Report on the findings of the doctoral research project

*Pedagogical Partnerships and Professionalisation: Changing work and identities of professional staff at one Australian university*

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Special thanks are due to the professional staff at UTS who participated in this study and who gave freely of their time and expertise.
1 Executive Summary

Professional staff comprise more than 50% of staff in Australian universities (Department of Education 2012b). Yet little research has been undertaken into the work of professional staff, particularly in relation to teaching and learning. This report describes a doctoral research project undertaken at UTS in 2009-2012, with the aim of investigating how professional (support) staff contribute to student outcomes, from the perspectives of the staff themselves. This research took a pragmatic constructivist approach (Morgan 2007; Patton 2002) to elicit a rich, thick description of the working lives of professional staff at UTS. The research method used a framework of 13 propositions for support of student outcomes, developed by Prebble et al. (2004) and referred to in this report as Prebble Propositions, that were found to enhance student outcomes in terms of 'retention, persistence and achievement' (Prebble et al. 2004, p. vii). The research design was two-stage: (i) a Delphi Study (Graham 2010), which informed the development of a subsequent (ii) case study (Graham 2012, 2013, submitted). Although this study was necessarily constrained due to resource and time availability of the sole researcher, and the choice of paradigm, several key findings emerged along with a number of recommendations.

Key findings

Two overarching findings emerged from this study, namely: (1) There were two key Prebble Propositions that emerged as most associated with the work of professional staff in this study, and (2) there was evidence of changing professional identities and growing professionalisation of this group of staff.

(1) The two Prebble Propositions most relevant to the work of professional staff in relation to student outcomes are:

i. Institutional behaviours, environments and processes are welcoming and efficient.

ii. A comprehensive range of institutional services and facilities is available.

Sub-themes appeared in the data that relate to these two propositions:

a. Changing technology, both operational and related to student learning, is developed and supported by professional staff.

b. Staff knowledge, including understanding of the University’s strategic goals and objectives, is important to meeting the needs of students.

c. Staff attitudes are recognised by professional staff as impacting on student outcomes, and lack of time and competing priorities can influence the development of positive attitudes.

d. Job satisfaction for staff, along with intrinsic motivation and prosocial motivation, is linked to customer satisfaction and general organisational benefits.
(2) Changing professional identities of professional staff and growing professionalisation result from changing work and changing relationships with students and other staff.

i. The Whitchurch (2008a, 2009) typology for professional identities was identified in this case study. The Whitchurch typology defines a continuum of professional identities from standard or bounded professionals, through cross-boundary professionals, to unbounded and blended professionals who work in a third space between traditional professional and academic spaces.

ii. Using the frameworks for professionalisation developed by Gornitzka and Larsen (2004) and by Blümel (2008), characteristics of professionalisation were identified.

Key sub-themes emerged from the data as follows:

a. Complexities in the external environment add to the complexity of the work of professional staff, leading to changing professional identities.

b. The professional identities of professional staff from a range of Higher Education Worker (HEW) levels demonstrate movement from bounded through cross-boundary to unbounded and blended professional identities.

c. Professional staff demonstrate characteristics that are consistent with growing professionalisation of this occupation.

d. Changing professional identities and increasing professionalisation contribute to job satisfaction for professional staff, which is linked to student satisfaction and positive student outcomes.

Concluding comments
This report finds that professional staff make substantial contributions to positive student outcomes at UTS. Since the higher education sector and its external environment is undergoing rapid and unpredictable change, UTS will need to make the most of all its staff in order to survive and thrive in this environment. The recommendations detailed in this report are intended to support UTS in achieving its mission, vision and values.

Recommendations
It is recommended that:

1. The label support staff should be replaced at UTS by professional staff, officially with the next Enterprise Agreement, and informally henceforth.

2. UTS develops position and promotion structures that acknowledge the third space and allow movement of staff across a matrix of positions according to ability and organisational need.

3. UTS uses the next round of negotiations for enterprise agreements to develop a framework of competencies across all positions (professional and
academic), which acknowledges the complexity of all types of roles and determines equivalence across all positions at UTS. Based on this framework, UTS develops and implements a single pay spine* that embodies the philosophy of equal pay for equal value of work.

