

MANCHESTER
1824

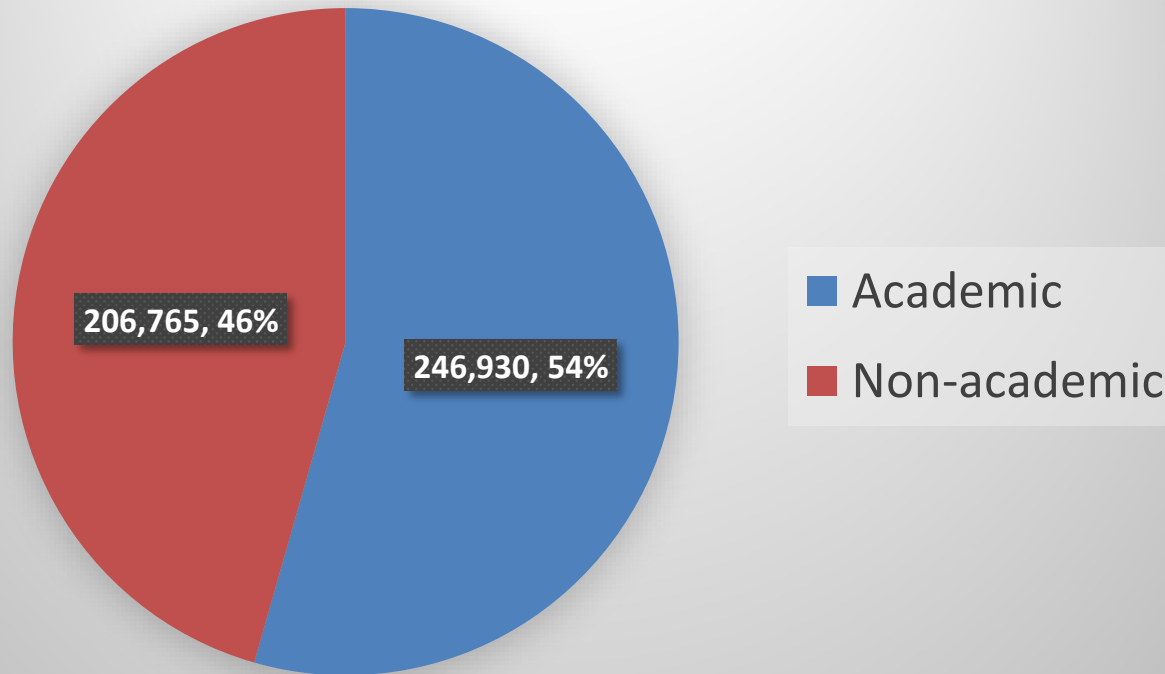
The University of Manchester

Professional services in partnership with EAP practitioners



Wayne Rimmer, BALEAP, 2025

HESA data: 2023/2024



‘Non-academic staff contracts include managers, **professionals in non-academic jobs**, student welfare workers, secretaries, caretakers and cleaners.’ [My emphasis]

A brief insight into the literature

- The value and contribution of PS have been overlooked in general HE scholarship (Watermeyer et al., 2023).
- PS have fluid roles which creates both threat and opportunity (Whitchurch, 2018).
- No one in EAP seems interested in writing about PS.

Research question

How do professional services staff perceive and experience their collaboration with EAP colleagues?

Methodology

I interviewed six PS colleagues within my own centre and carried out inductive analysis of the transcripts to establish themes.

Theme 1

Strong identification with academic mission

'Collegiality and communication between academic and PS staff is always quite strong, and I don't think there's a separation of roles like there is in maybe other areas of the University or other universities. I've worked in the academic side, and the admin side have been quite separate and different, I suppose, with less communication. But that's not not quite true here.'

Theme 2

Partial role awareness

'I remember going in and explaining a bit about my role and sort of delivering a presentation, and I think that a lot of the colleagues fed back that they weren't even aware of really what my role entailed.'

Theme 3

Limited resource

'We're always getting a bit squeezed in terms of how many staff we have, because I don't think the wider university necessarily understands our processes because they are quite unique.'

Tentative take-away point

The collaboration found between EAP and PS colleagues may be strong because EAP is less defined than other academic disciplines, encouraging non-delineated roles and more open communication.

References

HESA. (2025). *Who's working in HE?* <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis> -

Watermeyer, R., Knight, C., Crick, T., & Borrás, M. (2023). 'Living at work': COVID-19, remote-working and the spatio-relational reorganisation of professional services in UK universities. *Higher Education*, 85(6), 1317–1336.

Whitchurch, C. (2018). Being a higher education professional today: Working in a third space. In C. Bossu, N. Brown, & V. Warren (Eds.), *Professional and support staff in higher education* (pp. 11–21). Springer Singapore.

wayne.rimmer@manchester.ac.uk



MAKING A
DIFFERENCE