

Educational Development in the United Kingdom

**Report for the
Heads of Educational Development Group
(HEDG)**

**Jennifer Jones and Gina Wisker
Centre for Learning and Teaching
University of Brighton
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Foreword

By Joelle Fanghanel, Chair HEDG, 2012

This report was prepared for the Heads of Educational Development Group (HEDG). It continues the work of predecessor reports that have tracked the work of educational developers in the UK, and mapped the territory they occupy in the higher education landscape (Gosling, 2008; Gosling, 2001). Whilst the environment in which universities work today is very different from what it was in the first decade of this century – and likely, as this report clearly signals, to become increasingly challenging as the full impact of the new fees and regulation frameworks come in operation in next year – it is possible to identify recurrent themes and emergent trends.

As key stakeholders in driving the enhancement agenda within UK universities, educational development centres have always been working in turbulent environments, operating from within different central functions, and with diverse remits. As disciplinary boundary-crossers and strategic change agents, educational developers work in a complex operational zone - between discipline specificities and generic knowledge about teaching practice; between enhancement and control ; and at the interface of theory and practice. Educational developers' own understandings of their roles are diverse, and related to their conceptions of change (Land, 2004). A general trend over the years has been the move away from evangelistic approaches to change to 'whole institution' approaches (D'Andrea and Gosling, 2005). In the process, educational development has become a complex function that is handling an increasingly broad portfolio that includes professional development for both new and experienced academics; curriculum and quality enhancement; innovation and technology; the interface of higher education with work and industry; learning support; and research and scholarship into higher education.

This report reflects the diversity and complexity of the educational development agenda. It highlights also the precarious nature of this function in a turbulent and volatile context. It provides an insightful snapshot analysis of the state of the field. The Heads of Educational Development Group wish to thank warmly the researchers who carried out this study. Their research provides useful continuity with previous reports whilst raising new questions at this critical moment in the history of higher education in the UK.

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Executive Summary

This 2011 research into educational development in the UK, funded by the Heads of Educational Development Group (HEDG), is contextualised within the White Paper guidelines for contemporary higher education (BIS, 2011) and the current economic downturn. It explores recent developments in the often volatile and changing environments, identities, responsibilities and directions of UK educational development centres (EDCs). Within this context, the aims of the 2011 HEDG funded research have been to gain insights into the developments which have been recently taking place in varied EDCs across the UK HE sector, and to identify ways in which Heads of Educational Development and EDC staff are repositioning to meet the new needs and challenges they face within their work, and how they respond and contribute to strategic priorities and decisions. The findings of this research have been compared to those in previous (Gosling, 2006, 2008) HEDG funded studies, in order to highlight the changes that have taken place in the context, the focus and shape of EDCs during the last five years. In addition, the research seeks to identify patterns and variations between the ways in which these factors affect EDCs in the UK, and to a limited extent, across the international HE sector. It represents a snapshot in a changing context and landscape for HE more generally.

Following the same methodology that was adopted with the previous study (Gosling, 2008), we applied a mixed methods approach in order to conduct this research. This incorporated, firstly, a quantitative survey, which was circulated to all HEDG members via Jiscmail Listserv in January 2011, and which elicited 39 responses altogether. This was supplemented by qualitative research including 7 individual and 1 group interview (of 6 people) with HEDG members between March and October 2011 and two interviews and a number of informal discussions with international Heads of Educational Development. The research has also been informed by the many focused sessions in HEDG meetings and on the discussion list which have dealt with changing demands, changing roles and identities, and responses to challenges in HE.

The key findings highlight ways in which recent HE funding changes, and the implications of the White Paper 'Students at the Heart of the System' (BIS 2011), have a significant effect on Educational Developers and EDCs across the UK. There is a paradox in the context and in the research findings in this regard. The White Paper emphasises that enhancing the quality of the student experience, and the professionalization of the HE 'workforce' are the core business for universities, and therefore educational developers. However, some colleagues experience their situation as volatile and unstable. In this regard, the research shows that institutional funding shortages and the White Paper appear likely to influence senior managers' decisions to restructure university departments, frequently leading to a change in location and identity for EDCs and their staff. The current survey and interview data show that rather than remaining autonomous, EDCs are now often being merged with larger departments in universities. While for some this offers increased opportunities for networking and synergies across university functions and provision, for others it represents limitations on EDC functions. Some of the Heads of Educational Development, who were interviewed, are often unhappy about restructuring for a variety of reasons. For example,

some feel that EDCs, ED staff and the activities they perform could lose credibility and close engagement with academic staff if their roles are differently placed within the institution, no longer within academic departments/units if they were so placed previously. Consequently, the identities of educational developers in this context are shifting in a direction that is not always perceived to be positive, and this means that some Heads of Educational Development believe they might not be able to fulfil their roles effectively. Some interview participants appeared powerless to save their departments from restructuring since they said that they were unable to communicate effectively with senior managers in this regard. The interview data suggests that this situation is also worsened by the current difficulties that EDC staff have in acquiring external funding for either development or research. Consequently they may rely on the goodwill of university leaders to provide continued core funding for EDCs, and the latter is not always forthcoming, possibly because of insecurity of funding overall in relation to student numbers and the new funding situation. The research shows that where core funding for the work of EDCs is limited, or cut, this has resulted in EDC staff redundancies, particularly redundancies among fixed term research staff.

Overall trends include the recognition of the crucial importance of senior management support for EDCs in their strategic planning and implementation, so that a change in senior management often results in a notable change in the positioning and power of EDCs and their heads. Another key finding is a reported lessening of an external research focus, and an increased focus on involvement with or leadership of developments in e and blended learning.

In contrast to some of the less welcome reported changes, interview data suggests that some university leaders interpret the White Paper implications as a sign of the need to invest in learning and teaching. They realise the vital importance of providing greater support for Heads of Educational Development and EDCs in order to manage the new core mission of universities to enhance the professional development of teaching staff, and consequently the quality of learning and engagement for students. Some interviewees confirm that when this is the case, senior managers, Heads of Educational Development and ED staff are working together to achieve this aim. In some instances, the research shows that senior managers are therefore happy to provide ongoing and even enhanced funding for EDCs to make certain that the learning and teaching strategy is realised within their institutions, so ensuring a higher quality of learning, teaching and student engagement across their institution.

With regard to these findings, the survey data implies some interesting differences between respondents from pre 1992 and post 1992 universities. The data shows that a greater number of respondents from post 1992, than from pre 1992, universities consider the institutional environment to be more supportive to educational development and its goals than it was 5 years ago. The latter may also relate to additional findings from this research indicating that, in comparison to 5 years ago, a larger percentage of EDCs in post 1992 universities remain independent departments within their institutions. In contrast, since the previous HEDG survey, a larger percentage of EDCs in pre 1992 universities have now become part of larger central university departments. In this regard, some research participants describe their loss of autonomy and status as a result of being merged with larger departments. Considering funding for their centres, the current survey data also shows that some respondents from pre 1992 universities are feeling more insecure than respondents from post 1992 universities. These variations may indicate a difference between the two types of university in regard to these related themes. Moreover, these findings suggest a trend in the growing

status of educational development in post 1992 universities which are traditionally more teaching focused, whereas pre 1992 universities are more research focused. As the sample of pre 1992 institution participants in this survey is small, such findings are not statistically representative. However, they do raise important implications and questions that may be considered and explored in greater depth and breadth in future studies.

These research findings specifically relate to the current Higher Education sector, and aim to enable Heads of Educational Development across the sector to share vital knowledge and good practice in relation to contemporary Educational Development. Such knowledge will enable educational developers to inform their strategic planning, decision making and practice for the current and future effectiveness and success of educational development, while facing and surviving enormous change.

Future thoughts

The picture of HE learning and teaching and the role of EDCs has been shifting during 2012, after the data collection for this project and the initial drafts of the report. During and since the period of data collection up until June 2012, several Heads of EDCs have been made full professors. Several others have retired, or found their jobs changed, refocused or removed. We can speculate about possible futures based on themes and examples shared on discussion lists and in HEDG meetings, but such speculation is not founded yet in any research evidence. It now becomes necessary to provide returns to HESA about numbers and proportion of professionally qualified staff (from late 2012 onwards). Institutions are engaging more actively with the mapping, further development and implementation of CPD in relation to the Professional Standards Framework. Therefore, a more publicly visible, transparent, and accountable culture for some core educational development work could lead to higher expectations from EDCs, and to more recognition and stable core funding from HE institutions.

It remains, however, a volatile situation. As the student numbers, fees-based funding and additional funding settle down for universities after 2012-13, we are likely to see further changes. A regular review of the changing context and the reactive or proactive response of EDCs would probably help educational developers share concerns, deal with challenges, forward plan, develop and share good practice.

Section A

Introduction

1. Background

Currently, substantial changes face HE, which impact on EDCs and the roles of educational developers. The White Paper (BIS, 2011) outlines the radical overhaul of HE that is now taking place. This focuses on enhancing the student experience by advocating and ensuring high quality teaching across the Higher Education sector. The White Paper also encourages greater competitiveness between HE providers, and even between academics themselves. Many academic staff should now be able to access a route to promotion through the quality of their teaching, in addition to, or instead of, through their research (BIS, 2011). Consequently, the compulsory professional development of University teaching staff which has been taking place in most HE institutions across the UK (Gosling, 2010) could well be rolled out across the sector to a greater extent. Within this context, the current round of this research project provides a timely opportunity to update our knowledge of: ways in which Educational Development Centres (EDCs) and educational developers strategically position themselves within universities; their location within institutional structures; and the kinds of activities they perform. This will help inform HEDG members', HE managers' and educational developers' future decision making in times of change.

In 1997, the Dearing Report emphasised the need to enhance teaching standards across HE. This created new opportunities for Educational Development. The Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) and the Higher Education Academy (HEA) enabled EDCs and Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) to develop (Blackmore and Blackwell, 2006; Gosling, 2009). EDCs and CETLs have been able to increase support for academic staff, to enhance teaching quality and student learning and engagement, within their own institutions and across the sector. Researchers in EDCs have continued to support this process; by exploring how educational development programmes inform pedagogic practice; and how some issues still need to be resolved in order to enhance teaching further. There have been continuing tensions and changes regarding educational developers' perceived identities, as they have developed more strategic links with university managers (Gosling, 2008). However, their vital role in helping to achieve high pedagogic standards has been increasingly recognised by academic staff in universities. Internationally, Learning and Teaching and associated research has become a significant established discipline, strengthening esteem for the work of EDCs across the sector.

1.1 Current debates

Recently, however, some EDCs have faced reorganisation, threatened closure, or financial crises. These factors have limited the transformative work of EDCs in informing good pedagogic practice, and necessitated competition for limited external funding (Gosling, 2009). TQEF (Teaching Quality Enhancement Funding) that previously helped fund courses, projects, staff, research, has ended and CETLs have also ended (Gosling, 2009). Public sector cuts have caused severe cutbacks in HE funding (Hopkin, 2010). EDCs are now facing even greater uncertainty in their funding, location, identity and purpose, since the White Paper was published in 2011. Now funding will largely be derived from the student fee income source, and this will potentially lead to the commoditisation of HE, and a customer service approach to education in some respects. Some of the changes could mean a more focused, leaner, more efficient approach to educational development. Other changes, however, could seriously damage EDCs work, perhaps particularly where a culture of academic staff autonomy,

and partnership with staff, might change to one of insistence and monitoring performance. One argument is that “Institutions may well review the ways in which they organise for development, seeking to maximise benefit by focusing clearly on strategic aims and avoiding apparent duplication.” (Blackmore et al., 2010, p. 114). Ostensible duplication could actually be evidence of productive relationships between colleagues with related interests. For example, in some universities there are both EDCs as central departments, and in addition, faculty/department/school based learning and teaching advisers. In some universities there is both a learning development function in the EDC and there are student services. Cutting and/or dispersing the central unit can remove the experience and theory informed practice which EDCs offer as they network across disciplines and functions, leaving colleagues somewhat stranded and under-supported.

