

## Doing the groundwork on career pathways

*Effective career pathways need a supportive structure. Prior to embarking we have asked ourselves: How do people progress? Who progresses? What are the barriers? We will look at progression over a 5-year period at the University of Chichester and discuss how the findings support the need for clearer pathways.*

### Why are career pathways needed?

Nine out of ten leavers felt progression opportunities 'could be better', low turnover (6% in Professional Services), small departments, specialist functions and lack of clear pathways limit opportunities for progression

### Inter-departmental progression

Categorising departments into broad areas, in last 5 years, every department has either gained a member of staff or lost a member of staff to another area. An interconnected University exists, albeit with no clear structure.

Moving department is often a last resort – Most common reason cited for applying for a role in a different department was a 'lack of progression opportunities' (76pc). Only 41pc felt the role was more closely aligned to their career goals and only 29pc felt their skills matched those needed in the new role more closely.

### Skills gaps for those moving between different departments

Survey asked for how important skills were in previous role and how important they were in new role. Biggest jump in importance was 'planning, organising and project management', potentially highlighting a skills gap. This was also an area where staff felt they lacked confidence (relative to the overall importance of the skill), along with verbal and written communication skills.

### Intra-departmental progression

90pc of all progression is within the same department. 72pc of that is through re-evaluation of role, 22pc through advertised vacancy, 6pc due to acting up for a period (sometimes made permanent).

### Full-time/part-time progression within departments

Of those Professional Services staff with at least 5 years service, 5.5% of part-time staff progressed through re-evaluation of their role in that time, whereas 24% of full-time staff did within the same period. Why could this be?

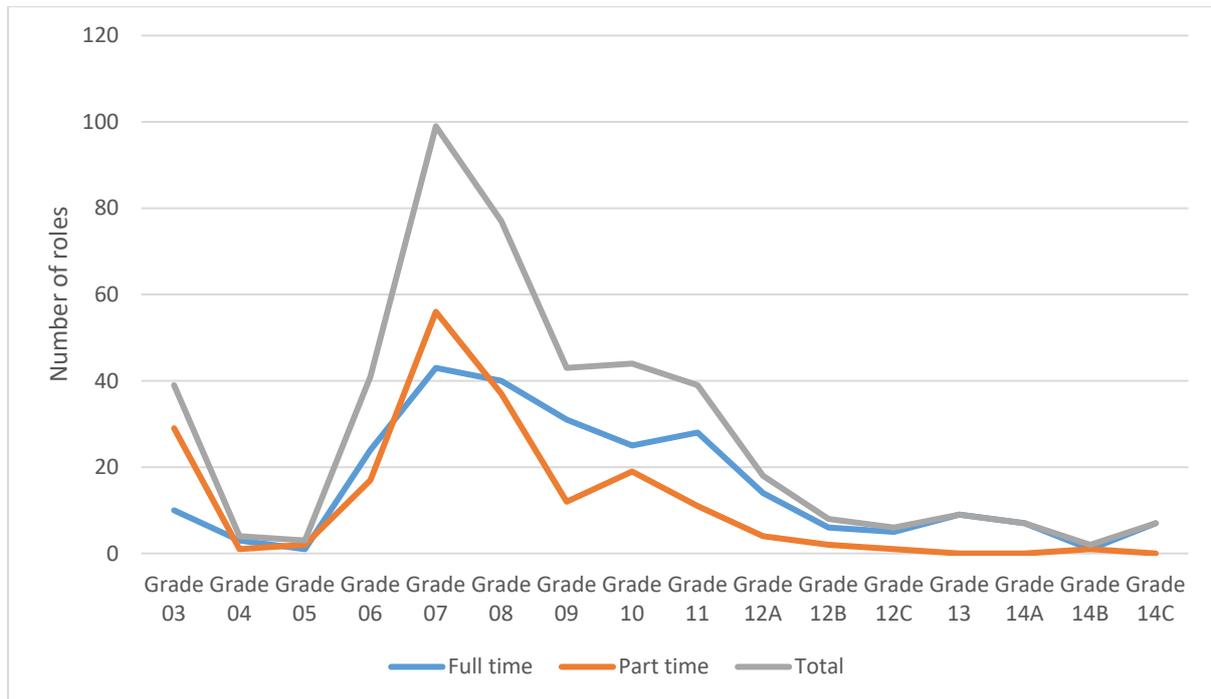
- Managers give projects/additional responsibilities to full-time instead of part-time staff?
- Projects can be completed more quickly by a full-time member of staff, so are given to them.
- Full-time staff are available throughout the week (e.g. to deal with queries) so are favoured over part-time staff
- Managers are consciously thinking about succession planning, and posts at a higher grade tend to be full-time so additional responsibilities are given to full-time staff
- Part-time staff are less skilled than full-time staff. How would we know? Training undertaken is similar – how about scores at interview? Does a skills gap open up due to fewer hours worked and therefore experience in role?
- Part-time staff do not want to progress as they need to balance commitments outside work/have actively taken the decision to prioritise a work/life balance.
- Part-time staff miss out on informal interactions and networking opportunities.
- Gender discrimination/unconscious bias?
- Part-time staff are less confident in making the case for a re-evaluation
- Something else?

### What are the implications?

Given 83% of part time staff are women, the above contributes to gender pay gap. Gender pay gap will not close without somewhat equalising progression rates between part-time and full-time staff.

### *Would clearly identified career pathways help this?*

### Structural issue: Less part-time jobs at higher grades



Part-time staff face a particular challenge in progressing beyond Grade 7/8 (Administrator/Senior Administrator) as there are fewer opportunities available if they wish to remain part-time. Need to encourage job shares and increased flexibility at higher grades. Wider structure needs to support pathways otherwise expectations will not be managed and opportunities to progress will not be there.

#### Making the case for career pathways:

- Clearer pathways needed within departments (where possible) as this is predominantly how people wish to progress
- Pathways across different departments required for where departments are too small to allow for clear pathways and to ensure that people have the opportunity to progress where skills can be used elsewhere.
- Career pathways may help narrow gender pay gap BUT wider structure needs to be considered alongside this. Managing expectations amongst the 75% that do not progress also important.