of women who were successful in applying for more senior roles after attending TMP with those who were unsuccessful indicated that the latter are more likely to consider ‘lack of career advice,’ ‘lack of career planning’ and ‘limited opportunities to change employer’ as constraints on their career development.
Table 15 Career development since attending TMP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How has your career developed since attending the TMP? Please tick all that apply.</th>
<th>Response % Female</th>
<th>Response % Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have stayed in the role I held at the time of attending TMP.</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been appointed to more senior role(s) within higher education.</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have been appointed to more senior role(s) outside higher education.</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been appointed to more senior role(s) within higher education after unsuccessfully applying more than once.</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have applied for more senior role(s) within higher education but have not been appointed to them.</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have applied for more senior role(s) outside higher education but have not been appointed to them.</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

With regard to ‘lack of career planning’ it is worth noting that as discussed earlier (see above under ‘Career plans’), most interviewees felt that their careers were largely unplanned, and this included several who had been highly successful. It is possible that in spite of perceptions of a lack of career planning, some planned more than others or that some, although not having a clear plan, nonetheless were driven by their ambitions and had a clear sense of what they wanted to achieve. Thus the evidence on this point is inconclusive.

Similarly, although limited opportunities to change employer were singled out especially by women as a constraint on their career progression, the evidence shows that others had very successful careers even if they stayed in the same institution for a long period of time and, in a few cases, for the whole of their career. This suggests that the need to change employer in order to progress one's career is more likely to depend on opportunities for promotion and access to leadership roles existing in individual HEIs and that this in turn may depend on the size of the institution.

Participants also provided details to support and supplement their responses. Six women and one man who had not been promoted had, however, taken on other significant responsibilities within their existing institution, for example, acting as secretary to the institution’s governing body or extending the role of their department. Four women had made a sideways move – one to another university at the same level, one to a similar role in a higher profile university and one had taken on a different role by moving into research management. One man returned to teaching and research, with two (one man, one woman) leaving higher education to become self-employed. However, a few of the women who had unsuccessfully applied for more senior roles in higher education were included in the sample of interviewees and expressed concern about possible gender bias in the selection and recruitment process for leadership roles, or about being advised to apply for the wrong role, as discussed earlier (see above under ‘Experiences of TMP’).

Another question in the survey asked to what extent their career goals had changed as a result of attending TMP. More women (10%) indicated that their career goals had changed ‘a lot’ compared with 4% of men. Six women and four men highlighted the confidence and increased aspiration TMP had given them; for example, two women stated respectively: ‘I knew what I wanted to do and the TMP confirmed for me that I could do it’ and ‘I realised I was good at being a senior manager and wanted to do more’.

TMP had also enabled delegates to reconsider their goals and for some this meant staying where they were:

> At the time I completed the TMP I still aspired to a more senior role…and I applied for two such roles within three years of completing it. However, I have evaluated my priorities since and at present am not looking for a major career move.

**Female respondent**
Another woman said she had ‘decided not to become a VC’.

For some male participants this was also the case: for example, for two of them, TMP had been a success because it clarified their goals for them and these did not involve promotion, as illustrated by the following quotes: ‘I found out that I didn’t want to be a top manager’ and ‘I’m still not sure I want to be a VC’, whilst for another it: ‘confirmed DVC role was the limit of my ambition’! Others, though, identified TMP as confirming a specific ambition to aim for a vice-chancellor post, whilst confirming for them that they were capable of achieving this. Several described ways in which the TMP had broadened their horizons, including a desire for self-development, to gain experience in other institutions and to move out of higher education altogether:

I am very happy where I am. TMP is sometimes perceived as a stepping stone to career progression. It should not be. Its role should be personal development, not primarily career progression.

Female respondent

These comments confirm that for many alumni, TMP offered an important space for reflection to consider their professional interests and career options.

2.7 Increasing diversity in leadership roles: views from TMP alumni and nominating managers

When asked to identify ways in which diversity in leadership roles might be improved, most were able to identify the entrenched problems. Fewer, though, were able to put forward any solutions or identify ways to act as agents of change. Increasing the numbers of BME people in the most senior roles is seen as a more impenetrable issue.146

One issue identified was board-level preconceptions about the type of people who would fit within the institution. There was agreement that appointment panels ‘recruit in their own image’ (female respondent). These views were echoed by nominating managers, as already discussed earlier in this report (see above under ‘Gender bias and leadership’ p40).

For some, the issues were around individuals, and ways they might need to change to become more successful. Some respondents raised concerns about the constraints of childcare responsibilities, and the resulting ability of women to move beyond familiar environments, or to progress to the highest levels. One nominating manager highlighted the possible negative impact that career breaks could have on promotions although the women in our study seemed to have taken very short breaks for maternity leave, partly in recognition of this issue. One interviewee felt that women needed to be more assertive and demonstrate more self-confidence.

One participant highlighted what she saw as different attitudes between women and men: women are unlikely to apply for a job unless they feel confident that they can fulfil all the requirements whereas men ‘would look at the spec and think, “I don’t know how to do that but I guess I can learn”’ (female respondent). Several participants did see it as their institution’s role to tackle this, with one stating that individuals needed to be given the confidence to apply for jobs ‘even if they can only do 80%’ (male respondent), and others agreeing on the importance of encouraging women to apply for senior roles. One woman spoke of ‘actively encouraging fellow female colleagues to move into unfamiliar territory and create opportunities to interact outside their immediate environment’.

Another female participant tries to ensure that people have opportunities to engage with networks and to have a process in place that helps people build their career, and tries ‘to get people to think beyond the role’.

In addressing the difficulties posed to women by caring responsibilities, it was acknowledged that the REF process attempts to acknowledge childcare responsibilities. However, this is seen as ‘the tip of the iceberg’ because:

it makes allowances at the outcomes point, but not…to the same extent in the process, so women struggle with promotions panels – keeping pace with publications and caring simultaneously is an issue.

Female respondent

However, a couple of female interviewees pointed to the fact that promotion panels in their institutions have started to take these issues into account when making decisions about promotions.

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146 The ECU is trialling an equality charter mark to help address this issue. See http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/project-files/race-charter-mark/applying-for-the-race-chartermark-trial-guidance.pdf
Action to address equality issues in higher education

A number of suggestions were made about the kind of action that HEIs should take to tackle equality issues. Addressing the ‘pipeline’ was identified as an important way of redressing the balance, for example, earmarking talented individuals in lower layers of management and encouraging them to take leadership training. Though a number of participants recognised the value of ‘talent-spotting’ individuals, and avoiding ‘one size fits all’ policies for promotion, one participant emphasised ‘the importance of maintaining transparent procedures for recruitment, promotion and training’ (female respondent). This point was also stressed by some nominating managers, who felt that more could be done especially earlier on in careers. For example one said:

*By the time you get to the senior team you are 20 years beyond the point where that selection genuinely started to happen, so I think it is the wrong end of the career to be focusing on…if gender and an ethnic imbalance is addressed at an early career stage there would be no subsequent challenges.*

Female respondent

This is an area that the Aurora Programme, recently launched by the Leadership Foundation, is trying to address by targeting women in mid-career.147

Nevertheless, some participants maintained that perceptions of leadership roles involving a ‘massive amount of work’ would dissuade individuals from even applying, highlighting, for example, a ‘macho email culture [where] everybody has to be on their email on a Sunday afternoon and whoever responds quickest gets the prize’ (female respondent).

In terms of identifying what action institutions may take to increase diversity, some participants were either unsure about or not in favour of, positive action, though there was evidence of HEIs aiming to improve gender balance in other ways, for example, addressing a gender imbalance in the professoriate, or introducing professorial appointments based on teaching and learning to provide an alternative avenue for those who do not have a strong research profile. Another suggestion for a proactive approach was to ensure executive search firms and those briefing them aimed for gender-balanced short-lists.

Other measures such as mentoring to build confidence were also suggested. Furthermore, externally sponsored initiatives such as Aurora and Athena SWAN, for example, were seen as a useful way of providing more opportunities for women in lower management positions, though it was noted that there is no equivalent for providing BME staff with such opportunities.148 In addition, role models were highlighted as an important factor in encouraging women to apply for more senior positions.

Supporting staff work–life balance

Several participants highlighted the importance of work–life balance, and the role of workplace flexibility in helping women to progress. One stressed the important of flexibility in working patterns to help those with caring responsibilities. Flexibility is seen as important but it was commented that it is difficult to be a vice-chancellor part time, for example, four days a week not because it is not manageable – ‘most VCs are hardly in the university anyway’ (male respondent) – but because there is a perception issue about such jobs having to be full time. Overall, though, there was widespread agreement about the importance of sensitivity to people’s needs, for example flexibility for people who have caring responsibilities. For example one interviewee reported that:

*We are talking about setting up more forums where people who've already got experiences doing certain things could actually talk about how they've done it or how they sorted out childcare or things like that. I think there could be more sharing of experience within groups of people. I think there could be more careful mentoring of people who are taking career breaks and coming back.*

Female respondent

Finally, one participant stressed the importance of publishing data on staff diversity in the sector to maintain awareness about progress.149

There was some recognition that the sector needs a stronger and more sophisticated understanding of the value and strength of diverse teams: though the evidence exists, the argument needs to be better articulated. One participant, though, felt that the evidence of a need for diversity is not there, as universities are performing well without diversity, thus removing a strong motive for pursuing a diversity agenda.