However, such cuts, redeployment and rationalisation in the face of funding cuts is in contradiction to the emphasis on the student experience, student engagement and a quality learning and teaching experience. Educational developers’ work is now increasingly crucial (HEA, 2010) as the Government has recently called into question pedagogic standards across UK HE, and has now published its guidelines for change across the sector (BIS, 2011). Universities need to meet contemporary students’ changing needs in relation to: enhancing learner engagement, providing flexible learning, advancing career prospects (QAA 2010; Hall and Wisdom, 2010); and by offering greater “value for money” (BIS, 2011, p7). In the context of these developments Halstead (2010) suggests that educational developers need to reprioritise, in line with the Government’s and HEA’s current objectives (HEA, 2010) by increasing and promoting:

- provision for lecturers to engage in professional development
- recognition for excellent teaching through awards and fellowships
- collaboration with individual disciplines and academics, offering specific support in pedagogic practice
- support to embed flexible and non-traditional teaching methods
- support for blended e-learning in pedagogic practice
- pedagogic research activity
- dissemination of good practice through workshops, discussion, conferences and publications

Of course, many educational developers would find such a directive confusing since working closely with academic staff and senior managers is what educational developers do on a daily basis, but perhaps this could be read as a suggestion for further strategic positioning and collaborative working. This is which several of our respondents indicate is a positive direction of development in their own work in their current, changing context of engagement with mapping CPD against the UK Professional Standards Framework (HEA, 2011).

1.2 Aims and objectives of the research

The aims of the 2011 HEDG funded research are to:

1. gain rich and detailed insights into changes now occurring in different UK EDCs
2. Identify ways in which UK EDCs are repositioning to meet new priorities
3. gain insights into similarities and differences in educational development in the UK and internationally
4. trace developments over the entire research period (1996-2011)

The research findings will enable Heads of Educational Development, both in the UK and internationally to share knowledge and good practice in relation to educational development in the context of a number of changes, in particular the recession; and recent changes in national and international higher education during these challenging and volatile times. Such knowledge will enable educational developers to inform their strategic planning, decision making and practice for the current and future effectiveness and success of educational development within their institutions and across the sector.

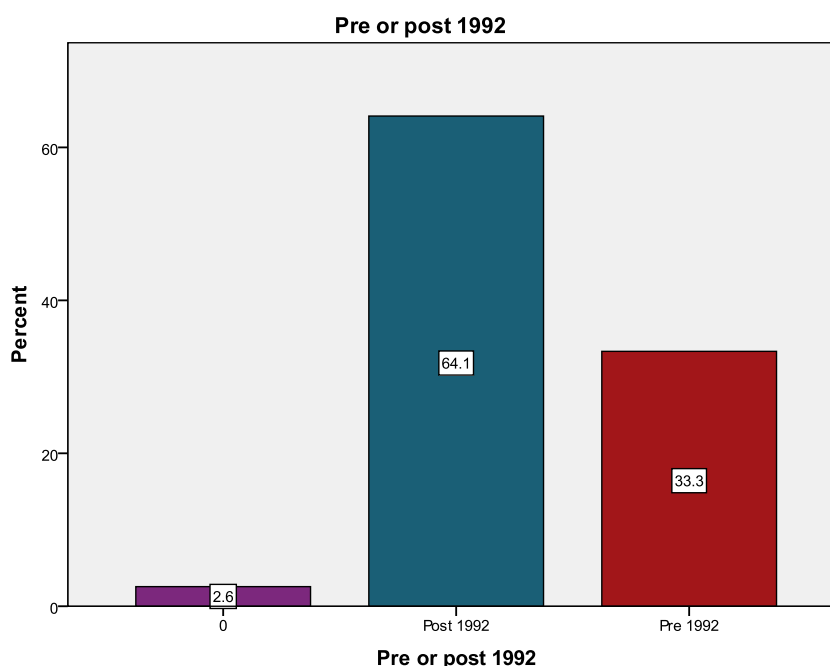
1.3 Methodology

This current research adopted David Gosling's mixed methods approach incorporating a quantitative survey and qualitative individual and group interviews (Gosling, 2008) in order to make it possible to produce comparative data, identify trends and comment on changes.

Survey

In January 2011 a survey was circulated to all UK Heads of Educational Development (who are HEDG members) via HEDG Jiscmail Litserv. From a self-selecting sample, 39 respondents from different institutions took part in the online questionnaire. Within this sample, 64.1% of Heads of Educational Development were from post 1992 universities, and 33.3% were from pre 1992 universities. 2.6% (1 respondent) are unknown.

Figure 1: Respondents from pre or post 1992 institutions
(Number of respondents = 39)



The survey sample enables an overview of current developments in the work and direction of varied EDCs across the UK HE sector. Through comparison with quantitative data from the previous HEDG funded survey (2006), similarities and changes since that time have been identified.

Validity of survey results

39 respondents took part in the survey. Within this sample not all participants answered all questions. Statistical analysis for different sections of the survey is based on the number of participants who took part in that particular section or question. As the number of responses was small for a minority of survey questions, the findings with regard to these particular questions is not statistically representative. In addition, statistical differences noted between responses from pre and post 1992 universities are not statistically representative, due to the small sample of respondents from pre 1992 universities. When presenting the quantitative findings in this report, the researchers have clarified the number of respondents for different sections.

Interviews

In addition, seven in-depth recorded interviews were conducted with UK Heads of Educational Development at pre 1992 and post 1992 universities. One group discussion with UK participants was also conducted, and two further interview discussions were held with international Heads of Educational Development. The latter, and earlier work exploring international examples from an Irish funded project leading to the formal establishment of EDIN (the all Ireland Educational Development network), conducted by one of the researchers (in 2007-8), have helped to provide some international, contextual, background comments. The qualitative data from the UK interviews and discussions supplement the quantitative data and provide a deeper and more detailed understanding of the themes and issues that arise from this research.

Analysis

For the survey, statistical analysis methods incorporating non-parametric tests were employed. Previous survey data (Gosling, 1996, 2001, 2006) has been carefully aggregated with new survey data in order to trace developments over the research period (1996-2011). For the qualitative interviews, cross-sectional content analysis methods were adopted. Quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted with the assistance of NVivo and SPSS software. Qualitative analysis has enabled the researchers to capture rich and detailed insights into changes now occurring in different UK and international EDCs, and ways in which EDCs are repositioning themselves to meet new priorities.

Ethics

The project was approved by the University of Brighton ethics processes. Research data will remain secure and confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Identities of participants will remain anonymous in all research dissemination.

Section B

Research Findings

Research Findings

All the research findings presented in this report relate to the qualitative and quantitative data from this current round of the longitudinal, HEDG funded research. When comparing the current findings with those of the previous report (Gosling, 2008), the findings of Gosling's study have been cited and referenced. In addition, in the context of the research interpretation that follows, the findings of related literature and research have also frequently been referred to in order to contextualise the current research findings, and highlight similarities and differences between educational development in the UK and internationally. Such contextualisation in this regard strengthens the current findings, through triangulation. This section on findings clarifies how contemporary educational development centres may be defined and how they differ from educational development centres (EDCs) in 2006. The main themes that emerge in the research relate to:

- the growth of EDCs across the UK HE sector
- the institutional environment for educational development
- the institutional location and identity of EDCs
- working relationships between heads of educational development and senior managers
- the national and international environment for educational development
- the responsibilities of EDCs and roles of educational development staff
- EDC staffing
- funding for educational development

The current priorities and the main challenges that Heads of Educational Development, EDCs and educational development staff now face in relation to these themes, and the ways in which they seek to address the latter, will now be explained.

2. Emergence of contemporary Educational Development Centres in the UK

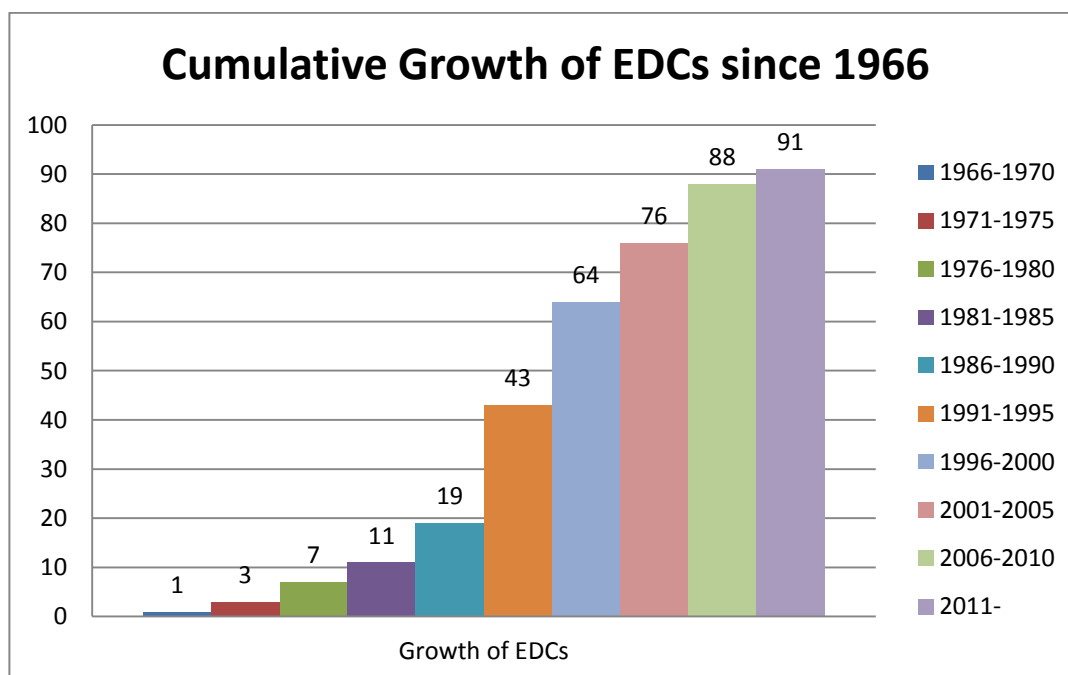
The chart below shows the cumulative growth of EDCs since 1966, and is calculated by aggregating data from the new round of research (2011), with data from the previous round (Gosling, 2008). In relation to Gosling's earlier survey findings (Gosling, 2008), this chart shows that growth in the formation of EDCs was slowing down between 2000 and 2005. This slowdown in growth may be related to the fact that there was less TQEF funding available for EDCs across the sector by 2005 than previously. The decrease in the emergence of EDCs follows a previous increase in growth for EDCs between 1991 and 2000. The earlier increase in growth may be linked to the Dearing Report (1997), and the consequent availability of external funding for teaching and learning development in higher education through TQEF, CETL and pedagogic research funding from a variety of agencies including JISC and HEA.

From the current survey data (2011) it is evident that the growth rate of EDCs since 2006 remains at a slow, but steady pace. The chart below shows that 12 new EDCs were formed in the period 2001 – 2005, and an additional 12 EDCs, in the period 2006 – 2010. This is a pattern which is repeated in other studies. For instance, previous research (Brew and Peseta, 2008) suggests that many EDCs,

both in the UK and internationally, have or are facing reorganisation, and possible closure, due to changes in politically driven HE agendas. For instance, examples of such agendas are set out in the recent White Paper (BIS, 2011).

