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Abstract

This paper draws on qualitative data gathered from two studies funded by the UK Leadership Foundation for Higher Education to examine the expansion of academic identities in higher education. It builds on Whitchurch's earlier work, which focused primarily on professional staff, to suggest that the emergence of broadly based projects such as widening participation, learning support and community partnership is also impacting on academic identities. Thus, academic as well as professional staff are increasingly likely to work in multi-professional teams across a variety of constituencies, as well as with external partners, and the binary distinction between 'academic' and 'non-academic' roles and activities is no longer clear-cut. Moreover, there is evidence from the studies of an intentionality about deviations from mainstream academic career routes among respondents who could have gone either way. Consideration is therefore given to factors that influence individuals to work in more project-oriented areas, as well as to variables that affect ways in which these roles and identities develop. Finally, three models of academically oriented project

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activity are identified, and the implications of an expansion of academic identities are reviewed.

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