147 Details can be found at http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/en/programmes-events/you/aurora/index.cfm
148 It should be noted that the Stellar HE and ECU race equality charter mark programmes are relevant in this area.
149 The ECU regularly produces statistical reports about equality in higher education relating to both staff and students. For more information see http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications
Overall, responses to this question highlighted that blocks to diversity seemed to reinforce acceptance of the status quo, locating responsibility for changing this with the development needs of potential participants (characterised as lacking in confidence). Although supporting an individual’s development is very important, there is a risk that by placing too much emphasis on this aspect, systemic organisational issues are not being addressed. Furthermore, it might be argued that this group of higher education leaders are in the best position to influence and change the dominant higher education culture, although only a few of them were able to point to concrete examples of initiatives that they were leading in this area.

2.8 TMP alumni’s future aspirations

At the end of the interviews, alumni were asked about their future aspirations and how they intended to achieve them. Several interviewees of both genders would like to become vice-chancellors, whereas other intended to apply to pro-vice-chancellor or deputy vice-chancellor and subsequently a vice-chancellor position. Three interviewees – one man and two women - thought that moving jobs was a possibility but they were less concerned with job roles than with ‘doing interesting work’ (female respondent), ‘developing and having the opportunity to contribute and do things and make a difference’ (male respondent) or ‘maintaining a diverse role and work internationally’ (female respondent). This demonstrates how, for some, identity, interests, beliefs and values are key influencing factors in the career decision-making process. A couple were considering retirement, with the focus of other respondents on writing, consultancy work or moving to the charity sector. One female interviewee was unsure whether to move outside the sector or stay in higher education and be ‘inevitably propelled up the ladder’ to be a vice-chancellor or deputy vice-chancellor as ‘with senior management...you get to a point where you can't go backwards...as it's been [x] years since I taught properly and did any proper research’ (female respondent).

In terms of what would help them to achieve their aspirations, responses varied. For some, identifying the right opportunities and narrowing down their potential options was a major step: having someone to talk to about career paths was also seen as key and ‘one of the things TMP does’ (male respondent). One male interviewee who was considering moving into a vice-chancellor role felt that he had to engage with head-hunters. Maintaining visibility at conferences, meetings and various forums was also seen as important ‘so that when other opportunities appear you are not a strange face appearing out of the blue’ (male respondent).

Other helpful factors identified were: feedback from unsuccessful job interviews; balancing research activities; receiving coaching and mentoring; advice about presenting one's achievements effectively in a job application; and building evidence of current successes based on credibility and evidence. Three women aimed to build their current team capabilities because, as one interviewee stated: ‘they’re the ones who will help me deliver’.

2.9 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to map the career trajectories of TMP alumni with a focus on gender; to explore their experiences and in particular how gender and other equality-related characteristics may have influenced their career paths; and to highlight factors that may have facilitated or hindered career progression for this group. This investigation was complemented by an examination of the nomination process for TMP.

The career trajectories of our sample of academics did not reveal significant gender differences – they followed very similar paths. Once they achieved their first permanent academic appointment as lecturers, they progressed through the academic promoted grades until they reach the role of head of department, which in most cases was identified as the key turning point into a management role. However, identities and careers developed differently between academics and those with a professional service background. Overall, participants from professional services had more varied career trajectories as several of them joined higher education having spent a period of time in other sectors. Evidence from this research suggests that such diversity of professional backgrounds creates a sort of ‘paradox’. On the one hand, the sector offers a diverse range of functions that can attract a diverse group of professionals, who bring a wide range of skills and expertise. However, on the other hand, this diversity of skills and expertise becomes a barrier to progression into leadership roles, which are seen as the preserve of those with an academic background (‘it is hard but not impossible to find people who can be successful if they have not done a solid academic job’).
These perceptions are corroborated by the data collected through the online questionnaire, which shows that of those who indicated that they are currently in pro-vice-chancellor or deputy vice-chancellor roles, only a few (three men and three women) are from professional services. All vice-chancellors and principals have academic backgrounds save for one male participant. These findings point to a risk of occupational segregation, both horizontal and vertical, which could have a disproportionate impact on women since a high proportion of them are employed in professional service roles. Therefore it is important that HEIs focus on career progression routes and opportunities for staff in professional services.

Although career trajectories did not show significant gender differences, the research findings highlighted a number of significant gender differences in the women's working experiences. One of these differences related to ‘gendered division of labour’,151 which affected especially the women in our sample who have children and have had to shoulder most of the childcare as well as other family responsibilities while maintaining a career. This was in stark contrast to several men (although not all) who were able to pursue their careers ‘unfettered’ thanks to their wives/partners who were prepared to take the main responsibility for childcare, sometimes at the expenses of their own careers. Although the women recognised that combining childcare with a career was ‘hard work’ most of those interviewed did not feel that this had much impact on their careers after all. This may be partly explained, as some of them pointed out, by the fact that they took short periods of maternity leave and none of them had career breaks for childcare reasons. Also, save for very few noticeable exceptions, these women did not have access to flexible working and their working patterns overall tended to conform with patterns of full-time, almost uninterrupted employment. It was noted that HEIs have become much more family-friendly, and that flexible working is now widely available and that this is important in helping women to combine their careers with childcare. However, an interesting point that emerged from their stories is that in their choices of taking a short period of maternity leave many of these women were also motivated by their interest in their work and their desire to maintain their professional identity as well as by a sense that this made them better mothers: ‘I instantly became a better mother when I…went back to work’.

Another significant difference is that several women in our sample reported instances of less favourable treatment which often took the form of direct discrimination, for example being denied promotion or other opportunities because of their marital status. Although most of these instances occurred in the past, there is no room for complacency since anecdotal evidence suggests that direct sex discrimination has not yet been completely eradicated. Also, these women's experiences have highlighted the possible existence of significant gender bias in the selection and recruitment process for leadership roles. One of the main issues that was raised can affect women as well as other under-represented groups: leadership in the sector appears to be ‘narrowly defined’ and tends to reflect the perceived characteristics associated with male leaders. This resonates with the persistent stereotype highlighted in the academic literature which associates management with being male.152 The lack of diversity in leadership roles and on institutional boards was predominantly blamed for causing a ‘cloning’ effect152 in the selection and recruitment processes which made it difficult for people from under-represented groups to break through. A further important point raised by several participants was about the role of executive search firms (ESFs) and to what extent they may contribute to reinforcing the status quo rather than helping to increase gender diversity in leadership roles. The evidence on this point is mixed but the findings from other studies153 point to the need for gaining a better understanding of what kind of influence ESFs have on the selection and recruitment process at this level and how good practice can be developed.

In this research we attempted to capture wherever possible the interplay of different equality characteristics. Such an attempt was largely frustrated by the lack of BME and alumni with other equality-related characteristics in our sample (or at least alumni who were willing to disclose and discuss them). However, as highlighted in this report, we were able to identify some areas that may warrant further investigation and these are the intersection of age and gender especially for women since this could work to exclude them from leadership roles either because they are seen as being too young and lacking credibility or conversely too old. Another important area is that of ethnicity and gender but also how ethnicity relates to cultural diversity and can work to the disadvantage of people who do not belong to the dominant culture. A couple of significant points were raised by BME interviewees which, although they were made independently of each other, read in conjunction, highlight some issues that are key to tackling the lack of ethnic diversity in leadership roles. They referred to the ‘unspoken racism’ that may exist in HEIs and the difficulty of raising these issues, especially at senior level.

150 Morley (2013)
151 Berthoin Antal and Izraeli (1993); Alimo-Metcalfe (2004)
152 Gronn and Lacey (2006)
153 Doldor et al (2012) and Sweeney (2014)
Identity was a recurrent theme throughout this research and most of our interviewees pondered on aspects of their identities, including tensions of being working class vs middle class, female vs male, non-British vs British, and professional vs academic. This pointed to a lack of a clear ‘leadership’ identity at this level and that people see their identity as a composite of personal factors (eg male or female) and of previously held occupational identities (eg researcher; nurse; librarian). Also our findings suggest that people respond to their situation by defining themselves against what they see as a norm. They may see themselves as not fitting in (being part of the ‘out-group’) but the nature of the in-group, as perceived by them, very much depends on their own sense of self. There does not seem to be a clear route to success as a higher education leader. This is both encouraging – because it opens opportunity to everyone, regardless of background – but also it makes it more challenging to set out what will increase diversity in higher education leadership. The nomination process did not shed much light on this point. When nominating managers were asked what kind of people they would nominate for TMP, their response focused on ‘potential’, which was defined in generic terms such as being open-minded, able to listen, take the initiative, etc.