4. UTS supports and facilitates, for its professional staff, (a) further education in higher education and (b) accreditation as a higher education professional, in collaboration with the programs offered by L.H. Martin Institute for Higher Education and the Association of Tertiary Education Management.

5. UTS requires a Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Education Management as a base-level qualification for all management positions, professional and academic, and supports and facilitates staff to attain this qualification.

6. UTS develops and implements a Talent Management program for professional staff to attract, develop and retain staff who have the ability and passion to drive UTS towards becoming “a world-leading university of technology”.

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* A single pay spine with equivalence determined across all professional and academic positions (other than clinical academics) was developed in the UK (Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff n.d.) and has been progressively implemented across UK universities since 2006 (University and College Union n.d.).
2 About the Project

_Pedagogical Partnerships and Professionalisation: Changing work and identities of professional staff at one Australian university_ is a doctoral research project that will be submitted for examination for the Doctor of Education at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). This research concerns the work undertaken by professional staff in Australian universities, and focuses on the question of how professional staff contribute to student outcomes. In a review of 146 international studies, Prebble et al. (2004) derived 13 propositions for student support (hereafter referred to as _Prebble Propositions_) that were found to enhance student outcomes in terms of retention, persistence and achievement. These propositions are outlined in Appendix I. This research uses a case study undertaken at UTS to describe and illustrate the work of professional staff in relation to student outcomes.

2.1 Terminology: Professional Staff

There are many labels used in Australian universities for staff that the federal government describes as _non-academic or other_ – non-academic staff, general staff, administrative staff, support staff and professional staff, to name a few. A study of nomenclature used on websites of Australian universities, undertaken in 2010 and updated in 2012, found that UTS was, and continues to be, the only university in Australia to use the label _support staff_ (Sebalj 2012, pers. comm, 4 August). A separate study undertaken in 2009-2010 found that a large number of universities were adopting the term _professional staff_ (Hudson 2012, pers. comm., 3 August). This finding was confirmed by the updated 2012 study, which indicates that an increasing number of universities have now adopted _professional staff_ as the usual term for these staff (Sebalj 2012, pers. comm, 4 August). In addition, the Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM) has formally adopted the title of _professional staff_ as the preferred nomenclature in Australia (Association for Tertiary Education Management 2011) and, accordingly, this term has been used in this doctoral research project from 2010.

2.2 Rationale for the Project

Over the last 25 years, the higher education sector in Australia has been subjected to significant and widespread changes in external conditions. In particular, there has been the abolition of the binary university system (contributing, in part, to the development of UTS); rapid and variable growth in both domestic and international student higher education participation; changes in higher education funding and accountability; increasing knowledge and the demand for new disciplines and transdisciplinary approaches; as well as industrialisation and changes to industrial
relations policy (Coaldrake & Stedman 1999; Santiago et al. 2008). Such changes in external conditions have resulted in pressures within universities. Like other organisations, universities are likely to face continued and accelerating rates of change during the twenty-first century, and higher education institutions will need to understand and develop the capabilities of all staff if they are to adapt successfully to change.

Over the last five years, there has been an increase in the amount of literature about the work of professional staff in Australian universities, typically written by professional staff (Graham 2009, 2010; Sebalj & Holbrook 2006, 2009; Sebalj et al. 2007; Small 2008; Szekeres 2006, 2011). Nevertheless, the invisibility of their work continues to be a concern for professional staff (Szekeres 2004, 2011). Yet this invisible work is operationally and strategically important: professional staff comprise over 50 per cent of staff in Australian universities (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2012), and an improved understanding of this work has the potential to enhance their institutions’ organisational sustainability. Of particular importance is an understanding of the work of professional staff in relation to the strategic goals of their institutions. While research has been completed on the contributions of professional staff to research activities in universities (Sebalj & Holbrook 2006, 2009), there has been little research into the contributions of professional staff to learning and teaching.

A qualitative approach was used to elicit a rich, thick description of the work of professional staff at UTS. In doing so, their contributions to student outcomes have been identified, along with changes to the professional identities of these staff. This project and its recommendations have the potential to contribute to the realisation of UTS’s vision, purpose and values.
3 Research Design and Methodology

This research used a pragmatic constructivist approach (Morgan 2007; Patton 2002) to investigate how professional staff contribute to student outcomes, from the perspectives of the staff themselves. The research design had two distinct phases.