Figure 2: Growth of EDCs since 1966

(Current data is aggregated with David Gosling's previous 2006 research data).



The previous HEDG survey report suggests that the names of EDCs referring to 'educational development' were decreasing between 2001 and 2006 (Gosling, 2008). However, the current survey shows that the word 'development' in names of EDCs is now relatively frequent, indicating that it has become relevant again in relation to the remit of EDCs. Names of EDCs often refer to:

- educational development (5)
- academic development (5)
- learning development (6)

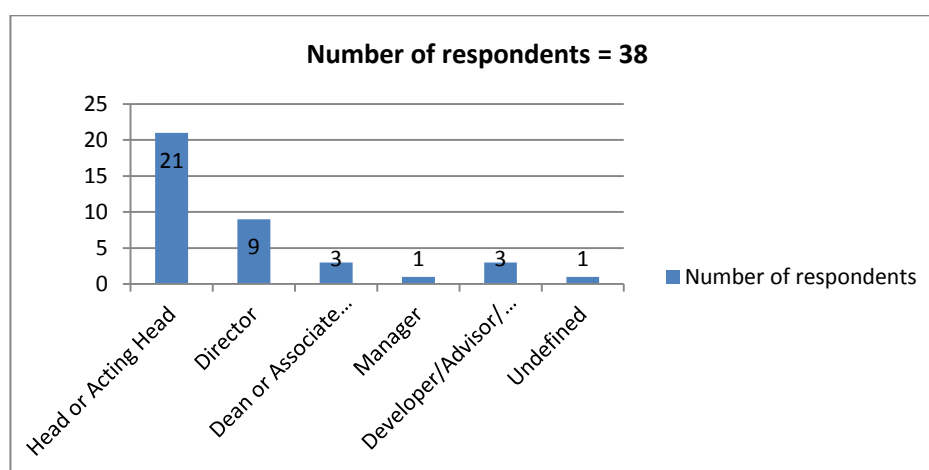
In addition names referring to 'learning and teaching' are still most often used as 12 centres currently adopt this term within their name.

2.1 Profile of Heads of Educational Development

The current HEDG survey results indicate that, although UK Heads of Educational Development still report to more senior managers, such as Pro Vice-Chancellors, they often also hold very senior

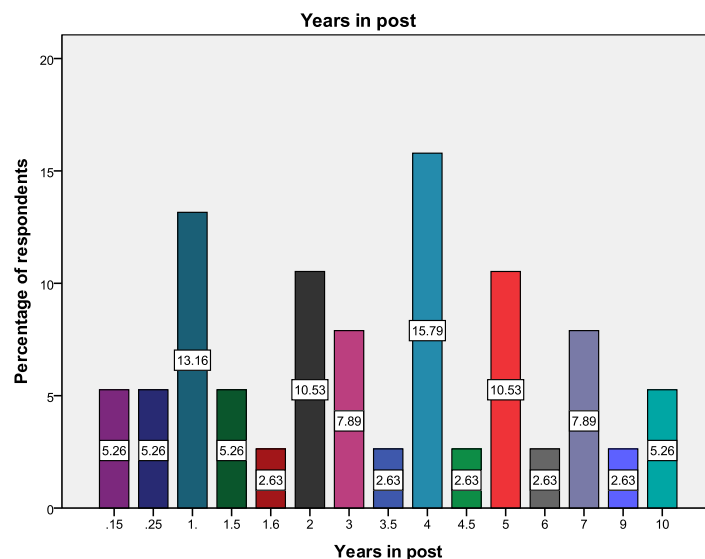
positions and titles themselves. This suggests that the status of Heads of Educational Development may be growing in UK HE, and as additional findings show later in this report, this may particularly be the case for respondents in post 1992 universities. The current survey results hardly vary from the 2006 findings in this regard. In 2006 there were 31 Heads or Directors within the survey sample, whereas the current survey results show that there are 30. Comparing the previous survey with the current survey results, there are the same number of Deans and Managers in 2006 and 2011. Other titles for Heads of Educational Development in the current survey include: Manager, Team Leader, Senior Advisor, and Academic Professional Development Lead. One title remained undefined at the time of the survey. As with the 2006 survey, there are more female Heads of Educational Development currently (55.3%) than male (36.8%). In US higher education, roles with responsibility for educational development have also risen in status so that the post holders have become senior managers within their institution. It is argued that the latter may indicate the recent growing international importance of educational development as perceived by its leaders (Sorcinelli and Austin, 2010). The current HEDG findings also corroborate this trend.

Fig. 3: Titles of Heads of Educational Development



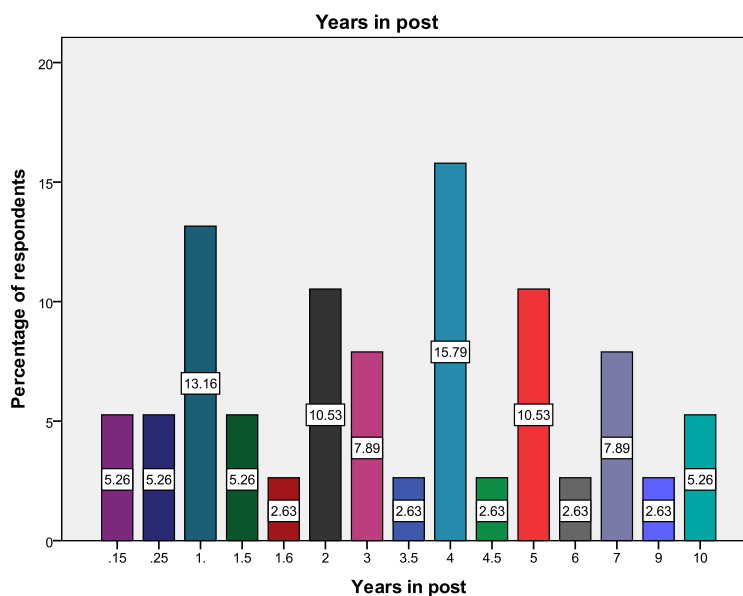
The current HEDG survey data shows that 71% of UK respondents have been in post for less than 5 years, and 29% have been in post between 5 and 10 years. Gosling's previous research report similarly suggests that UK, and also Australian and US Heads of Educational Development, have been in their current roles for a short time – less than 5 years (Gosling, 2008; Chism, 2008). Again, the current and the earlier research findings in this regard indicate that educational development has been and is an emerging major national and international priority for HE institutions. Another reading of the length of time in role might be that the role itself is in a volatile context, and there are frequent changes of post holders, and versions of EDCs themselves. The current and earlier research results also reflect the changing international economic climate and its effects on HE and HE reform. Universities and EDCs are now prioritising teaching and learning, and academic staff professional development, as their mainstream key missions.

Fig. 4: Range of years Heads of Educational Development have been in post
(Number of respondents = 38)



As shown in the chart below, Fig. 5, Heads of Educational Development have very varied lengths of time in previous similar roles, ranging from 1 to 25 years. 81.6 % of respondents have between 5 and 25 years experience in a previous role within their field. It is evident, therefore, that generally Heads of Educational Development are very experienced developers, which is also suggested by Gosling's earlier survey results (Gosling, 2008). Having carried out a single sample T Test for the current survey, the average number that respondents have been in post is 3.6 years; and the average number of years that respondents have been in a similar role is approximately 9 years.

Fig. 5: Range of years Heads of Educational Development have been in a similar role
(Number of respondents = 38)



2.2 The favourability of the institutional environment towards educational development and its goals

The current survey results show that respondents' perceptions of the favourability of the institutional environment towards educational development and its goals have not greatly changed, compared with 5 years ago, in relation to the findings of the 2006 HEDG survey (Gosling, 2008). 27.3% of respondents in the current survey, compared to 35% in the previous survey (Gosling, 2008), consider the institutional environment considerably more favourable. 31.8% of respondents in the current survey, compared to 38% in the 2006 survey, consider it moderately more favourable. 18.2% of respondents in 2011, compared to 16% in 2006, thought the environment was worse.

However, according to the current survey results there is also an interesting difference between pre and post 1992 universities in this regard. The chart below, Fig.6, shows that no respondents from post 1992 universities consider the institutional environment to be worse, whereas 44.4% of respondents from pre 1992 universities do consider the institutional environment to be worse. The latter may relate to the fact that respondents in pre 1992 universities may feel that EDCs are losing their autonomy, identity and status as a result of being merged with larger central departments (please see following section). In addition, the current survey shows that respondents from pre 1992 universities are also feeling more insecure, compared with respondents from post 1992 universities, about funding for their centres, a subject which is discussed at greater length later in this report.

Fig.6: Favourability of the institutional environment towards educational development and its goals
(Number of respondents = 22)

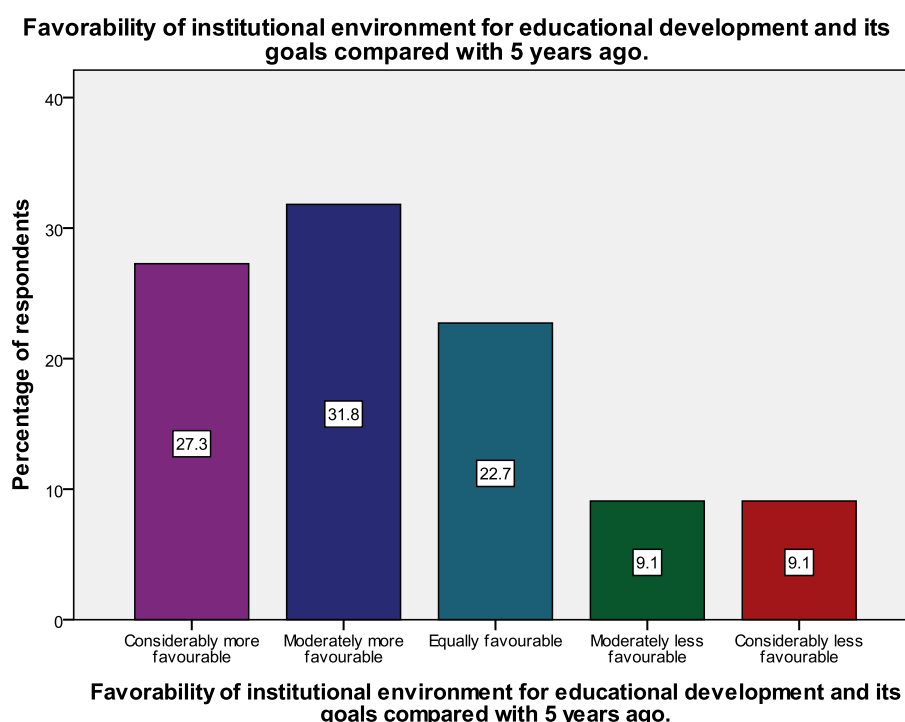
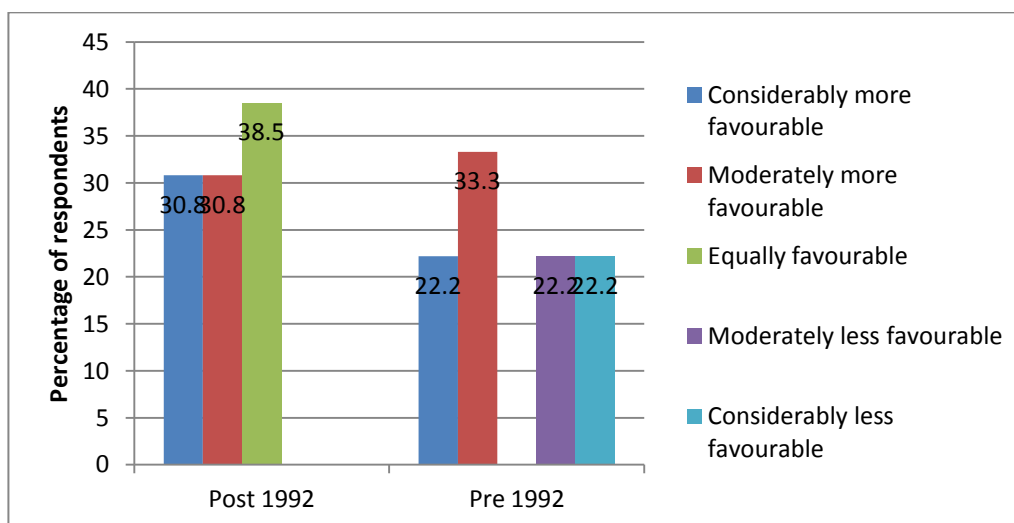