The findings show that TMP plays an important role in developing this group of leaders, most of whom felt that the programme ‘helped’ or ‘helped a lot’ with their personal development and careers. Networking and the action learning sets were highlighted by most of those who took part in this study as one of the most valuable aspect of the programme since it helped them to develop valuable ‘social capital’. The survey data shows that many of them successfully applied for more senior roles in higher education after completing the TMP. However, on a less positive note they also indicate that a significant proportion of female TMP alumni have been unsuccessful in gaining more senior roles.

This report concluded with the findings from interviews with both alumni and nominating managers in response to a question about what can be done to increase diversity at leadership level. Overall, equality considerations do not seem to feature very prominently in the nomination process. There was a general consensus that diversity in leadership roles in the sector is poor. Discussion tended to focus more on the problems than on possible solutions. Many mentioned Aurora and the Athena SWAN programmes which were thought to be very effective in their own right but at the same time this conveyed a sense that this could locate responsibility for increasing diversity to external agencies rather than within the roles and positions (or spheres) of influence of respondents.

Final note

This research has produced some very rich findings and although caution needs to be exercised in generalising some of these results since they represent the views of a limited group of people (this is especially the case in relation to the interviews), they offer nonetheless a unique insight into the career trajectories and work experiences of a significant sample of TMP alumni in leadership roles in higher education. This report concludes with a summary of the evidence and a list of recommendations, which are set out below.

154 Brass (2001)
Summary of evidence and recommendations

This section of the report summaries the research findings and set out a list of recommendations. It is hoped that these ideas will contribute to the debate within higher education to increase women’s representation in leadership roles across the sector.

1. Perceptions of gender bias in selection and recruitment for leadership roles.

Evidence:
- Our survey results show that although the proportion of males and females in PVC roles in our sample is almost equal there is a significant gender gap in VC/principal roles which reflects the national trend at this level.
- Female respondents in our sample were more likely to be unsuccessful than men when applying for more senior roles.
- The perceptions and experiences of women who took part in the interviews point to the existence of possible gender and other forms of bias in selection and recruitment processes for senior appointments which may result in a ‘cloning’ effect of white male leaders.
- These perceptions were supported by comments made by some of the nominating managers.
- Furthermore, questions have been raised by participants as to whether the involvement of ESFs in the selection and recruitment process for leadership roles contributes to increase diversity or reinforces the status quo.
- All these findings strongly resonate with existing studies relating to the gendered construction of leadership and the role of ESFs in senior appointments in other sectors.

Recommendations

HEIs governing boards: These play a key role in the selection and recruitment for leadership roles, including VCs. However, research focusing on governing bodies showed that a limited number of HEIs offer equality training to governors. ECU and Leadership Foundation should develop and offer to members of governing boards and other key staff involved in making decisions about senior appointments, appropriate high level equality training with a focus on selection and recruitment for leadership roles to raise awareness and understanding of the equality implications relating to the design of job descriptions and selection criteria for senior posts. HEIs should make it a mandatory requirement for members of governing bodies and other key people to attend such training. Action: ECU and Leadership Foundation

Executive Search Firms: Develop a code of practice in collaboration with sector stakeholders, including ECU and Leadership Foundation to promote good practice and greater transparency about the role of ESFs in the selection and recruitment process for senior appointments. ESFs and their clients should aim for at least a 30% of female applicants on short-lists for leadership roles. Data on the proportion of female candidates put forward for senior appointments should be published. Action: ESFs, higher education sector bodies

Adopt positive action in recruitment and promotion: Provisions for positive action in the Equality Act (SS 158-159) permit (but do not require) employers to take into account a protected characteristic when deciding whom to recruit or promote where people having the protected characteristic are at a disadvantage or are under-represented and where the candidates are as qualified as each other. This is known as a ‘tie-break’ and the higher education sector should look at those experiences both in the UK and in other European countries where this and similar provisions to increase gender diversity have been used. It is important that such measures are not confused with ‘quotas’ and for the sector to have a debate about the use of such provisions and learn from other sectors that have used them. A similar debate is taking place in relation to increasing gender diversity on company boards following the introduction of a draft EU Directive requiring companies to achieve female representation of 40% on their boards. Although this Directive has not been adopted yet, such debate has helped to focus companies’ efforts to increase gender diversity. Action: higher education sector bodies

Setting up aspirational targets and monitoring the pipeline: HEIs should set up aspirational targets (supported by measurable and realistic action plans) to increase diversity in senior management roles. Depending on which stages institutions are at, this might involve focusing on different layers of management in order to develop a sustainable pipeline. Such plans would also assist institutions to meet their equality duties and it should include on-going monitoring of applications for senior management roles, short-listing and success rates by gender and wherever possible by other equality characteristics. Action: HEIs

156 Anderson et al (2009) p52
Monitoring career trajectories: It is recommended that processes are set up to allow for the monitoring of career trajectories of TMP and Aurora alumni and to identify role models. **Action: Leadership Foundation**

2 Constraining factors for career development and progression.

**Evidence:**

The survey’s results show that female respondents who have been unsuccessful in applying for more senior roles in higher education were more likely to identify ‘lack of career advice’, ‘lack of career planning’ and ‘limited opportunities to change employers’ as constraining factors to their career progression.

- ‘Childcare’ and ‘lack of confidence’ were also more likely to be identified as constraints by all female respondents.
- Combining work with childcare was especially identified as an issue in the early stages of careers.
- Both male and female academics were likely to consider ‘lack of mentoring’ as a constraint to their career development and progression.
- There is a perception that the absence of an academic background can be a barrier to progress into the most senior leadership roles. The survey’s results showed that save for very few participants all respondents in PVC, DVC and VC and principal roles had an academic background. Although this issue was highlighted by both males and females who participated in this study, these findings point to a risk of gendered occupational segregation since women are over-represented in the professional services occupational group.

**Recommendations**

**Mentoring:** Institutions should consider offering academic staff access to mentoring programmes throughout their career, since these can help to boost confidence and provide a source of career advice and guidance. Examples of good practice in developing and managing mentoring programmes can be found in a comprehensive publication on mentoring in higher education produced by ECU and accessible on their web-site. **Action: HEIs.**

**Support for staff with childcare and other caring responsibilities:** It is important to offer flexible working to help staff to combine their work with childcare and other caring responsibilities, at different stages of their careers. The Children and Families Act 2014 introduces provisions for shared parental leave, and the right to request flexible working to all employees. Guidance could be provided by ECU to help HEIs consider the implications of the provisions of the Act in the higher education context. **Action: ECU and HEIs**

**Take into account equality-related circumstances in academic promotions:** The principles established by the Funding Councils through their equality guidance for REF 2014 to take into account how equality-related circumstances might have impacted on quantity of research outputs (not quality) in selecting staff for inclusion should be adopted when making decisions about academic promotions. This could help to increase the number of female professors and professors from other under-represented groups. **Action: HEIs**

**Professional services career routes:** HEIs should review career routes for this group of staff which tends to be a higher percentage of women, to ensure that they are able to progress in leadership roles. It is important to focus on competencies and transferable skills which are actually necessary for leadership roles to ensure that staff in this group are not overlooked or disadvantaged in selection and recruitment processes for these roles. **Action: HEIs**

3. Enabling factors for career development and progression.

**Evidence:**

- Both the survey’s results and the findings from the interviewees indicate that opportunities for taking management responsibilities, undertaking cross-institutional work, and opportunities for external exposure/responsibilities were considered factors which helped with career development and progression.
- Development of social capital through networking was also highlighted as a key enabling factor.
- With specific regard to gender ‘opportunities for training and development’ these were shown to be most valued by women.
- The evidence shows that most respondents’ experience was of very informal arrangements for career support, with few formal systems and little transparency. Opportunities for new experiences, including formal leadership development, tended to arise through informal conversations and ‘taps on the shoulder’.
Recommendations

Facilitate access to opportunities for taking management responsibilities, cross-institutional work and external exposure: Institutions should maximise opportunities for internal mobility by mapping out functions and responsibilities that could provide stepping stones to senior management roles and ensure that they can be accessed through a transparent process. This may also include the use of secondments and assignment to specific projects. Ensure a balanced representation of women and wherever possible other equality groups on committees and especially those operating on a cross-institutional basis. Women may be encouraged through personal development plans to take up external roles, either within the higher education sector (e.g. involvement with research councils) or with other sectors. **Action: HEIs**

Talent management and access to leadership development: Institutions should adopt clear criteria, which include equality considerations, to identify and nominate staff for leadership programmes. These criteria and the type of opportunities available to staff both internally and externally should be clearly communicated to staff at different stages of their careers. **Action: HEIs**

4. Lack of equality discourse in leadership programmes.

Evidence:
- The findings from this research highlighted that save for a few exceptions most of the participants in this study did not seem to be pro-active in promoting equality and diversity in relation to career planning and promotion in their institutions or across the sector in spite of being in roles where they could exercise significant influence on the equality agenda.