1. A preliminary, framing study conducted using a modified Delphi method (Graham 2010) to develop a rank order of the 13 Prebble Propositions in terms of how professional staff perceive their contributions to each proposition.

2. A case study to elicit a rich, thick description of the work of professional staff in relation to student outcomes.

The results of the Delphi study informed the design and analysis of the case study, which constitutes the main portion of the doctoral study. Appendix II shows a schematic diagram of the research design and the research outputs.

3.1 The Delphi Study

3.1.1 Research methodology

The Delphi Study (Graham 2010) used a modified Schmidt Delphi method for the ranking of the 13 Prebble Propositions by a panel of experts. The Schmidt Delphi method for ranking items involves three phases (Schmidt et al. 2001).

1. A brainstorming phase to develop a list of issues.
2. A narrowing down phase to pare the list of issues.
3. A ranking phase to order the remaining items.

For the purposes of the Delphi Study, the meta-study by Prebble et al. (2004) and the associated development of the Prebble Propositions were deemed to comprise the first two phases of the Schmidt Delphi method.

3.1.2 Panel selection and demographics

Choosing appropriate experts is crucial to the effective use of the Delphi method, and there are two key aspects to this: panel size and knowledge of the panellists (Powell 2003). Criterion sampling was used to recruit volunteer participants from lists of staff, provided by faculty managers, who had at least five years’ experience in higher education across a range of different roles. On average, panellists had over 16 years’ experience in higher education. This selection satisfied the knowledge requirement for panellists (Fink et al. 1984). Twenty-six panellists returned the Human Ethics Research consent form and participated in the study,
which was a sufficient number of panellists (Paliwoda, cited in Okoli & Pawlowski 2004). Further details of the panel demographics are provided in Appendix III.

3.1.3 Data collection and analysis

Three rounds of the Delphi method were used to collect data, which were analysed to determine Kendall’s coefficient of concordance for finding agreement of the rankings between panellists. Moderate agreement was achieved after three rounds. Further details are provided in Appendix IV.

In addition to the ranking activity, there was opportunity for panellists to provide open-ended comment, which were analysed for emergent themes.

3.1.4 Member checking

Results of the Delphi Study were provided to the participants, with the opportunity to provide feedback.

3.2 The Case Study

3.2.1 Research methodology

A case study approach was used, which focused on a single site for both logistical (Daymon & Holloway 2002) and representative reasons (Yin 2009). Moreover, as this research is part of a professional doctorate that has three main audiences — the academe, the profession and the workplace (Lee, Green & Brennan 2000) — it is highly appropriate to locate the research within a single workplace.

3.2.2 Participant selection and demographics

Building on the Delphi study, it was recognised that there would be value in interviewing a wide range of experienced professional staff. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to identify a variety of professional staff who had at least three years’ experience in higher education. The average length of experience in higher education was 10 years, with the average experience at UTS being 8 years. Further demographic details are provided in Appendix V.

3.2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Semi-structured interviews, using the framework developed by Patton (2002), were conducted over a seventeen-month period between April 2010 and September 2011. A total of 14 interviews were used to achieve theoretic saturation (Guest, Bunce & Johnson 2006).

Analysis of the data used first cycle descriptive coding as well as structural coding (Saldana 2009) based on the 13 Prebble Propositions to categorise the work of professional staff in relation to student outcomes. This allowed identification of key
propositions for comparison with the Delphi Study. Subsequent second cycle coding provided elaboration of these themes with the determination of sub-themes that identified gaps in the Prebble Propositions.

3.2.4 Member Checking

Member checking, using draft versions of journal articles, was undertaken with case study participants.
4 Findings from the Delphi Study

4.1 The Key Propositions

The most highly ranked proposition in all three rounds was the first, namely: *institutional behaviours, environments and processes are welcoming and efficient* (Graham 2010). This proposition was ranked in the top half of the rankings by all panellists for the first and third rounds, and by all but one panellist in the second round. This proposition encompasses the need for students’ enquiries to be dealt with promptly, knowledgeably and with a friendly manner, and also that the institutional and physical environment meets the students’ needs and expectations.

Other propositions that were consistently ranked highly over all three rounds were propositions 3, 6 and 8 (see Appendix I). These relate to the provision of high quality pre-enrolment advice; academic and general orientation and induction programs; and a comprehensive range of services and facilities to support the social and academic integration of students.