Fig.7: Favourability of the institutional environment –
respondents from pre and post 1992 institutions

(Total number of respondents from post 1992 universities = 13

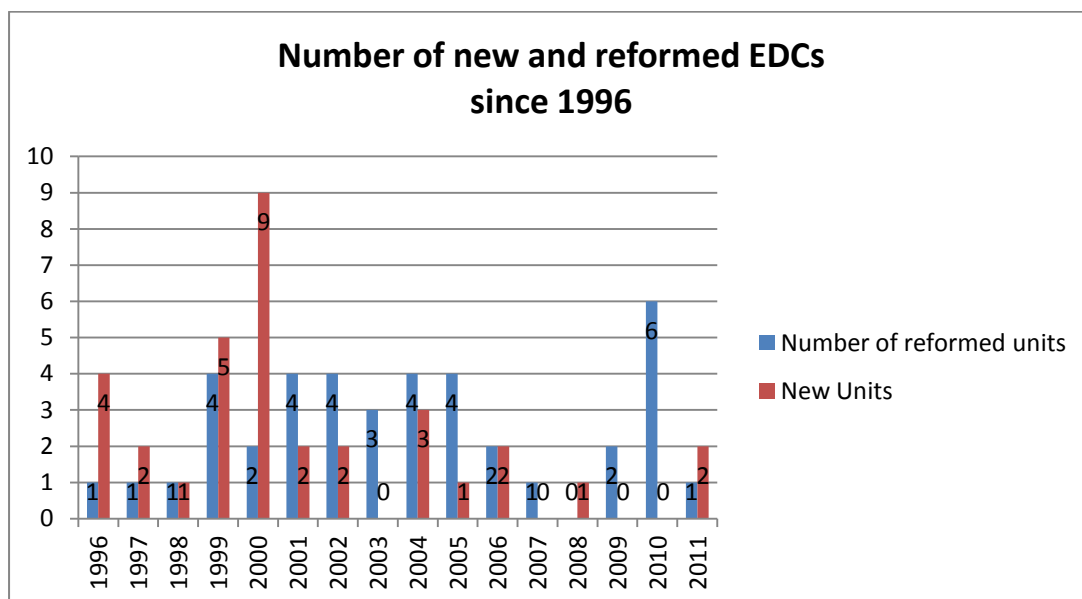
Total number of respondents from pre 1992 universities = 9)



2.3 Organisational change

This research shows that organisational change is one of the main contexts within which Heads of Educational Development are now experiencing uncertainty and volatility in EDCs. The current survey shows that in the overall period from 2006 -2011 there were 12 reformed units. This is considerably fewer than in the period 2000 – 2005, when the previous survey shows that there were 21 reformed units (Gosling, 2008). However, it is evident that since the last survey in 2006, the current data shows that rate at which units have been recently reformed in the space of 1 year (2010) has risen considerably (please see chart below).

Figure 8: New and reformed EDCs
(Current data has been aggregated with David Gosling's previous survey data)



2.4 Institutional location of Educational Development Centres

In this regard, the current research shows that EDCs are often being merged with larger central departments, or are joining other smaller departments to become a larger department. This restructuring has been taking place for some time. As Gosling points out in his previous report (Gosling, 2008), EDCs were subject to much restructuring between 2001 and 2006. The current research demonstrates, however, that the reorganisation of EDCs is now even more frequent. The present survey data suggests that just over half of respondents (51.3%) say that their centres have now become part of central services within a larger organisation. 41 % agree that their centres are stand alone units. 5.1% are neither. 2.6% (1 respondent) did not respond to this question.

Some interview participants view such a reorganisation positively as they may be in charge of a new larger central structure focused on the student experience:

“There’s a suggestion thatat least there will be more integration between us and *a variety of other departments relating to student support* to develop the core of a central student facing unit. We’re in the middle of a professional services review, whether that’s going to be me or someone else hasn’t been decided yet....”

(Interview 1, pre 1992)

However, restructuring of EDCs has often led to a shift in location and identity for EDCs, which is a matter of concern for several interview participants, who feel they will lose their credibility.

“We’re in the xxxxx services division which is professional services, that’s about to be restructured, but we’re still going to report to the Academic Registrar. At the moment I’m trying to resist a desire to move us into the

same building as the rest because I think that will be the kiss of death if we're in the admin building with all of them."

(Group discussion participant 1, post 1992)

In the 2006 report, Gosling describes the importance of the EDC being a standalone unit in terms of its "identity and autonomy (Gosling, 2008, p27)." The interview participants are often concerned about new or impending changes in location of their units; as this also indicates a change of their identities and power.

"The other challenge is resisting aspects of the restructuring that I don't like, and actually being able to say no we really won't come and house ourselves in that registry. It will make use less effective because we'll be one of them."

(Group Discussion, Participant 1)

When the SPSS file was split into pre and post 1992 universities, it is interesting to note that a larger percentage of EDCs in post 1992 universities are still stand alone services – 52%, compared to 23.1% of pre 1992 universities. According to the survey a much larger percentage of EDCs in pre 1992 universities are now central services within a larger organisational unit. This may indicate a difference between the two types of university in this regard; and a trend in the growing status of educational development in post 1992 universities, and a major change since the 2006 survey (Gosling, 2008).

Figure 9: Location of EDCs within their institutions

(Number of respondents = 39)

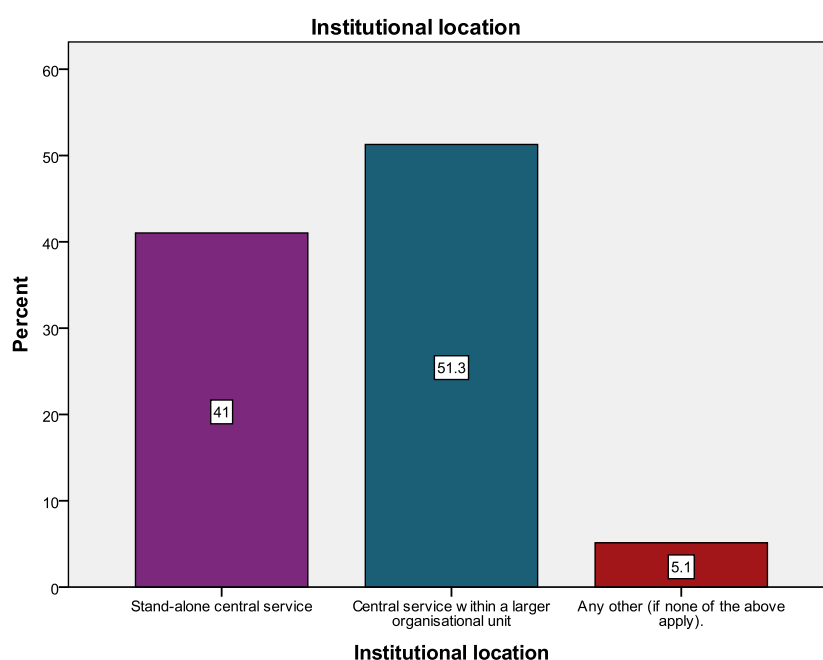
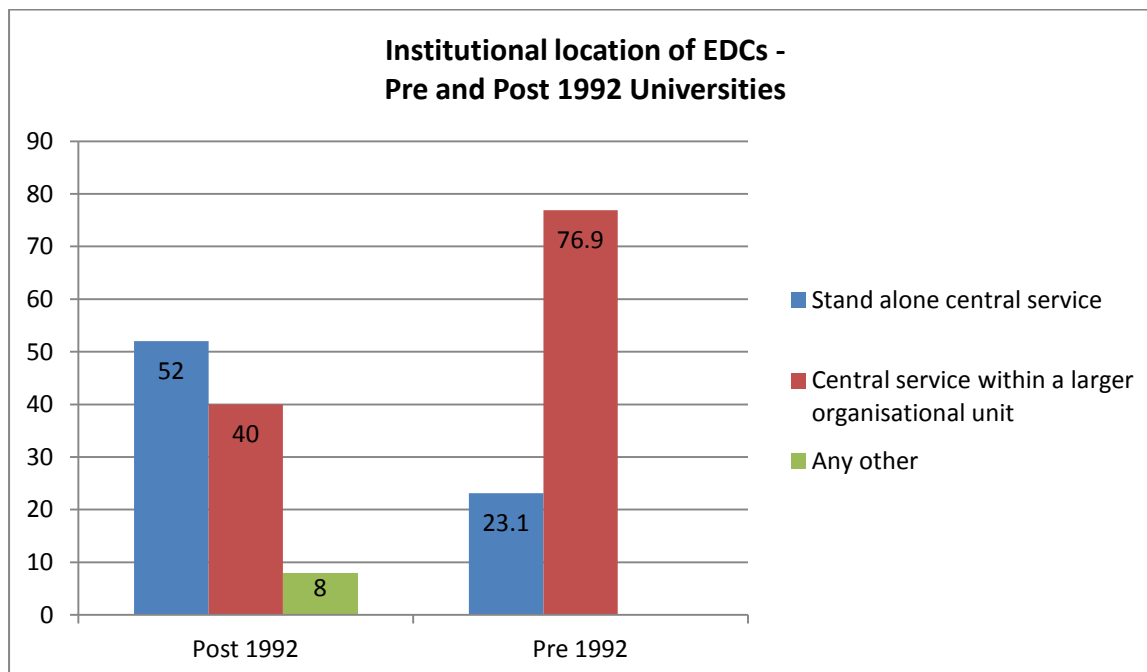


Figure 10: Location of EDCs in pre and post 1992 institutions

(Total number of respondents = 38
 Number of post 1992 universities = 25
 Number of pre 1992 universities = 13)



2.5 Working relationships between Heads of Educational Development and Senior Managers

In relation to the favourability of the institution towards EDCs and their goals, the current UK study and previous internationally focused research shows that the support of senior managers is seen as crucial to the effectiveness and success of the work of educational developers. For instance, in Australia the importance of the effective and supportive working relationship between EDCs and senior managers including Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Academic) and Associate Deans of Teaching and Learning has been highlighted (Palmer, Holt and Challis, 2010; Brew and Peseta, 2010). The current HEDG interviews also indicate that educational developers' effective working relationships with senior managers in UK HE are becoming increasingly vital to the success and longevity of EDCs and their work.

"My Pro VC is absolutely adamant that my job and my team are going to be absolutely crucial to all of this. The VC and the *management* committee have pointed out, you are very much in the hot-seat and we trust you to do good jobs."

(Interview 5, Pre 1992 University)

The current research suggests that without these vital working relationships, the survival of EDCs and their work may be threatened.

"A lot of our futures depend on the perception that rules in the community you work in....I think what happens now is – if the institutional management deems

you good then you're sticking around. So those are the different agendas you work to. Supporting the classroom, the curriculum, the teaching staff, that's still the core business, but now it's regarded as mainstream."