Recommendations

Integrating equality in leadership development programmes: There is a need for leadership development programmes at different levels to integrate equality and diversity in their curricula and to encourage future leaders to think how they can make a difference in this area (as Aurora has begun to do). There is also scope to promote better understanding of cross-cultural issues as there is a high proportion of international staff in higher education. **Action: Leadership Foundation, ECU**

5. Work-life balance issues in leadership roles.

Evidence:
- The research findings show that there is still a belief that leadership roles are ‘greedy work’, ie, involve excessive work demands, and this may deter some people, especially women, from applying for these jobs.
- However, the evidence also suggests that staff in these role have a significant amount of control and autonomy about how they organise their work and some of them have managed to achieve a ‘healthy work-life balance’ as opposed to others who find that work-life balance is an issue in these roles.

Recommendations

Tackle work-life balance issues in leadership programmes: Include in leadership programmes discussion on work-life balance issues. Draw on existing research about the role of technology and the future of work to explore positive ways in which technology can enable work-life balance rather than hinder it. Also identify examples of good practice and role models at this level both in higher education and in other sectors where similar challenges are experienced in senior roles. **Action: Leadership Foundation**
References


Morgan, J. (2013). Interview with Dr Mark Pegg, Chief Executive of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.


Appendix 1 Focus group discussion themes and information

Tracking the Careers of TMP Alumni
Research project, April-December 2013; Oxford Brookes University and Learning for Good Ltd
Focus groups: questions and notes

This sheet is for you to use to capture your thoughts during the focus group. Please use it to doodle/make notes/capture any comments you don’t have an opportunity to make during the plenary discussions. Please leave it with the facilitators at the end of the focus group.

A reminder of the purpose
We are holding focus groups in order to gather initial data to help the team to develop the research instruments for the following stages of the research, and more specifically to explore the range and variability of alumni views on: expectations, experiences and impact of the TMP; enablers and barriers to career development in different HE mission groups; typical and atypical career trajectories and the issues faced at key decision-points; and views on experiences of discrimination and under-representation of women and BME in senior roles in the sector.

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<tr>
<th>1. What degree of diversity do you see at senior management level in HE?</th>
<th>2. What are your experiences of under-representation and bias in your career?</th>
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<td>3. What are your experiences of under-representation and bias in your career?</td>
<td>4. What needs to be done within the sector to address these issues?</td>
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Tracking the careers of TMP alumni – description of project

In this project, jointly funded by the Leadership Foundation and the Equality Challenge Unit, we aim to explore the career trajectories of alumni from the Leadership Foundation's Top Management Programme (TMP), in order to inform the work of the Leadership Foundation and ECU. We will focus in particular on how to make more progress both in improving the diversity of the sector's leadership and in enhancing leadership for diversity. While the project will look primarily at gender, the research will place a strong emphasis on intersectionalities relating to ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and other aspects of diversity.

The project is being conducted by the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice at Oxford Brookes University, in collaboration with Rebecca Nestor and Felicity Cooke, Learning for Good.

Research indicates that between 1970 and 2008 there has been a six-fold increase globally in the number of female students and that across the world, there are slightly more women enrolled on undergraduate courses than men. However, there is still a gender gap globally in the leadership of higher education. At a Round Table discussion hosted by the Leadership Foundation in July 2012 and involving senior leaders, governors and academics, it was noted that that the leadership of higher education in the UK is shifting towards a less inclusive profile, with leaders being predominantly male and public-school educated. Less than 20% of vice-chancellors are women and only one vice-chancellor is from a minority ethnic background. Tracking the careers of the 500-plus people who have taken part in the Leadership Foundation's flagship programme for aspiring top leaders will, we hope, provide unique insights into:

- the contribution that programmes of this kind can play in increasing diversity, and understanding of diversity, at the very top
- more broadly, what actions will help the sector achieve a more diverse leadership at the very top of our sector, and what support from the LFHE and ECU will be needed to enable this

This research project is guided by a steering committee chaired by Professor Janet Beer, Joint Chair, Equality Challenge Unit, who is herself a TMP alumna. The research begins in April 2013 and we expect that it will take approximately nine months to complete. The fieldwork will take place in the spring and summer of 2013 and will consist of interviews and focus groups with TMP alumni, an exploration of the nomination and follow-up processes for TMP with senior HE staff, and a survey of all contactable TMP alumni. The outcomes of the project will include recommendations for the Leadership Foundation and ECU as well as other relevant stakeholders. General findings will be communicated to the sector more widely through suitable media.

We hope that TMP alumni will wish to participate fully in this project. If you have any comments about the project that you would like to share with us at this stage, please contact Diane Bebbington (Leadership Foundation) on 020 8540 0647 or Simonetta Manfredi (Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice) at smanfredi@brookes.ac.uk. Thank you in advance for your help.

Oxford Brookes University/Learning for Good, March 2013
Appendix 2 Focus groups findings

Overall 52 TMP alumni expressed an interest in taking part in the focus groups but only 26 were able to attend the dates offered (14 woman and 12 men). The number of participants in each discussion group ranged from a minimum of four to a maximum of 12. Each focus group lasted 90 minutes and was facilitated by two members of the research team. All the sessions started with informal contracting of ‘ground rules’ based on respect for personal experience and opinions and confidentiality in order to promote a diversity of views since this was of particular importance for this initiative. In order to attract participants to the focus groups, a developmental session was offered immediately following the focus group discussion: this focused on ‘how to get the most out of your action learning set’.

Findings from the focus groups are presented under the following key areas, which follow the broad areas of questioning developed for this stage of the enquiry:

- Diversity at senior management level in higher education
- Experiences of bias in careers
- Career paths in higher education
- Contribution of the TMP to alumni’s career progression into senior roles
- What needs to be done in the sector to address equality and diversity issues.

Diversity at senior management level in higher education

The focus groups confirmed findings from the literature review that there is a lack of diversity at senior management level in higher education. Most of the participants noted that BME representation was particularly poor and, while it was noted that some vice-chancellors will highlight this issue, there is no obvious strategy to address it. It was also commented that the lack of a pool of BME staff for promotion was a long-term issue. In one group it was felt that while there was a strong voice to support women’s representation, not much progress had been made for either race or disability.

Conversely, gender diversity appears to present a mixed picture. It was reported that women’s representation in senior roles has improved in a number of institutions with some institutions having achieved 50:50 male/female senior teams (at this level where numbers are small a few appointments can make a big difference). However, it was felt that in spite of this progress, gender balance in the sector is still very fragile, that there is a lack of sustainability and that women remain significantly under-represented at vice-chancellor level.

- A number of structural barriers to achieve greater gender equality in senior roles were identified and these included:
  - All-male senior teams at institutional level contribute to maintain a male-dominated culture.
  - There were problems reported with the number of women feeding into the professoriate as a portal to senior management.
    It was noted however, that this varies by discipline – for example, sciences compared with liberal arts subjects – with some having higher numbers of female professors compared with others.
  - Often it is not clear where opportunities are for women to progress their careers in the administrative structures; it was commented that one needs to be exceptional to succeed.
  - Recruitment processes in senior management roles: it was felt that the problem can lie with the board of governors or council members, who may be men often from an industrial background, who, when selecting and recruiting people for senior management roles, are looking for another ‘chap’ – just like them.

Gender differences in the way men and women approach their career progression could also, in participants’ experience, act as barriers. For example, one participant who is dean of a faculty reported that she has to work harder to persuade good women researchers to put themselves forward for promotion across all different levels. In contrast, men are more likely to put themselves forward even if they are not ready, and have to be held back. Others commented that women are less likely to put themselves forward for rewards, or to negotiate for better rewards. For example the REF created a climate where people (men) would threaten to leave and gain a retention salary rise, unlike women, who, it was noted, are much more diffident about doing this. Finally it was noted that women who do make it into the upper ranks tend to be older.
Mixed views were offered about LGBT representation, with some participants not seeing this as an issue, and others noting that consideration of monitoring for LGBT had only just begun, thus implying that not enough is yet known about this group. One participant reported having encountered homophobic attitudes in one institution. Another said that he believed that assumptions had been made about his sexuality.

A positive example was mentioned of an institution which had an openly gay senior woman who has been a good role model and has had a very positive effect: this institution is now in the Stonewall Top 100. Save for this positive example, overall there was a perception that disability and LGBT are largely invisible and unspoken. Questions were also raised about class – people heard a lot of ‘public school accents’ in certain parts of the sector.