4.2 Other Findings

The open-ended comments provided the following key findings.

1. There is increasing use of technology to facilitate learning and teaching, much of which is designed, developed and maintained by professional staff.
2. There is a wide diversity in the roles of professional staff.
3. There is a lack of consultation with professional staff about the work they do.
5  Findings from the Case Study

Two overarching findings came to light from the case study. Firstly, two Prebble Propositions emerged as most relevant to the work of professional staff in this study: (i) Institutional behaviours, environments and processes are welcoming and efficient and (ii) A comprehensive range of institutional services and facilities is available was also strongly represented in the interview data (Graham 2013). Secondly, it became apparent that a key theme across these Prebble Propositions were changes to the identity of professional staff (Graham 2012, 2013, submitted).

5.1  The Key Propositions

Applying the Prebble Propositions framework across the case study, the contributions of professional staff to student outcomes were found to be most significant in ensuring behaviours, environments and processes are welcoming and efficient (Graham submitted), which was consistent with the results from the Delphi Study. The Prebble Proposition that student outcomes are also enhanced by the provision of a comprehensive range of institutional services and facilities also featured strongly in the case study (and was fourth in the Delphi ranking), and there was a high level of co-occurrence between these two propositions.

In exploring these themes in the data, four key sub-themes emerged, which elaborate the propositions.

1. Technology.
2. Staff knowledge.
3. Staff attitude.

5.1.1  Technology

The theme of technology applies to both the environments and the processes part of the first Prebble Proposition. Environments and processes that are welcoming (through meeting student expectations) and efficient affect the attraction, retention and achievement of students (Prebble et al. 2004). Technology was also strongly associated with the second Prebble Proposition in relation to the range of services and facilities that were provided by or supported by professional staff. The case study identified the three key impacts of technology on higher education defined by Wilen-Daugenti (2009).

1. Continual development of new technologies (Graham submitted).
2. Increased use of technology (Graham submitted).
3. Changes to learning environments that are facilitated by technology (Graham 2012).

These three impacts can be framed in two different contexts relating to the work of professional staff.

1. Operational activities.
2. Facilitation of student learning.

For both contexts, there have been significant changes in the functionality and use of technology-based systems, which have had direct impacts on the work and the working lives of professional staff. Perhaps even more than the changes in operational technology, changes in technology that facilitate student learning have impacted on the work of professional staff. Key findings are itemised below.

**Operational activities**

1. Professional staff need to use new technologies, at times without adequate training or support.
2. Staff find ways around limitations imposed by technology, where necessary.
3. Changes to technology have changed the way that professional staff interact with other staff and students.
4. New technologies have led to changed expectations about staff availability.
5. New technologies have created new jobs for professional staff, in the maintenance and development of technology-based operational systems.
6. Hardware and software that are up-to-date help professional staff to do their jobs effectively and efficiently.

**Student learning outcomes**

1. New learning technologies, affecting the whole student population, are developed, implemented and maintained by professional staff.
2. Specialised technology, including some course-related technology, affecting specific groups of students, are also developed, implemented and maintained by professional staff.
3. Infrastructure that underpins learning technologies are developed and maintained by professional staff.
4. New roles, such as educational designer and curriculum support officer, have arisen, occupying the third space between academic and professional staff, which require skills and knowledge from both sides of this space (Whitchurch 2008c).
5. Professional staff provide expertise to develop crucial information literacy skills of students.

6. Changes in technology, along with changes to student expectations, result in professional staff needing to deliver a wide range of online learning opportunities.

5.1.2 Staff Knowledge

The matter of staff knowledge applies to both the behaviours and the processes aspects of the Prebble Proposition, and influences whether the institution is welcoming (including meeting student expectations) and efficient. Staff knowledge also affects the effectiveness of the services provided by professional staff. The provision of good and useful advice supports retention and achievement by students (Prebble et al. 2004). Staff knowledge related to both the knowledge of the participants and the knowledge that they recognised as being held by other professional staff.

1. Knowledge held by professional staff is recognised by professional staff themselves as being important in relation to being able to meet the needs of students effectively.