(Interview 5, Pre 1992 University)

In some cases, when there is a lack of strong working relationships and communication with senior managers, participants are experiencing a complete lack of security or understanding about the future existence and direction of the centres.

"Our greatest challenge is the reorganisation – we've just been moved into the office of the *senior manager*. As a unit, we've been split up and some of us have been moved into the office of the *senior manager* to deal with strategic matters, but until the *senior manager* settles down and talks to us, it's business as normal. We feel in a very vulnerable no man's land at the moment."

(Group discussion, Participant 6)

Although these strong working relationships between Heads of Educational Development and senior managers are necessary, the current HEDG survey data shows that fewer Heads of Educational Development (currently 51.4%), than in 2006 appear to be reporting directly to Pro Vice-Chancellors. This suggests that for some institutions this working relationship may be lacking. The latter is again suggested by the interviews.

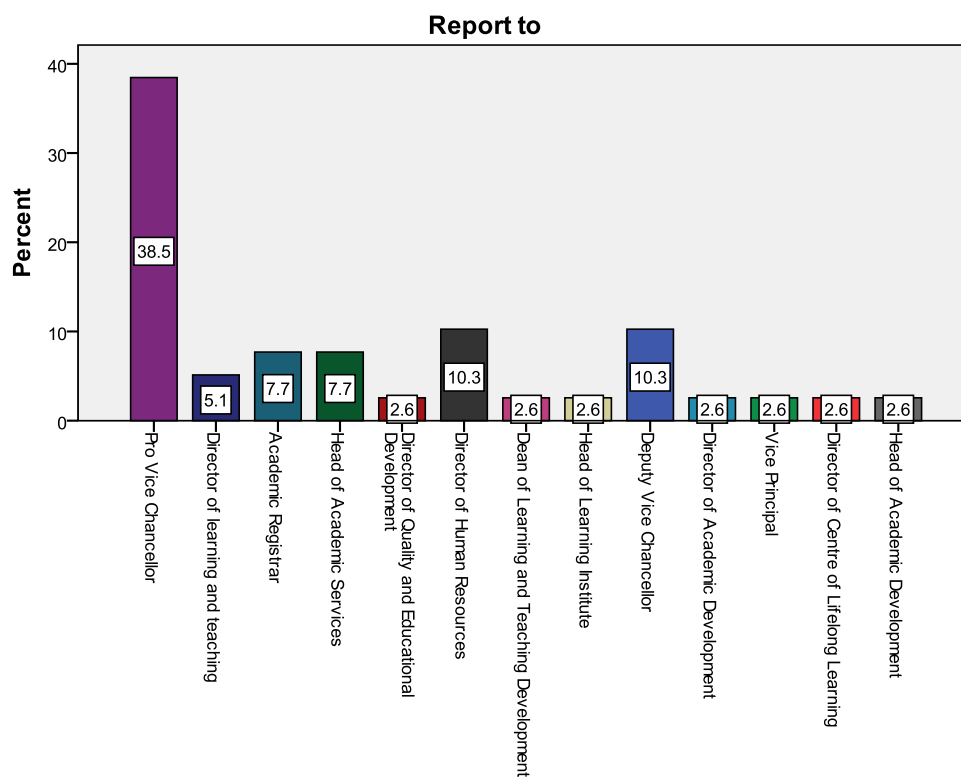
"A main challenge for us is the constant restructuring and the fact that we've got a new PVC for Teaching and Learning who is making a lot of very rapid changes, and has yet to turn the spotlight on us. Even though we have had her for *a short time*, I'm not sure exactly how to relate to her and what her priorities are. We haven't yet got a working relationship and that's a challenge, because what you want to do is second guess management strategy."

(Group Discussion, Participant 1)

Hence, the internal environment for educational development and EDCs within their institutions is volatile. Rapid changes with regard to the identities, locations, funding, relations with senior managers and purposes of EDCs are now occurring, which leaves many Heads of Educational Development and their staff in an insecure situation.

Figure 11: Heads' of Educational Development lines of reporting

(Number of respondents = 39)



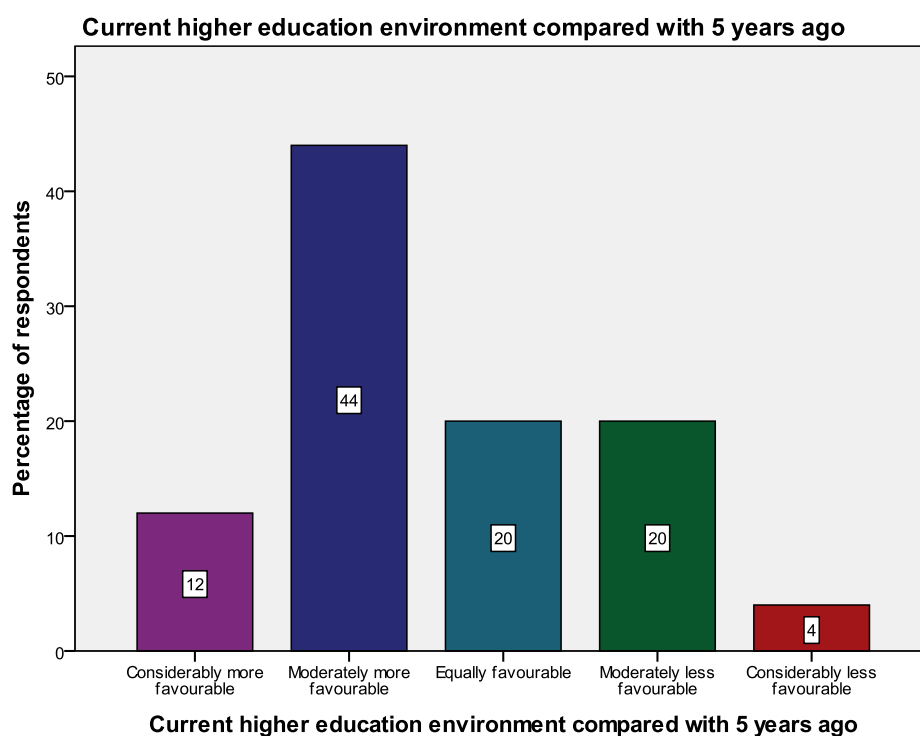
3. The remits and responsibilities of Educational Development Centres

3.1 The favourability of the current higher education environment

In the current survey 56% of respondents felt the current higher education environment to be more favourable than it was 5 years ago. 20% considered it to be equally favourable and 24% considered it less favourable. A higher percentage of 26.7% post 1992 universities consider the higher education environment to be less favourable, compared to 15.4% of pre 1992 universities. There is little difference in percentages of respondents in old and new universities who consider the national environment to be more favourable or equally favourable.

Fig.12: Favourability of the national higher education environment

(Number of respondents = 25)



3.2 The developing HE focus: to enhance quality in teaching, learning and student engagement

In this context, this and previous research indicates that international educational development is at an exciting moment, where it is vitally needed in order to support better quality in HE and “focusing on core missions of teaching and learning” (Felten, 2011, p1). Quality assurance is the new mission for international HE (Lemaitre, 2010). In the UK, the professional development of new staff is now compulsory in most UK HEIs, and in many other countries including: Holland, Norway, Sweden, Japan

and Sri Lanka such mandatory professional development for new academic staff is also commonplace. Although currently this is still not the case in the US (Gosling, 2010), Peter Felten hints that there may be a new refocusing on staff development since “we can no longer afford to waste resources on ineffective teaching, poorly designed courses and curricula....” and that in this context US EDCs are “becoming more central” (Felten, op.cit. p1). Until recently Australia has not made teaching qualifications for lecturers mandatory, but now many Australian universities are also introducing compulsory professional development for new staff in the form of the Graduate Certificate of Higher Education (Holt, Palmer and Di Challis, 2011). This latest HEDG funded research also shows that the current focus of the work of staff in EDCs is on development, and putting the Learning and Teaching Strategy into practice.

The 2006 survey data shows that the full responsibilities most frequently chosen by respondents in both pre and post 1992 universities relate to the professional development of staff (Gosling, 2008). The current survey shows that this is still the case. Of the respondents who answered the section on remits of EDCs, 100% of pre 1992 university respondents and 88.9% of post 92 respondents agree that they are fully responsible for the initial professional development of staff. As is the trend with the 2006 survey (Gosling, 2008), the current 2011 data also shows that the most frequently mentioned responsibilities which are considered to be shared with other university departments relate to: the overall quality of teaching and learning; and putting the teaching and learning strategy into place. In this regard, the White Paper implies that universities and HE institutions will now compete more with other public, and a growing number of private providers (BIS, 2011). There is a consequent need for universities and EDCs to focus more than ever on quality and student engagement (BIS, 2011). As discussed above in relation to earlier international research, the current research indicates that EDCs therefore need to concentrate on enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, the professional development of teaching staff, and driving forward the Teaching and Learning Strategy within their institutions. However, with regard to the Learning and Teaching strategy it is interesting to note that no respondents from pre 1992 universities are fully responsible for the implementation of the learning and teaching strategy, whereas 27.8% of respondents from post 1992 universities do bear this full responsibility. The latter may also be suggested by the current research interviews.

“....now we have to be internally focused on supporting academic staff. The VC sees us driving forward the learning and teaching agenda, so we’re in the process at the moment of having a new learning and teaching strategy ratified, and it’s very much about us driving it, supporting the faculties to implement it and the various support services.”

(Interview participant 2, Post 1992)

In this regard, UK and international centres for learning and teaching, perhaps particularly in post 1992 universities, are purposefully playing a more central and strategic role within their institutions in leading change and development and supporting staff in providing a quality educational experience for students (Deane Sorcinelli and Austin, 2010; Holt, Palmer and Di Challis, 2011). The greater strategic focus of Heads of Educational Development and EDCs has been occurring in the UK for some time, as Gosling identifies in the previous research report (Gosling, 2008). The current HEDG research strongly confirms that this is now even more the case in UK universities.