**Experiences of bias in careers**

Participants were asked whether they believed that they had experienced bias in their career that could be attributed to equality-related personal characteristics. Several participants reported having experienced bias because of their gender. For example, one female participant said that there had been instances in her career when people assumed that she was a secretary rather than a female pro-vice-chancellor. Another reported that her male successor was paid more. One male participant explained that although he had not personally experienced bias in his career, he is currently on senior committees that are largely populated by men, and he has noted that men tend to talk over women in meetings. Moreover, he noted that when a woman makes a good point it can be hijacked by the men, who say it a few sentences later, and if a woman makes a slightly challenging point it is seen as problematic, whereas if the men make a challenging point it is seen as challenging in a positive way.

Two male participants reported being unsuccessful in job applications where it had become clear that female applicants had been preferred in order to improve gender balance (one outside the higher education sector and one for a chair). A third one had not bothered to make an application because he knew it was intended to appoint a woman, but he was in favour of positive action ‘on the whole’. Though some of them felt ‘sore’ at the time, these experiences did not prevent them from making progress in their careers. There was some discussion in the groups about the use of quotas to improve gender balance at senior level and views from female participants were mixed. One female participant deplored this behaviour, as she would only want to be appointed on her merits, whilst another explained that although she has been opposed to the idea of quotas in the past, she has come to the conclusion that the adoption of this type of measure may be the only way to achieve some significant progress.

In practice the use of quotas or positive discrimination is not permitted under UK legislation; however, the Equality Act 2010 provides for the use of positive action in relation to recruitment and promotion (Section 159). These provisions would apply to a situation where two candidates (for example a man and a woman), are equally qualified and allow an employer to appoint the candidate from the under-represented sex. It was not clear from the discussion to what extent the distinction between the use of quotas, which are unlawful, and the positive action measures provided by the Equality Act was understood among participants. It is probably fair to say that some shared the view that greater intervention was needed to increase women’s participation in leadership roles: as one participant put it ‘we have run out of soft options’. It was also commented that with regard to recruitment and promotion, gender issues are more subtle, and they are about perceptions of women and the quality of their work, especially where a recruitment panel does not have a diverse make-up.

Social class was identified as a possible issue. Some commented that there are still vestiges of class distinction based on how people speak and some people were said to have learnt to ‘talk posh’. Class, regional accents and dress were all seen as having potential for negative attitudes by recruiters, which would impact on career progression.

Some participants experienced bias in their careers in higher education because of their non-academic background. It was noted that promotion systems in the sector can be quite ‘old-fashioned’ and not always helpful to those outside the sector. The higher education sector needs to pay more attention to how promotion happens to ‘late entrants’ from outside the sector. This is well illustrated by the experience of one participant who came to higher education via public sector services: she explained that she had received lots of ‘prompting’ at every stage of her career in higher education, which did not happen to colleagues coming through a ‘traditional’ academic career. There seems to be still a prevalent view that success means one is a great researcher and can teach. Furthermore, not having a PhD, and the title Dr, can have a negative influence, particularly for women in medical/science environments. Thus it is important to have role models to show how people can get to the top by a number of routes.
Finally the question was raised and by implication a suggestion made that there is a lack of equality of esteem in the sector between academic and professional roles.

Career paths
Participants were asked to reflect on career paths in higher education and what might be considered a typical career trajectory. The sector was said to be ‘permissive’ in recognising careers that moved in and out of different professional roles. Career structures have changed a lot in recent decades, which meant that they had moved on from a system of rotating senior roles, including that of vice-chancellor, to increased managerialism and opportunities for more movement up academic scales. There is no single career path in higher education but a variety of different routes for progression. Institutions were said to have phases of internal and external recruitment and thus from an individual's perspective it was important to balance progression between moving up within an institution or by moving to another institution. One participant talked about the need for understanding that promotion can be ‘within the job’ in higher education compared with other sectors. It was also felt that lots of people in senior roles have a rather ‘zig-zag’ career path and that it is possible to get to places via different routes, for example by doing useful things, leading specific projects, within the university. Swapping and shifting can be a creative way to develop careers since it gives diversity and breadth of experience. It was commented that the TMP was helpful in providing an ‘articulation of career path’ and in encouraging people to better understand the range of possibilities and develop a ‘plan B’ if original career plans do not materialise.

Contribution of the TMP to alumni’s career progression into senior roles
Participants explored the extent that the TMP could be viewed as exclusive and necessary for career progression. Participants felt that the extent to which attendance on the TMP could be viewed as a ‘ticket’ to progression was somewhat dependent on institutions’ selection processes, including the use of head-hunters. It was thought that being a TMP alumna(us) would certainly provide an important credential, especially for those re-entering the sector from outside or overseas, but it would only be one aspect of a candidature.

Overall the TMP was perceived very positively as having a lot of strengths. The most commonly mentioned included the following:

- The opportunity of networking emerged as one of the strongest aspects of the programme: getting to know trusted colleagues and working in confidence, as well as understanding the context of other institutions, was also seen as an asset for the sector as a whole.
- The diversity of academic disciplines represented in the TMP was appreciated.
- External perspectives were especially valued (i.e., from other disciplines, other institutions, including from other mission groups and international, and from other roles and speakers).
- Time and space were provided for reflection and understanding of priorities and aspirations.
- There were opportunities to be self-analytical and to hear other points of view.
- The TMP contributed towards confidence building.
- Action learning sets (for some) were valued.

Some criticism also emerged and this included:

- The absence of equality and diversity was noted, with respondents saying it should preferably be integrated into the TMP curriculum rather than a stand-alone component of it.
- Cliques reflecting sector mission groups had a tendency to emerge.
- TMP will not suit all potential participants: for some it could be a destabilising experience.
- The importance of the TMP brand was seen as exaggerated by some respondents.
- Some specific aspects were disliked by some, such as the very long days, use of role play and action learning sets.
- It could have been more at the leading edge. Some would have wanted to be exposed to more challenging constructs and concepts, for example re-imagining what universities could be.
What needs to be done in the sector to address equality and diversity issues?
The focus groups concluded with a discussion about what should be done in the sector to address equality and diversity (E&D) issues. There was consensus that there needs to be better understanding of E&D by vice-chancellors and senior management teams. In one group it was stressed that debates among senior managers about E&D need to be broader than simply relating to legislation and compliance. E&D should be covered by the TMP and other training for senior managers. Also, it was suggested that departments should be requested to produce equality and diversity action plans and that there should be naming and shaming of institutions that perform poorly in this area.

Recruitment and promotion were singled out as key processes to achieve greater diversity and it was pointed out that there is a need for ‘continuous, mindful effort’ in appointments at every stage in order to secure a pipeline of potential applicants from under-represented groups. A couple of examples of good practice were highlighted: the first one involved a female head of department in the physical sciences who had challenged every short-list without equally qualified women, which resulted in the appointment of four or five women in her department. The second one involved an overseas institution that had achieved a good gender and ethnic balance through deliberate effort on set-up and through worldwide recruitment (though none is disabled). Also, greater attention needs to be paid to the appointment of institutional-level boards/councils which are not diverse themselves and do not appear to address these issues. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the lack of diversity at board/council level can be a significant obstacle to the appointment of a more diverse range of vice-chancellors.

It was commented that external agencies such as Athena SWAN and funding bodies including the EU can affect institutional culture and promote positive change. It was suggested that there is a need for interventionist strategies to address equality issues and that the higher education sector could learn from other sector initiatives such as the Two Percent Club. Another point made regarded the importance of linking funding to E&D outcomes in order to ensure progress, as demonstrated by the Athena SWAN initiative.

Summary of key findings from the focus groups

- There is a significant lack of diversity in senior management roles in the sector, especially with regard to BME staff. This is likely to be perpetuated by all-male and predominantly white senior management teams across the sector.
- Some institutions have improved women’s representation in senior roles but such progress is still fragile and women continue to be significantly under-represented among vice-chancellors.
- Women are less likely to put themselves forward for promotion and rewards compared with men.
- LGBT and disability are largely unseen and unspoken. Role models of senior people who are openly gay can have a positive effect on institutions.
- Experiences of bias in careers included gender, homophobic attitudes, social class and having entered the sector from a non-academic background.
- There are different views about the use of positive action measures to improve women’s representation in senior roles. Some remain opposed to them as they are seen to undermine the principle of meritocracy; others, however, feel that ‘we have run out of soft options’ and these measures are now necessary to achieve results. However, there seems to be a lack of understanding of what kind of positive action measures would be permitted under current equality legislation.
- Career structures have changed a lot in the sector in recent decades. Most notably they have moved on from a system of rotating senior roles to increased managerialism but also greater opportunities in an increased number of universities. There are no single career paths in higher education but a variety of routes for progression.
- The TMP was seen as providing an important credential for applying for senior roles. This course was perceived as having a lot of strengths, with the most commonly mentioned the opportunity to network with colleagues from other institutions. Some weaknesses were also identified, most notably the absence of equality and diversity in the TMP curriculum.
- A number of suggestions were made to address equality and diversity issues in the sector which included: the need to promote a debate among senior managers about equality and diversity issues that goes beyond legal compliance; covering E&D issues in the TMP and other training for senior managers; require departments to produce E&D action plans; and focus on recruitment and promotion processes to secure a pipeline of potential applicants from under-represented groups.
- Greater attention needs to be paid about the diversity of institutional boards/councils. The lack of diversity can represent an obstacle to appoint more vice-chancellors from under-represented groups.
- Linking funding to E&D can help to achieve positive outcomes.