2. Diverse networks across the university allow professional staff to access knowledge held by other staff.

3. Professional staff develop their knowledge and expand their roles to match their interests and the needs of students.

4. Appropriate professional development is necessary to enable professional staff to deliver high quality professional services.

5. Knowledge and understanding of the university’s strategic goals and objectives allow professional staff to better meet the learning needs of students.

5.1.3 Staff Attitude

Staff attitude relates most strongly to behaviours being welcoming. However, staff attitude also affects the university environment, determining whether students feel welcomed and whether they feel the environment is efficient. These factors affect the retention and achievement of students (Prebble et al. 2004). Positive relationships with colleagues, supervisors and managers, enabled staff to provide effective and efficient services to students.

1. Diverse networks allow professional staff to identify other staff as enablers for positive student outcomes.

2. Forging understanding between different groups of staff facilitates outcomes that meet student needs.
3. Professional staff recognise that lack of customer focus is an obstacle to meeting the needs of students.

4. A lack of time and competing priorities can result in poor attitude towards students, or difficulties in meeting student needs.

5. Supervisors or managers who over-prioritise the measurement of KPIs, can induce time constraints, along with negative attitudes in staff, to the detriment of service provision.

5.1.4 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction for staff has been linked with customer satisfaction (Nebeker et al. 2001), and with more general organisational benefits such as reduced absenteeism and turnover, and enhanced creativity and commitment (Chen et al. 2006). Accordingly, job satisfaction relates at a macro-level to both identified Prebble Propositions; hence, job satisfaction for professional staff is linked to positive student outcomes. This case study found several key factors that promote job satisfaction.

1. Having technology and systems that work well, being knowledgeable and having knowledgeable colleagues, and having supportive colleagues and supervisors, all contributed to job satisfaction for the professional staff in this study.

2. The professional staff in this study were intrinsically motivated by their work, displaying "the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise [their] capacities, to explore, and to learn" (Ryan & Deci 2000, p. 70), which gave them job satisfaction.

3. Non-tangible extrinsic motivators for staff in this study included receiving thanks from students (client satisfaction), and having supervisors and managers who support their staff and create a positive culture.

4. Some participants expressed prosocial motivation – the desire to benefit other people – in addition to intrinsic motivation. The combination of intrinsic and prosocial motivation is a good predictor of higher levels of persistence, performance and productivity (Grant 2008).

5.2 Changing Identities

5.2.1 Professional identities

Professional staff are increasingly working in changing environments, taking on new responsibilities and increasingly complex work, which is accompanied by changes in professional identity (Ibarra 1999). In the UK, Whitchurch (2008a, 2009) has developed a typology of bounded, cross-boundary, unbounded and blended professional identities, with the newly emerging unbounded and blended
professionals contributing to the development of a *third space* between traditional academic and professional domains (Whitchurch 2008b). Developments in the *third space* are occurring in Australia with the advent of *para-academic* positions (Birch & Gillard 2010; Macfarlane 2011).

Professionals working in this *third space* have been described as working in partnership with their academic colleagues (Gordon & Whitchurch 2007; Whitchurch 2008b), with benefits to their institutions and to their academic associates (Whitchurch 2010). In contrast, Macfarlane (2010, 2011) takes a narrower view, concerned with the devaluing of the academic identity, and assuming an adversarial stance between professional staff, para-academics and *all round* academics. The findings of this study support the contention that professional staff view their work as providing benefits to the university, its academic staff and its students.

1. Changes in technology have driven change both in the way that work is completed and also in interactions that professional staff have with students and other staff, both professional and academic.

2. Complexities in the external environment, including the introduction of new technology, add to the complexity of the work of professional staff, leading to changing professional identities.

3. Changing work and responsibilities adds diversity to the work of professional staff, leads to changing professional identities and increases job satisfaction.

4. Evidence of all four categories of professional staff identities – bounded, cross-boundary, unbounded and blended – were found in the case study (Graham 2013).

5. Staff across a range of HEW levels and roles are moving towards the third space (Graham 2013), including staff who occupy roles that would traditionally be standard professional positions (Freidson, 2001).

### 5.2.2 Professionalisation

Professionalisation of higher education workers is growing (Blümel 2008; Gornitzka & Larsen 2004; Szekeres 2011). Frameworks for the professionalisation of university administrative staff have been developed by Gornitzka and Larsen (2004) and Blümel (2008), and have been found to provide similar conceptualisations (Graham 2012). These frameworks encompass four dimensions.