Fig. 13: Full responsibilities of EDCs – respondents from pre and post 1992 institutions

(Total number of respondents =29
 Number of respondent from post 1992 universities =18
 Number of respondents from pre 1992 universities = 11)

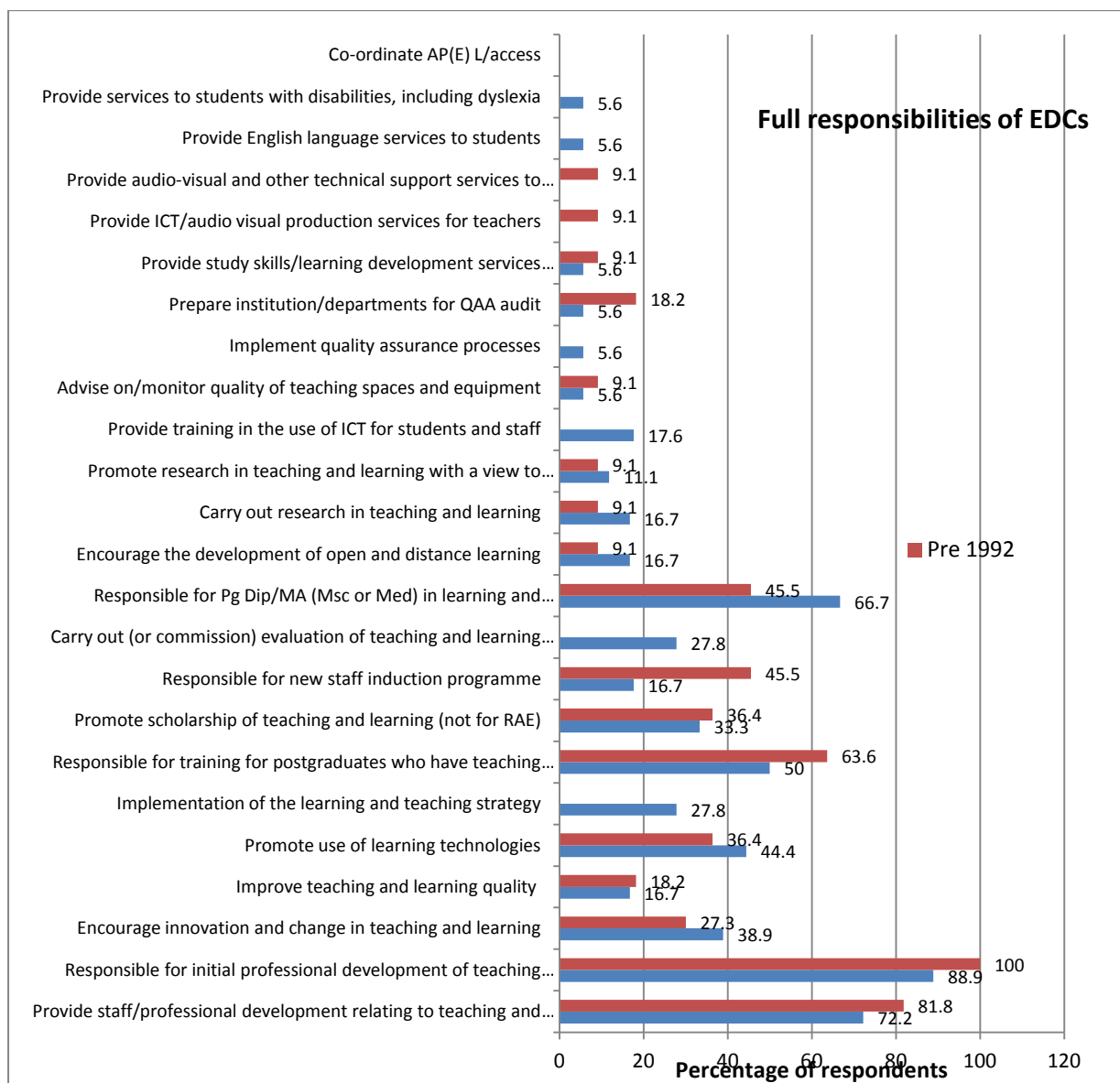
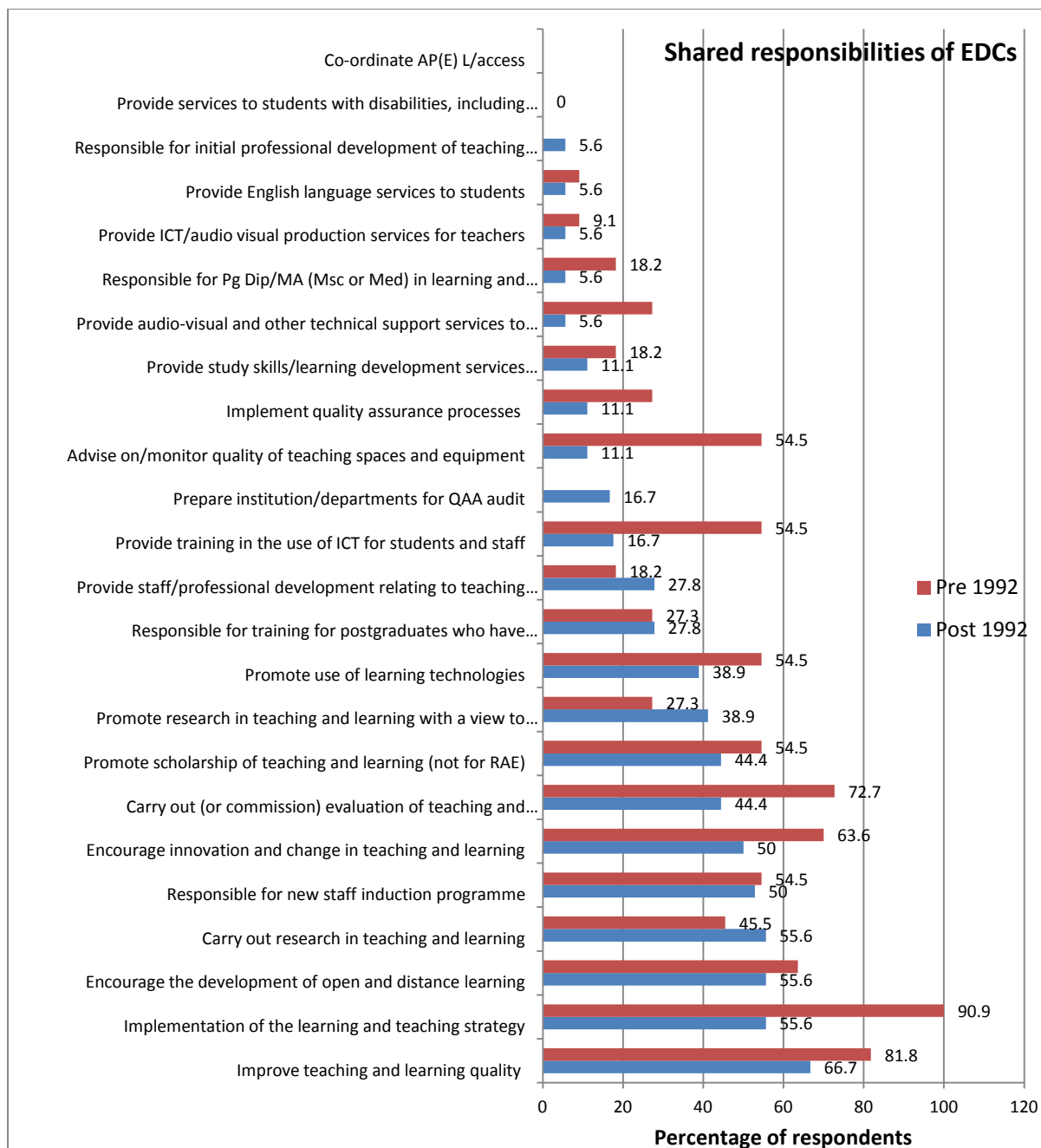


Fig.14: Shared responsibilities of EDCs – respondents from pre and post 1992 institutions

(Total number of respondents =29
 Number of respondent from post 1992 universities =18
 Number of respondents from pre 1992 universities = 11)



In the current survey, the most frequently mentioned responsibilities that respondents contribute to (in pre and post 92 universities), but do not consider their full or shared responsibility, relate to:

putting Quality Assurance processes in place (75.9% of respondents); preparing their institution for the QAA Audit (72.4%); and advising on quality of teaching spaces and equipment (51.7% of respondents).

3.3 EDCs' main responsibility: enhancing the quality of teaching and learning and engaging in the professional development of staff

In the 2006 survey, when the results for the full and shared responsibilities of EDCs were combined, the 3 most frequently mentioned ways in which EDCs were responsible for enabling the enhancement of teaching and learning within their institutions were: 1. professional development in relation to teaching and learning; 2. initial professional development of teaching staff; and 3. training postgraduates who have teaching duties (Gosling, 2008). In the current survey, when the full and shared responsibilities were combined in the same way, the first two most frequently mentioned responsibilities remain the same as those indicated by the 2006 survey. 100% of EDCs are fully responsible for professional development in relation to learning and teaching, and 96.5% are fully responsible for initial professional development of teaching staff. In the current survey, however, the 3rd most frequently mentioned full responsibility is 'encouraging innovation and change in teaching and learning' (89.7% of respondents), and the 4th most frequently mentioned full responsibility is 'improving teaching and learning quality' (89.6% of respondents). The 5th current equally important priorities for EDCs are the 'implementation of the learning and teaching strategy' (86.2%) and 'the promotion of learning technologies' (86.2%). These latter figures indicate the growing importance of these agendas in current higher education. EDCs both nationally and internationally are now focusing on these aspects in educational development, in line with the priorities dictated by senior managers and the White Paper. It is likely that such priorities will become even more important now that the revised UK Professional Standards Framework has been fully launched (HEA, 2011)

3.4 Technology, e- and blended learning - a main agenda for educational development

The emerging focus on e-Learning as an educational development priority, which is shared with other departments in the institution, also appears a recurring theme in the interviews and group discussion. The growth of e-Learning initiatives is also often associated with e-Learning communities of practice within the institution.

"I would say what's happening at the moment is that the learning technologists' network is very strong simply because we're implementing a lot of technology related initiatives: a new VLE, e-submission, online marking, all the sorts of things that require these people. A lot of the things that are being driven through at the moment are technology focused."

(Interview Participant 4, Post 1992)

Learning Technology, e and blended learning are also seen as a major agenda in US higher educational development. Deane Sorcinelli and Austin (2010) point out that, US educational developers are highly influenced by literature in the field in informing their work. In Australia, there is also a greater current focus on e-learning in academic development which is described as one necessary aspect of their effectiveness (Holt, Palmer and Di Challis, 2011). In addition to the growing remit of EDCs with regard to e-learning, the e-Learning Strategy is the 2nd most frequently

mentioned strategy for which EDCs are responsible, as it also was in 2006. In the chart below, e-Learning is generally shown to have a medium impact, rather than a high impact on the strategic focus of EDCs. However, virtual learning environments (linked to e-learning) are generally shown to have a high impact. As mentioned above, the interview participants often mention e-learning as a growing agenda for educational development in their institutions. Universities are increasing e-learning developments and initiatives, and consequently e-learning communities of practice are growing stronger. Some interview participants suggest that this also results from their university's new aims to attract more international and distance learning students.

"We're being pushed to grow distance learning students and international students. So there is a huge push on up-scaling the technology side of things to make sure we can do that – online submission, online marking, online feedback...We're suddenly being faced with developing programmes to help support staff and have e-submission starting in September."

(Interview 2, Post 1992)