159 The Two Percent Club was launched in London in 2013 as a national network for the ‘Voice of Corporate Women’ and to forward the issue of under-representation of women at the top of corporate UK. See http://www.thetwopercentclub.com
### Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

#### About this survey

Thank you for visiting our survey, which should take you about fifteen minutes to complete.

You have been invited to take part in this survey because you have taken part in, and possibly also nominated colleagues for, the Leadership Foundation's Top Management Programme (TMP). The survey is part of a study of the careers of people who have taken part in the TMP. For more details of the study, see the [project description on the Leadership Foundation's website](#).

All the information provided in this survey is confidential and will only be seen by the research team at Oxford Brookes University that is undertaking the study on behalf of the Leadership Foundation and the Equality Challenge Unit. Data from the survey will be presented anonymously. This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at Oxford Brookes University. If you have any concerns you can [email the Ethics Committee](#) or [visit their website](#).
### About your career as a whole

1. Please use the drop-down lists to (a) pick the choices that best describe your primary activity; and (b) indicate your salary band for each period in higher education (to be used as a proxy for grade).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Main Activity During This Period</th>
<th>Salary Band During This Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 21-30</td>
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<td>Age 31-35</td>
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<td>Age 36-40</td>
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<td>Age 41-50</td>
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<td>Age 51-60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age 61 till now</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please expand on your answer if you wish by giving reasons for your choice of activity.

2. If you were in higher education for any of the following periods, please indicate your primary job role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Job Role Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 21-30</td>
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<td>Age 31-35</td>
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<td>Age 36-40</td>
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<td>Age 41-50</td>
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<td>Age 51-60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age 61 till now</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. Please tell us about your patterns of working during your career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No, never</th>
<th>Yes, for up to a year</th>
<th>Yes, for between one and five years</th>
<th>Yes, for more than five years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever had a period of working part-time only within higher education?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you ever had a period of working part-time only outside higher education?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you ever had a period during which you had significant other responsibilities outside work (e.g. childcare)?</td>
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</table>

Please comment if you wish.
### Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

#### 4. Please indicate the extent to which your career has been enabled by the following. If you have not experienced an option, please tick 'I have not had this experience.'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Not enabled at all</th>
<th>Enabled a little</th>
<th>Enabled quite a lot</th>
<th>Enabled a lot</th>
<th>I have not had this experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive role models in senior management positions</td>
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<td>I have not had this experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentor relationships</td>
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<td>I have not had this experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching support</td>
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<td>I have not had this experience</td>
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<td>Career planning</td>
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<td>I have not had this experience</td>
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<td>Good career advice</td>
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<td>I have not had this experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities for training /development</td>
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<td>I have not had this experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sabbaticals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities for taking management responsibilities (e.g. head of department, head of a functional service)</td>
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<td>I have not had this experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities for external exposure/responsibilities (e.g. membership of professional bodies, advisory/consultancy roles)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working for different HE institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networks within HE</td>
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<td>I have not had this experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience across multiple mission groups</td>
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<td>I have not had this experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networks outside the HE sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience outside HE</td>
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<td>I have not had this experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having worked for different sectors</td>
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<td>I have not had this experience</td>
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Please expand on your answer if you wish.

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#### 5. What personal qualities, experience or skills do you think have helped you most in your leadership and management career?

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Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

6. To what extent do you believe that your career development or progression has been influenced by any of the following arrangements, if you have made use of them? If you have not made use of an arrangement, please tick 'have not used at all'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not influenced at all</th>
<th>Influenced a little</th>
<th>Influenced quite a lot</th>
<th>Influenced a lot</th>
<th>Have not used at all</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maternity or adoption leave</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paternity or adoption leave</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental leave (unpaid entitlement to look after a child’s welfare)</td>
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<td>Flexible working</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career break arrangements</td>
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<td>Athena Swan</td>
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<td>Training or developmental initiatives for women</td>
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<td>Training or developmental initiatives for BME staff</td>
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<td>Equality networks</td>
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<td>Support for disabled staff</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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Please expand on your answer if you wish.
Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

7. Please indicate the extent to which you think that the following, if they apply to you, have constrained your career development. If the situation does not apply to you, please tick 'This has not happened to me'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constraint</th>
<th>Did not constrain at all</th>
<th>Constrained a little</th>
<th>Constrained quite a lot</th>
<th>Constrained a lot</th>
<th>This has not happened to me</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of academic background</td>
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<td>Lack of confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunities for training/development</td>
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<td>Lack of role models</td>
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<td>Lack of mentoring</td>
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<td>Lack of career advice</td>
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<td>Lack of career planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of networks within higher education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunities for taking additional management responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunities for external exposure/responsibilities (e.g.</td>
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<tr>
<td>membership of professional bodies, membership of research councils,</td>
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<tr>
<td>advisory/consultancy roles to private/public sector)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childcare responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caring responsibilities for an adult</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited opportunities to change employer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please describe any other constraints you have experienced, or expand on your answer if you wish.
Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

8. Do you believe that in your career you have experienced less favourable treatment because of any of the following? If your answer is ‘yes’, please specify by ticking the area(s) this occurred, or leave blank if not applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area(s)</th>
<th>Recruitment</th>
<th>Promotion</th>
<th>Opportunities for training/development</th>
<th>Opportunities for taking additional management responsibilities</th>
<th>Opportunities for external exposure/responsibilities</th>
<th>Other area(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender identity</td>
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<td>Sexual orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
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<td>Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion or belief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of religion or belief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maternity</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other aspects of diversity (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. If you answered 'Yes' to the previous question, please give more details if you wish of your experience/s
### About your career before the TMP

10. Thinking about the higher education institution at which you worked when you were nominated for the TMP, what mission group/s did it belong to?

- [ ] 94 Group
- [ ] GuildHE
- [ ] Million+
- [ ] Russell Group
- [ ] University Alliance
- [ ] Non-aligned
- [ ] Don't know

Other (please specify)
Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

### About your experience of being put forward for the TMP

11. Which TMP run did you take part in (e.g. TMP4, TMP29?) If you don’t know the number, or if you took part in the pre-TMP programme (Room At The Top / RATT), please give the year in which you completed the programme.

12. At which point in your career were you nominated for the TMP? Please choose the answer that most closely matches your situation.

- Before I took up a leadership role to which I had been appointed, to prepare me for it
- Early on in a leadership role, to help me undertake it effectively
- When I was applying for more senior leadership roles
- When I was considering my career options with no specific roles in mind
- Other circumstances (please specify)

13. What were the motivating factors behind your nomination?

14. Who was involved in your nomination for the TMP? Please tick all that apply.

- Vice-chancellor only
- Vice-chancellor plus PVC or DVC
- Vice-chancellor plus HoD or Dean
- Vice-chancellor plus line manager
- Vice-chancellor plus someone who has previously done the TMP
- Vice-chancellor plus Human Resources/staff development
- Vice-chancellor plus other colleague
- Other

Please expand on your answer if you wish.
15. How were you nominated for the TMP? Please choose the answer that most closely matches your situation.

- It was formally discussed during appraisal or similar review process.
- It was formally discussed during feedback on a job application.
- It arose informally from discussions with colleagues within the institution.
- It arose informally from discussions with colleagues outside the institution.
- It was suggested informally to me by a more senior colleague.

Other (please specify)

16. What is your understanding of how people were generally nominated for the TMP in your institution when you were nominated? Please tick the answer that most closely reflects your institution’s practice.

- All senior managers attend in turn
- All senior managers attend on request
- Needs are identified following development discussions (e.g. appraisal, or after a job application) leading to recommendation to attend
- Informal discussion following personal request to attend
- Other

Please expand on your answer if you wish.
### Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

**About your experience of the TMP**

17. What aspect/s of the TMP has/have been most helpful to your career development?

18. What aspect/s of the TMP has/have been least helpful to your career development?
### About your career since the TMP

#### 19. How has your career developed since attending the TMP? Please tick all that apply.

- [ ] I have stayed in the role I held at the time of attending TMP.
- [ ] I have been appointed to more senior role/s within higher education.
- [ ] I have been appointed to more senior role/s outside higher education.
- [ ] I have been appointed to more senior role/s within higher education after unsuccessfully applying more than once.
- [ ] I have applied for more senior role/s within higher education but have not been appointed to them.
- [ ] I have applied for more senior role/s outside higher education but have not been appointed to them.