2. Increasing formal qualifications required by these staff.

3. Growth and formalisation of relevant professional networks.

4. Increased formal status and autonomy in decision-making of these positions.
Professional staff in this study demonstrated characteristics that were consistent with growing professionalisation of this profession (Graham 2012).

1. Participants described their development of networks to ensure a shared understanding of relevant knowledge.

2. Most participants held degree-level qualifications, with several having more than one tertiary qualification. The average qualification level was a Bachelor’s degree and several participants held a Master’s degree.

3. Most participants were members of a relevant professional association, and there was a positive relationship between the seniority of the participant’s role and the number of associations of which they were members.

4. Participants expressed their ability to make autonomous decisions, and the satisfaction thereby gained.
6 Limitations of the Study

This research project was undertaken at one university only (UTS), by one part-time research student, who was also working full-time in a demanding role. As such, this study is necessarily constrained by time and resources. Given the rapid changes in the higher education sector and the duration of this study, this research was conducted in an environment of shifting sands, which means that the environment in which the earlier interviews were conducted was different to that for the later interviews. This adds to the complexity of analysis and to limitations on the findings.

This research project adopted one paradigm, a pragmatic constructivist approach (Morgan 2007; Patton 2002), which entails the limitations of that perspective: it is a qualitative study from the perspective of the participants themselves. Further research, using different approaches, could be undertaken to investigate whether the findings of this study generalise to other contexts.
7 Conclusion and Key Recommendations

This report finds that professional staff make substantial contributions to positive student outcomes at UTS. The study has identified two key Prebble Propositions that provide a link between the work of professional staff at UTS and student outcomes. It has also identified sub-themes and gaps in the Prebble Propositions that relate to changes in technology, staff knowledge and attitude, and job satisfaction. The study also identified changes to how professional staff work, challenges these staff face and associated changes to professional identities. Finally, it is important to note the links between job satisfaction, changing professional identities, increasing professionalism and positive student outcomes.

The following recommendations are listed for consideration by UTS Senior Executive as they review this report.

It is recommended that:

1. The label support staff should be replaced at UTS by professional staff, officially with the next Enterprise Agreement, and informally henceforth.

2. UTS develops position and promotion structures that acknowledge the third space and allow movement of staff across a matrix of positions according to ability and organisational need.

3. UTS uses the next round of negotiations for enterprise agreements to develop a framework of competencies across all positions (professional and academic), which acknowledges the complexity of all types of roles and determines equivalence across all positions at UTS. Based on this framework, UTS develops and implements a single pay spine\(^1\) that embodies the philosophy of equal pay for equal value of work.

4. UTS supports and facilitates, for its professional staff, (a) further education in higher education and (b) accreditation as a higher education professional, in collaboration with the programs offered by L.H. Martin Institute for Higher Education and the Association of Tertiary Education Management.

5. UTS requires a Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Education Management as a base-level qualification for all management positions, professional and academic, and supports and facilitates staff to attain this qualification.

6. UTS develops and implements a Talent Management program for professional staff to attract, develop and retain staff who have the ability and