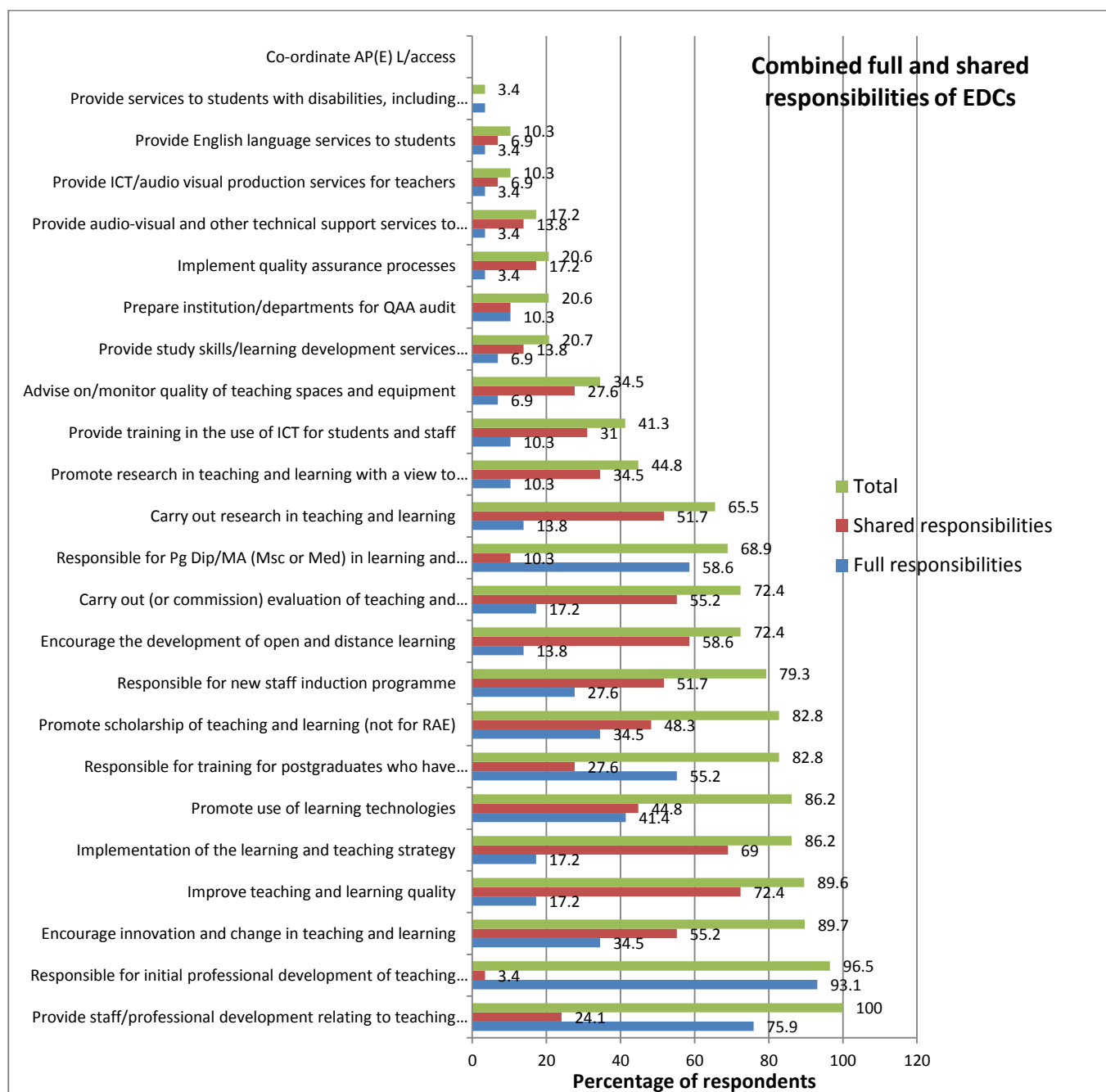
In addition educational developers realise that e-learning is a good way of engaging teaching staff in educational development, because it is something they can all relate to.

"I've found, both personally and from a strategic perspective that using technology is a really good way to get staff involved, because at least that's something that they have to do that they can relate to."

(Interview 4, Post 1992)

Fig. 15: Combined full and shared responsibilities of EDCs – all institutions

(Total number of respondents = 29)



3.5 Professional development of teaching staff

In terms of EDC staff priorities in relation to supporting the professional development of academic staff, these have changed slightly since the 2006 survey (Gosling, 2008).

1. 93.1% of respondents say they are fully responsible for initial professional development of teaching staff, compared to 70% in 2006
2. 75.9% of respondents are fully responsible for professional development of teaching staff in general, compared to circa 75% in 2006, which is almost the same
3. 58.6% are fully responsible for the PG Dip/MA in learning and teaching, compared to 26% in 2006
4. 55.2% are fully responsible for training postgraduates who have teaching duties, compared to circa 50% in 2006

These results indicate a recent rising trend in academic staff engaging in initial professional development, which is expected since the recent Government reforms (BIS, 2011). In addition there has been a growing number of staff wanting a more advanced qualification in teaching in the last few years. However, although enhancing the quality of teaching and learning is the most important current agenda for universities in 2011, evidence emerges from the research interviews which show that other than initial professional development of new staff, the responsibility of trying to engage mainstream academic teaching staff in professional development is a challenge for some EDCs. The main reason for this is that the teaching staff workload is great, and the time lecturers have available for professional development is insufficient.

“I work in a teaching oriented institution and I actually took up the post thinking that it was going to be a piece of cake to engage staff....and it isn’t....because their workload is huge. They haven’t got time to think.”
(Interview 4, post 1992)

In some cases, however, the professional agenda may become too managerial. Some universities are now effectively asking EDCs to check up on underperforming staff, and evaluate their performance, then reporting back to Heads of Department and Heads of School. The latter does not make for very easy relationships between Educational Developers and teaching staff.

“I think it’s crucial that we develop people who are underperforming and that we help them to develop themselves. What we’re being asked to do is much more managerial, checking-up on people and providing evidence for managers potentially to get rid of them if they don’t come up to scratch. That’s not really a job I want to have.”
(Interview 1, Post 1992)

3.6 Research and scholarship in learning and teaching

In relation to the 2006 research findings (Gosling, 2008), EDCs now appear to have changed their priorities with regard to research and scholarship in learning and teaching. The latter now appears to be a decreasing focus for EDCs in terms of being a full responsibility. However, from the survey data it is evident that the responsibility for research and scholarship in learning and teaching is shared with other departments within institutions.

1. 34.5% of respondents say they are fully responsible for promoting the scholarship of learning and teaching, compared to 42.5% in 2006
2. 13.8% say they are fully responsible for conducting research into teaching and learning, compared to 20% in 2006
3. 10.3% are fully responsible for promoting pedagogic research, with the possibility of being entered for the REF, compared to circa 32% in 2006
4. 17.2% are fully responsible for carrying out (or commissioning) evaluation of learning and teaching, compared to circa 28% in 2006

According to the current research, there is therefore an indication that pedagogic research appears to be a decreasing priority for EDCs. This is also suggested by the survey, which shows that there may now be very few research staff in EDCs. (The latter is according to a small number of survey respondents who gave out this information in the survey (3 respondents), and therefore these findings are not representative). The qualitative data also suggests that, as cited above, some senior managers appear to be steering Heads of Educational Development away from external pedagogic research as a priority. Some educational development colleagues are now being asked by managers to concentrate more on teaching quality and academic staff professional development. However, fewer research staff in EDCs means that there is a resulting problem facing educational developers. There is now more pressure on educational developers to conduct the pedagogic research themselves, and the latter often struggle to find the time for this.

“Actually, it’s a struggle for them and a struggle for me to let them have time to do research, and it’s a struggle for all of us to have time to actually get it written up and published.”

(Interview participant 3, post 1992)

3.7 Student facing educational development

Although the survey results do not indicate that EDCs consider it their main responsibility to provide learning development activities for students, several interview participants suggest that this is a developing remit for their centres, and one which is in line with central institutional directives and strategies. This also relates to the White Paper and new national guidelines with regard to promoting student engagement and student voice in UK HE (BIS, 2011).

“Working with students is something that I’ve developed...Technically it still isn’t in my remit, but that’s how the EDC’s role has developed over the past few years...because all the quality enhancement has to be student informed and relevant to them. And on academic staff development there’s a number of projects that we run as joint projects with staff and students. So it was always there in the ethos of how it was set up in our work.”

(Interview 5, Pre 1992)

Some participants, however, are concerned about the fact that students are to be given a much greater voice and power in universities. This is an inevitable consequence of raising student fees; and the White Paper (BIS, 2011), which encourages the rights and voice of students in HE. However, many interview participants agree that while it is important to represent the student voice, it is also essential not to give students too much power. Participants strongly feel that students should maintain their identities as learners rather than consumers of education. This learner identity is precariously balanced, and may be easily lost unless institutions fight hard to safeguard this.

“Let’s not give them too many rights, so they can’t get consumerist. It’s at odds with the rest of the climate but I think it’s absolutely essential because if we don’t do that, well the students aren’t going to benefit if they see themselves as becoming passive consumers of some kind of service. So I think that’s a huge challenge. It’s an uphill struggle all the time now.”

(Interview 3, Post 1992)

3.8 Disappearing responsibilities

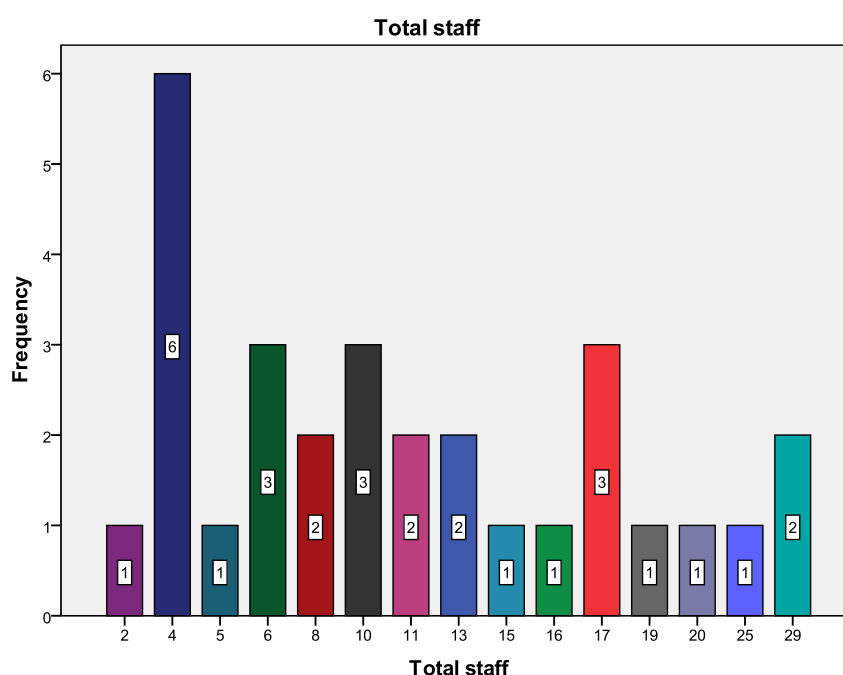
As Gosling notes in the 2006 research report, some responsibilities seem to be becoming a decreasing focus for EDCs including: providing study skills for students, ICT/ audio visual production services, and the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) (Gosling, 2008). The current research data shows that this is still the case.

4. Staffing of EDCs

As Gosling points out in the 2006 research report, explaining the staffing of EDCs is complicated, and varies considerably across institutions (Gosling, 2008). The current research shows that this is still the case, as indicated by the chart below, where staff numbers vary from 2 to 29 across institutions, within a sample of 30 respondents for this section of the survey.

Fig. 16: Range of total number of staff in EDCs across the response set

(Number of respondents = 30)



4.1 Educational Developers

The average number of staff in EDCs carrying out educational development as their main role has not changed noticeably since 2006. Gosling indicates in the 2006 research report, that there is not a significant difference in the average number of educational development staff in pre and post 1992 universities. Having carried out an independent sample t-test for the current survey, there is still not a significant difference in this regard between pre and post 1992 universities. Within the sample of 30 respondents who completed the staff section of the survey, 28 reported that there was 1 Head of ED. 20 respondents said they had lecturers in educational development ranging in number from 1 to 12. Only 4 respondents said they had Deputy Heads of Educational Development within their centres.

4.2 E learning staff

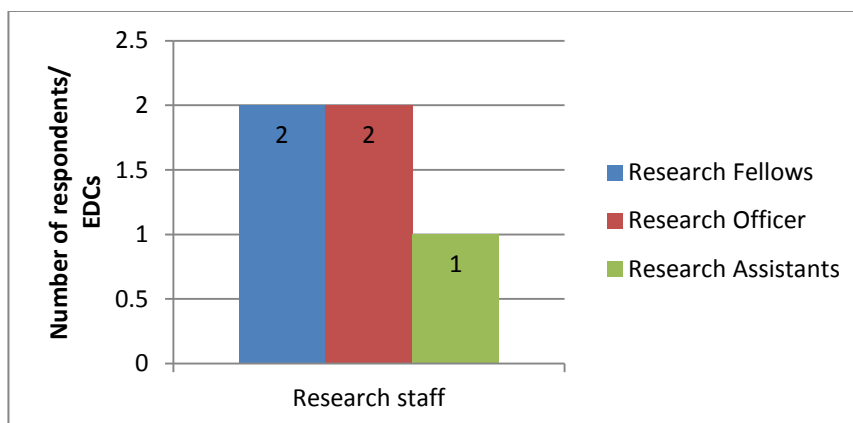
4 universities have a Head of E Learning. 14 universities have e-learning advisors ranging in number between 1 and 4. 12 universities have eLearning technologists ranging in number between 2 and 5. Although the numbers of elearning staff in EDCs appear relatively small, elearning is still shown to be

a growing priority for EDCs in the data regarding EDC responsibilities above, and the views of interview participants in this regard.