Other (please specify):

#### 20. To what extent did your career goals change as a result of attending the TMP? If your goals did change, please describe in what way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>They did not change at all</th>
<th>They changed a little</th>
<th>They changed quite a lot</th>
<th>They changed a lot</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please expand on your answer if you wish.

#### 21. To what extent do you think the TMP has helped your career progression?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It has not helped at all</th>
<th>It has helped a little</th>
<th>It has helped quite a lot</th>
<th>It has helped a lot</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please expand on your answer if you wish.

#### 22. Have you ever nominated someone else for the TMP? (This question requires an answer to direct you to the next appropriate question)

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
### Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

#### If you have nominated someone else for the TMP

**23. Which mission group/s does your university belong to?**

- [ ] 94 Group
- [ ] GuildHE
- [ ] Million+
- [ ] Russell Group
- [ ] University Alliance
- [ ] Non-aligned
- [ ] Don’t know
- Other (please specify)

**24. Thinking about all the higher education institutions at which you worked while you have nominated people for the TMP, what mission group/s did they belong to?**

- [ ] 94 Group
- [ ] GuildHE
- [ ] Million+
- [ ] Russell Group
- [ ] University Alliance
- [ ] Non-aligned
- [ ] Don’t know
- Other (please specify)

**25. Which cohorts of the TMP have you nominated people for?**

- [ ] 1999
- [ ] 2000
- [ ] 2001
- [ ] 2002
- [ ] 2003
- [ ] 2004
- [ ] 2005
- [ ] 2006
- [ ] 2007
- [ ] 2008
- [ ] 2009
- [ ] 2010
- [ ] 2011
- [ ] 2012
- [ ] 2013
- Other (please specify)
### Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

**26. Which of the following role-holders are generally involved in nominating people for the TMP? Please tick all that apply.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role-Holder</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vice-chancellor only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-chancellor plus PVC or DVC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-chancellor plus HoD or Dean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-chancellor plus line manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-chancellor plus someone who has previously done the TMP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-chancellor plus Human Resources/staff development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-chancellor plus other colleague</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please expand on your answer if you wish.

**27. Which of the choices below most closely reflects how nomination for the TMP works in your institution?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All senior managers attend in turn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All senior managers attend on request</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs identified following development discussions (e.g. during appraisal/PDR or in feedback after job applications) leading to recommendation to attend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal discussion following personal request to attend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please expand on your answer if you wish.

**28. To what extent do equality and diversity issues feature in nominations for the TMP in your institution?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They are not explicitly taken into account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are explicitly mentioned in the documentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are actively used in decision making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please expand on your answer if you wish.
Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

29. In what circumstances are individuals most commonly nominated for the TMP in your institution?

- Before they take up a leadership role to which they have been appointed, to prepare them for it.
- Early on in a leadership role, to help them undertake it effectively.
- When they are applying for more senior leadership roles.
- When they are considering their career options with no specific roles in mind.

Other (please specify)

30. What other developmental programmes, if any, would you consider most suitable for senior management roles in higher education? Please give the programme name(s) and, if known, the organisation running it

Programme 1
Programme 2
Programme 3

31. Generally, when nominating individuals for the TMP, what would you expect the benefits to be for the individual, the institution, and the sector as a whole?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most important benefits</th>
<th>Secondary benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

32. In general, have these benefits been achieved?

33. What personal characteristics and qualities do you think are useful for leaders in higher education?

34. What skills and experiences do you think are useful for leaders in higher education?

35. Please tell us what you think about the extent of diversity in higher education leadership. If appropriate, what are the blocks?
## Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

### Personal details for data analysis

The personal information provided in this section will be used for data analysis purposes only.

### 36. What is your current role, and field?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job title</th>
<th>Any other information to help us understand your role</th>
<th>Your professional or academic field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 37. Year of birth

- [ ] 1983-1992
- [ ] 1973-1982
- [ ] 1963-1972
- [ ] 1953-1962
- [ ] Before 1953
- [ ] Prefer not to say

### 38. Gender

- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female
- [ ] Other
- [ ] Prefer not to say

### 39. Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were originally assigned at birth?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Prefer not to say
40. What is your ethnic group?

- White - Welsh/English/Northern Irish/British
- White - Scottish
- White - Gypsy or traveller
- White - Other
- Black or Black British Caribbean
- Black or Black British African
- Other Black background
- Asian or Asian British - Indian
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Other Asian background
- Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed - White and Black African
- Mixed - White and Asian
- Other Mixed background
- Arab
- Other Ethnic background
- Not known
- Prefer not to say
**Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire**

### 41. Disability

- Blind or a serious visual impairment
- Deaf or a serious hearing impairment
- A physical impairment or mobility issues
- Personal care support
- Mental health condition
- A long-standing illness or health condition
- Two or more conditions
- Social communication/Autistic spectrum disorder
- Specific learning difficulty
- Another disability, impairment or medical condition
- No known disability
- Prefer not to say

### 42. Do you have any dependants (children or adults)?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

### 43. What is your religion or belief?

- No religion or belief
- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Any other religion or belief
- Unknown
- Prefer not to say
44. What is your sexual orientation?

- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Heterosexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say
In this last section you will be given the opportunity to participate in a follow up telephone or Skype interview. Should you choose to participate, please provide your contact details so that a member of the research team can contact you to arrange an interview.

**45. Would you be willing to take part in a one-to-one telephone or Skype interview with a member of the research team? (This question requires an answer to direct you to the next appropriate question)**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Please amplify your answer if you wish.
Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

*46. First name

*47. Surname

*48. Email address

*49. Telephone number
## Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: alumni questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Any last thoughts?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 50. Do you have any final comments?

---

Page 21
Thank you for completing the survey.
Appendix 4 TMP alumni semi-structured interview protocol

1. Can you briefly tell us about your background and upbringing including your education?
2. In what ways do you think that your background and education has been helpful for your career in HE?
3. Can you tell us about what you see as the key turning points in your career trajectory so far?
4. What influences and/or factors have influenced these key moments?
5. To what extent do you think that you have been able to plan your career?
6. In particular what factors (e.g. personal, work-related, external) have helped you to get where you are?
7. Have you encountered any barrier to get where you are? If so how have you dealt with it?
8. How similar do you feel you are to other people in similar roles to yours?

For interviewees who have indicated in the questionnaire that they had received less favourable treatment because of one or more of their equality characteristics ask:

9. Can you tell us more about your experience of having received less favourable treatment?
10. To what extent do you think that this has impacted on your career development or trajectory?
11. Do you have any views about what could be done by HEIs and/or the HE sector to prevent other people working in the sector from experiencing similar situations?

If no report of any experience of less favourable treatment because of an equality characteristic ask:

12. How do you think that your gender/age or other personal factors have influenced your career path or are likely to influence your future career path?
13. What do you think HEIs or the sector as a whole should do to increase diversity in leadership roles in HE?
14. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your experience of how TMP has impacted on your career/development?
15. Anything else you would like to tell us about how you were nominated to attend the TMP? Do you feel for example that the nomination came at the right time in your career development/progression?
16. How have you balanced your career with other aspects of your life?
17. (If the interviewee has indicated in the questionnaire that they have taken time off and/or had periods of part-time working) do you think that working part-time has affected your career? If so, in what ways? Do you think that taking time off work (e.g. maternity leave) had any impact on your career?
18. What do you think could be done by HEIs and/or the HE sector to help people balancing the demands from their work with other aspects of their personal life?

Final questions

19. What are your professional aspirations for the future?
20. What do you think will help you most to achieve them?
21. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us before we conclude this interview?
Thank you for visiting our survey, which should take you about five minutes to complete.

You have been invited to take part in this survey because you have nominated colleagues for the Leadership Foundation's Top Management Programme (TMP). The survey is part of a study of the careers of people who have taken part in the TMP. For more details of the study, see the project description on the Leadership Foundation's website.

All the information provided in this survey is confidential and will only be seen by the research team at Oxford Brookes University that is undertaking the study on behalf of the Leadership Foundation and the Equality Challenge Unit. Data from the survey will be presented anonymously. This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at Oxford Brookes University. If you have any concerns you can email the Ethics Committee or visit their website.
Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: nominating managers’ questionnaire

About you and your institution

1. What is your current role?
   
   **Job title**
   [ ]
   
   **Any other information to help us understand your role**
   [ ]

2. Which mission group/s does your university belong to?

   [ ] 94 Group
   [ ] GuildHE
   [ ] Million+
   [ ] Russell Group
   [ ] University Alliance
   [ ] Non-aligned
   [ ] Don’t know
   
   **Other (please specify)**
   [ ]

3. Thinking about all the higher education institutions at which you worked while you have nominated people for the TMP, what mission group/s did they belong to?

