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**Abstract**

This paper draws on findings from a study that explored the changing roles and career experience of research managers and research administrators in English universities. It explores how research support has evolved during a period when the higher education sector was responding to changing science and higher education policy. These changes have impacted on research managers and research administrators roles, altered the occupational group and moved field boundaries. The paper draws on Bourdieu's theory of social practice to understand these changes and identifies a shared space of tension, the 'shifting arena,' where the research manager field crosses into the academic field. It is suggested that an increased understanding of this space will enhance the collaborative working of all those involved in research and help maximise research activity. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)