\(^1\) A single pay spine with equivalence determined across all professional and academic positions (other than clinical academics) was developed in the UK and has been progressively implemented across UK universities since 2006 (University and College Union n.d.)
passion to drive UTS towards becoming “a world-leading university of technology”.
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## Appendix I. Prebble Propositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Support Propositions</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Institutional behaviours, environments and processes are welcoming and efficient</td>
<td>Students’ enquiries are dealt with promptly, knowledgeably and with a friendly manner, and the institutional and physical environment meets their needs and expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The institution provides opportunities for students to establish social networks</td>
<td>Student clubs, societies and activities are supported, and facilities and events are provided to support socialisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Academic counselling and pre-enrolment advice are readily available to ensure students enrol in appropriate programs</td>
<td>Students are provided with high quality advice and information concerning program choices, and links are established with secondary schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lecturers are approachable and accessible inside and outside class times for academic discussions</td>
<td>Students benefit from regular and meaningful formal and informal contact with academics, particularly when a learning community is developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students experience good quality teaching and manageable workloads</td>
<td>The quality and teaching methodologies can have an impact on student outcomes, as can a manageable workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Orientation and induction programs are provided to facilitate both social and academic integration</td>
<td>Both academic orientation and general orientation programs can improve student outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Students working in academic learning communities have good outcomes</td>
<td>The deliberate use and facilitation of learning communities has a positive impact on student outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. A comprehensive range of institutional services and facilities is available</td>
<td>Student outcomes are improved by the provision of services and facilities that support both the social and academic integration of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Supplemental instruction is provided</td>
<td>Academic support programs in programs that students find difficult improve student outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Peer tutoring and mentoring services are provided</td>
<td>Students benefit from well-designed and well-run peer tutoring and mentoring programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The institution ensures there is an absence of discrimination on campus, so students feel valued, fairly treated and safe</td>
<td>When diversity is welcomed and valued, and students feel physically and psychologically safe, student outcomes are improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Institutional processes cater for diversity of learning preferences</td>
<td>Students have different learning styles, which need to be accommodated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The institutional culture, social and academic, welcomes diverse cultural capital and adapts to diverse students' needs</td>
<td>The diverse backgrounds of students should be affirmed and accommodated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After (Prebble et al. 2004)

**Table 1: Description of Prebble Propositions**
Appendix II. Research Design

Figure 1: Research design and outputs schematic
Appendix III. Delphi Study Participant Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Avg</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panellists’ experience in higher education (years)</td>
<td>16.06</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years that panellists have worked at UTS</td>
<td>12.79</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of universities at which panellists have worked</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panellists’ educational level&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>DD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEW&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt; level</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> Education level is the highest level attained by the panellist: HS = high school leaving certificate (or equivalent), BD = bachelor degree, DD = doctoral degree

<sup>2</sup> HEW (Higher Education Worker) level was the level of the panellist at the time of the Delphi Study: 3 panellists indicated that previous roles had been at higher levels

Table 2: Demographics of expert panel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Role (number of panellists)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Social Sciences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and IT</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, Architecture and Building</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing, Midwifery &amp; Health</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> Includes administrative and technical management

<sup>2</sup> Includes a range of technical roles

<sup>3</sup> Includes a broad range of administrative roles

Table 3: Faculties and roles of expert panellists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delphi Study (2009)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Staff Group&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTS Support and Senior (2009)</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Staff Group&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> Professional staff only

<sup>2</sup> May include academic staff

Table 4: Gender distribution of Delphi study participants
Appendix IV. Delphi Study Data Analysis

Kendall’s coefficient of concordance, $W$, is widely recognised as the best metric for measuring non-parametric rankings (Okoli & Pawlowski 2004). The value of $W$ ranges from 0 to 1 (Kendall & Gibbons 1990), with a value of 0 indicating no consensus and a value of 1 indicating perfect agreement between the experts (Okoli & Pawlowski 2004). Schmidt (1997) developed a guideline to the interpretation of Kendall’s $W$ (Table 4), but cautioned that these values should not be applied rigidly.

**Equation 1: Calculation of Kendall’s coefficient of concordance ($W$)**

$$W = \frac{12S}{m^2(n^3 - n) - mT}$$

where:

- $S =$ sum of squares of the deviations of the rankings from the mean rankings
- $m =$ number of experts
- $n =$ number of propositions being ranked (13)
- $T =$ is a correction factor for tied ranks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$W$</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Confidence in Rankings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>Very weak agreement</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>Weak agreement</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Moderate agreement</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>Strong agreement</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>Unusually strong agreement</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From (Schmidt 1997)

**Table 5: Interpretation of Kendall’s coefficient of concordance**
Appendix V. Case Study Participant Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Avg</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ experience in higher education (years)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years that participants have worked at UTS</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of universities at which participants have worked</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ educational level¹</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>VET</td>
<td>MC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEW² level</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Education level is the highest level attained by the participant: VET = vocational education and training certificate, BD = bachelor degree, MC = coursework master degree
² HEW (Higher Education Worker) level was the level of the participant at the time of the case study

Table 6: Demographics of case study participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study (2010-2011)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Staff Group¹</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTS Support and Senior (2010)</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Staff Group²</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTS Support and Senior (2011)</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Staff Group²</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Professional staff only
² May include academic staff

Table 7: Gender distribution of case study participants