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**Abstract**

Research suggests that higher education changes affect the work and identity of academics. The consequent challenges often mentioned include too little time, work overload and limited autonomy among academic staff. Space is rarely mentioned, especially in relation to the context of open distance learning. This article reports on the findings from a study that was conducted in an open distance learning institution to understand how the institutional space is experienced by academics as they construct their identity. Institutional policy was examined, semi-structured interviews were conducted with academics and observations were made. The findings suggest that imagined institutional space is sometimes different from the lived space due to academics' differing preferences of space. It is recommended that the institution should find the common ground between academics' spatial needs and the institution's imagined space as provided for through institutional policy. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)