   [ ] 94 Group
   [ ] GuildHE
   [ ] Million+
   [ ] Russell Group
   [ ] University Alliance
   [ ] Non-aligned
   [ ] Don’t know
   
   **Other (please specify)**
   [ ]
Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: nominating managers' questionnaire

About your experience of nominating people for the TMP

4. Which cohorts of the TMP have you nominated people for?

- [ ] 1999
- [ ] 2000
- [ ] 2001
- [ ] 2002
- [ ] 2003
- [ ] 2004
- [ ] 2005
- [ ] 2006
- [ ] 2007
- [ ] 2008
- [ ] 2009
- [ ] 2010
- [ ] 2011
- [ ] 2012
- [ ] 2013

Other (please specify)

5. Which of the following role-holders are generally involved in nominating people for the TMP? Please tick all that apply.

- [ ] Vice-chancellor only
- [ ] Vice-chancellor plus PVC or DVC
- [ ] Vice-chancellor plus HoD or Dean
- [ ] Vice-chancellor plus line manager
- [ ] Vice-chancellor plus someone who has previously done the Top Management Programme
- [ ] Vice-chancellor plus Human Resources/staff development
- [ ] Vice-chancellor plus other colleague
- [ ] Other

Please expand on your answer if you wish.

6. Which of the choices below most closely reflects how nomination for the TMP works in your institution?

- [ ] All senior managers attend in turn
- [ ] All senior managers attend on request
- [ ] Needs identified following development discussions (e.g. during appraisal/PDR or in feedback after job applications) leading to recommendation to attend
- [ ] Informal discussion following personal request to attend
- [ ] Other

Please amplify your answer.
Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: nominating managers’ questionnaire

7. To what extent do equality and diversity issues feature in nominations for the TMP in your institution?

- They are not explicitly taken into account
- They are explicitly mentioned in the documentation
- They are actively considered in decision making
- Don’t know

Please amplify your answer if you wish.

8. In what circumstances are individuals most commonly nominated for the TMP in your institution?

- Before they take up a leadership role to which they have been appointed, to prepare them for it.
- Early on in a leadership role, to help them undertake it effectively.
- When they are applying for more senior leadership roles.
- When they are considering their career options with no specific roles in mind.
- Other (please specify)

9. What other developmental programmes, if any, would you consider suitable for senior management roles in higher education? Please give the programme name(s) and, if known, the organisation running it.

Programme 1
Programme 2
Programme 3

10. Generally, when nominating individuals for the TMP, what would you expect the benefits to be for the individual, the institution, and the sector as a whole?

Most important benefits
Secondary benefits

11. In general, have these benefits been achieved?

12. What personal characteristics and qualities do you think are useful for leader in higher education?
13. What skills and experiences do you think are useful for leaders in higher education?

14. Please tell us what you think about the extent of diversity in higher education leadership. If appropriate, what are the blocks?
### Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: nominating managers’ questionnaire

#### Personal details for data analysis

The personal information provided in this section will be used for data analysis purposes only.

#### 15. Year of birth

- [ ] 1983-1992
- [ ] 1973-1982
- [ ] 1963-1972
- [ ] 1953-1962
- [ ] before 1953
- [ ] Prefer not to say

#### 16. Gender

- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female
- [ ] Other
- [ ] Prefer not to say
17. What is your ethnic group?

- White - Welsh/English/Northern Irish/British
- White - Scottish
- White - Gypsy or traveller
- White - Other
- Black or Black British Caribbean
- Black or Black British African
- Other Black background
- Asian or Asian British - Indian
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Other Asian background
- Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed - White and Black African
- Mixed - White and Asian
- Other Mixed background
- Arab
- Other Ethnic background
- Not known
- Prefer not to say
Track the careers of TMP alumni: nominating managers’ questionnaire

18. Disability

☐ Blind or a serious visual impairment
☐ Deaf or a serious hearing impairment
☐ A physical impairment or mobility issues
☐ Personal care support
☐ Mental health condition
☐ A long-standing illness or health condition
☐ Two or more conditions
☐ Social communication/Autistic spectrum disorder
☐ Specific learning difficulty
☐ Another disability, impairment or medical condition
☐ No known disability
☐ Prefer not to say
**Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: nominating managers’ questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follow up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this last section you will be given the opportunity to participate in a follow up telephone or Skype interview. Should you choose to participate, please provide your contact details so that a member of the research team can contact you to arrange an interview.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**19. Would you be willing to take part in a one-to-one telephone or Skype interview with a member of the research team? (This question requires an answer to direct you to the next appropriate question)**

- Yes
- No

Please amplify your answer if you wish.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First name</th>
<th></th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th></th>
<th>Email address</th>
<th></th>
<th>Telephone number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Tracking the careers of TMP alumni: nominating managers' questionnaire

#### Any last thoughts?

24. Do you have any final comments?

| 2 | 3 |
### Thank you

Thank you for completing the survey.
Appendix 6 Nominating manager semi-structured interview protocol

1. Can you please elaborate on your experience of how nomination works in your institution(s)?
2. What are the follow-up processes for TMP alumni?
3. (If a nominating manager at multiple HEIs) In your experience, did the nomination process differ between institutions? How did that influence nominations, or outcomes for individuals and the institution/sector?
4. What leadership qualities do you look for when considering TMP candidates?
5. Do equality and diversity issues feature in the nomination and follow-up processes?
6. As a TMP nominating manager, what expectations do you have for the individual and the institution (and have these changed over time)?
7. To what extent have your expectations of the TMP been met?
8. Have you considered other development programmes for your senior management? (please elaborate)
9. What role do you think development programmes like TMP play in supporting women and other groups (eg ethnic minorities) who are currently under-represented in senior roles in HE?
10. What do you think may be important in order to enable other under-represented groups, for example BME staff, to take on senior roles?

Final question

11. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us before we conclude this interview?

Thank you for considering these questions.
Biographies

Simonetta Manfredi is Professor of Equality and Diversity Management and Director of the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice at Oxford Brookes University. Her research interests include gender issues in careers, work-life balance, age discrimination and retirement policies with a focus on the higher education sector and she has published and led several externally funded projects on these topics. Her book on Managing Equality and Diversity (co-authored with Dr. Kumra), published by Oxford University Press, received the Charted Management Institute Management Book of the Year Award 2013 (under the management and leadership category). In 2011 she received the outstanding paper award by the Emerald Publisher for her article (co-authored with Professor Liz Doherty) on Improving Women’s Representation in Senior Positions in Universities.

Dr Felicity Cooke has been a Consultant at Equality Practice since 2010. Formerly, she was Head of Equality at the University of Oxford and prior to that at the University of Cambridge. Her skills include the ability to translate legislative requirements into live and effective practice and transforming compliance into active delivery of equality outcomes. She works on policy design and implementation, and consultation (interviews and focus groups). She has a deep understanding of the process of culture change in organisations, with particular expertise in women’s development, and in unconscious bias. Since establishing Equality Practice she has undertaken equality projects for Equality Challenge Unit, the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, the Royal Society and the University of Oxford.

Dr Louise Grisoni is Associate Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange in the Business Faculty at Oxford Brookes University. Louise’s passion for research falls into the broad field of Organisation Studies. She has developed an international specialism in aesthetics and art-based approaches to research inquiry into a range of organisational phenomena including leading and managing change, leadership, equality and diversity. She has published widely on gender, leadership and equality issues in organisations in a number of academic journals such as: Journal of Management Learning, Organisation and Management Journal and Gender, Work and Organisation. Her career prior to entering higher education was in management development in the Health Service. During her academic career she has been involved in a range of executive development projects for both public and private sector clients including: IBM, Sainsbury’s PLC, Newbury Building Society, Bristol Social Services and Wiltshire County Council.

Dr Karen Handley is a Reader in Organisation Studies at Oxford Brookes University Business Faculty. Her research interests include individuals’ expectations and experiences of work and ‘careers’. She has undertaken a number of externally funded projects including a recent 18-month study funded by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales investigating the career aspirations and planning horizons of graduates from eight HEIs across England. More recently, her research on career trajectories has oriented towards older workers, given the significant challenges and opportunities ahead for this group and she has been awarded funding by the British Academy to undertake work in this area. Before entering academia, Karen worked in the financial services industry and as a principal consultant for PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Rebecca Nestor is director of Learning for Good Ltd, a consultancy focusing on the educational and charitable sectors. Formerly Associate Director of the Oxford Learning Institute, with responsibility for leadership development at the most senior levels in the University of Oxford, she has over twenty years of senior experience in staff development and equality and diversity in higher education and in the public sector. Since 2009 she has been Associate and Regional Co-ordinator, South-East and East of England for the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. In this capacity she holds the following responsibilities: co-director for Preparing for Senior Strategic Leadership; ad-hoc consultancy to HEIs; keeping in touch with HEIs in the two regions; providing support and improving communication between the Leadership Foundation and its member institutions; improving take-up of Leadership Foundation provision in the two regions. Between November 2011 and February 2012 she was also Interim Director of Programmes for the Leadership Foundation.