4.3 Research Staff

Only 3 institutions in the sample of 30 universities volunteered information about research staff, and according to the data there were a total of 5 research staff altogether. This is fewer than in the previous survey where 11 respondents from different universities had at least one researcher among their staff (Gosling, 2008). This decrease in research staff suggests that many researchers' fixed term contracts may not have been renewed. The latter may be related to restricted research funding since 2010; and TQEF and CETL funding coming to an end. Moreover, some university senior managers are asking Heads of Educational Development to refocus their work on staff professional development; teaching quality and student engagement rather than externally focused pedagogic research. As Gosling points out in his previous HEDG report (Gosling, 2008), the fact that there are few research staff does not necessarily mean that educational developers are not carrying out pedagogic research themselves. As described above, in relation to the remits of EDCs, the interview participants describe how educational developers are conducting research, but that, as previously suggested, conducting such research is often a struggle in terms of the lack of time available.

Fig.17: Research staff



4.4 Administrative Staff

Within the sample of 30 EDCs, 22 institutions had Administrators ranging in number from 1 to 4. 11 institutions had Administrative Assistants ranging in number from 1 to 5. 4 institutions had Programme Coordinators and 2 institutions had EDC Coordinators.

4.5 Distributed Educational Development Staff

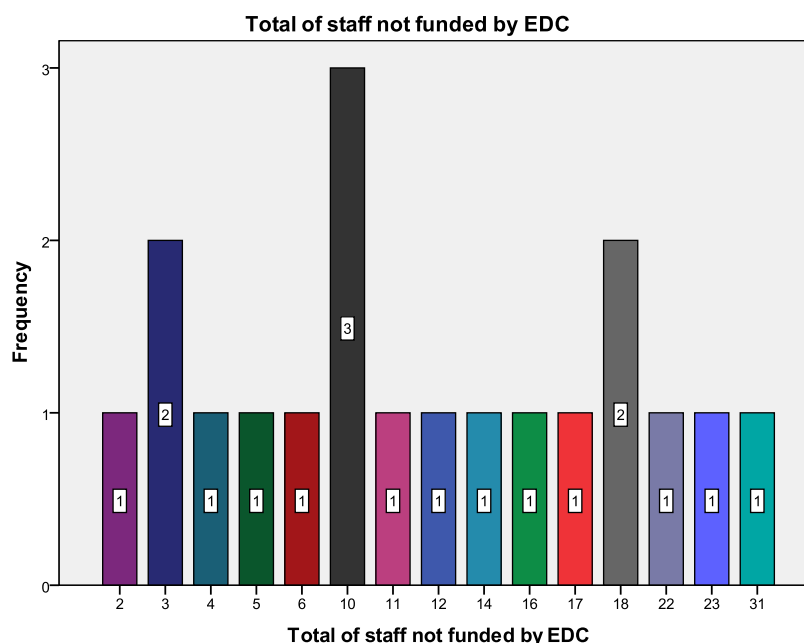
In the context of the current research, distributed development staff, not funded by EDCs, are emerging in importance in their growing contribution to enhancing learning and teaching across HE institutions. The significant work of learning and teaching communities of practice across universities is described in detail by several interview participants.

“We don’t have faculty T and L people, but we do have a very strong teacher fellow network, so they are our links to the faculties and they do a lot of work with us. Over the past few years the teacher fellow network has become really much stronger.”

(Interview 3, Post 1992 University)

In the survey, 19 respondents answered the questions in relation to staff not funded by the EDC. Within this sample educational development staff not funded by EDCs in the 19 institutions ranged in number from 2 to 31. On average, there was 12.37 such staff per institution, with little difference in the average number in relation to pre and post 1992 universities.

Fig.18: Range of educational development staff not funded by EDCs across the response set
(Number of respondents = 19)



In relation to categories of educational development staff not funded by EDCs, the highest average within these categories is 3.3 for e-learning staff and 3 for National Teaching Fellows.

With regard to levels of contact between EDCs and distributed development staff across the institution, the largest number of respondents (52.4%) described having very close collaboration and contact with faculty learning and teaching fellows, advisors or coordinators. This is followed by 41.2% of respondents who described having very close collaboration and contact with Information Services learning and teaching staff. Following this, 35% agree that they have very close collaboration with Faculty or Departmental eLearning specialists. The largest number of respondents (42.9%) also agrees that Faculty Learning and Teaching Fellows, Advisors and Coordinators make a very significant contribution to educational development. 25% agree that Faculty or Departmental eLearning Specialists, and 21.7% that National Teaching Fellows make a very significant contribution in this regard. As cited above, interview participants often mention that Learning and Teaching Fellows and eLearning Specialists, who are not funded by EDCs, make a strong contribution to learning and teaching development within their institutions; and often form strong communities of practice.

Fig.19: Levels of collaboration between EDCs and educational development staff who are not funded by EDCs

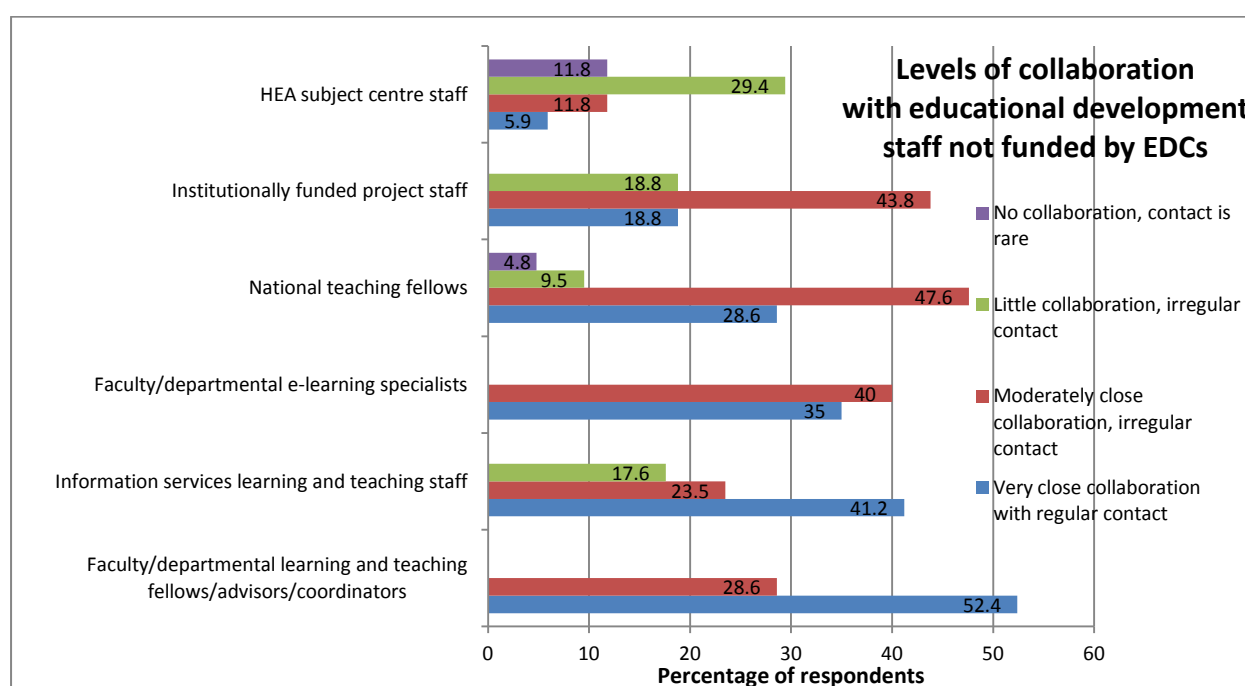
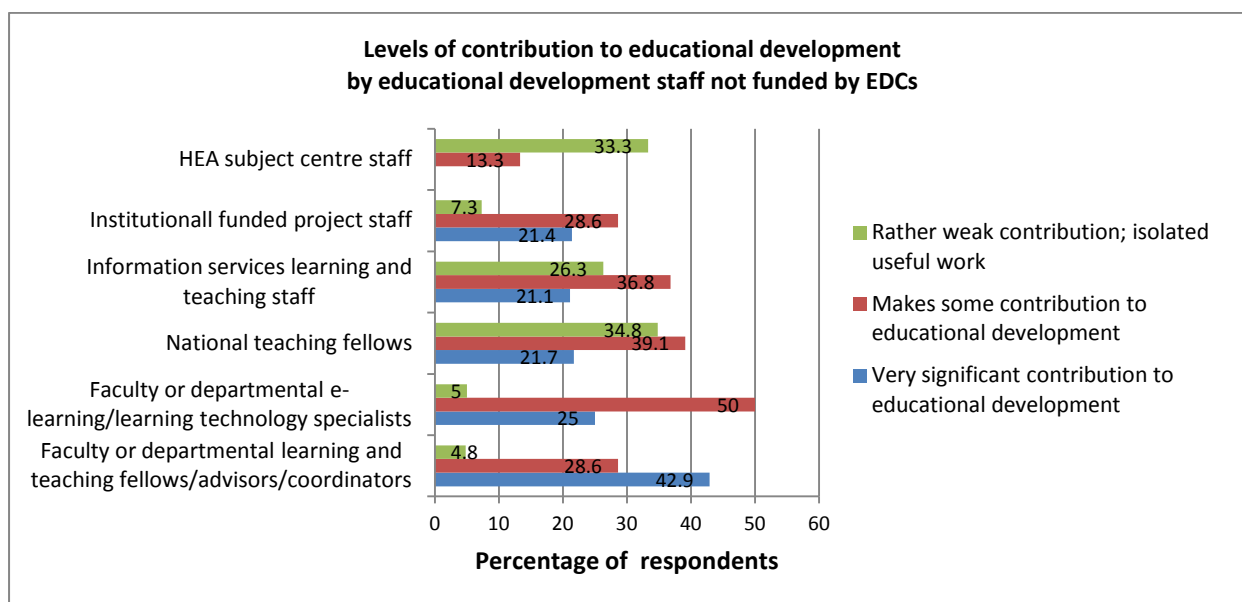


Fig.20: Levels of contribution to educational development -
educational development staff not funded by EDCs



4.6 Communities of practice

The current survey results show that there is a strong and growing institutional network of educational development activities across different faculties and disciplines, with good communication and collaboration between faculty educational development staff and EDC staff. The current HEDG survey shows that as educational development staff, not directly funded by EDCs, faculty and departmental learning and teaching fellows collaborate most often with EDCs, and make the strongest impact on educational development within their institution. The importance of these institutional educational development networks and 'communities of practice' are also highlighted by previous internationally and UK focused studies (Deane Sorcinelli and Austin, 2010; Holt, Palmer and Di Challis, 2011). As described above in the section on e-learning, the current HEDG research interviewees also confirm that teaching and learning communities of practice are becoming stronger within their institutions, and are described as an effective means of involving academic staff in teaching and learning development.

5. Policies and strategies

In his 2006 report, Gosling discusses the dual nature of EDCs' roles in contributing to policies, which on one hand focus on learning and teaching development, and on the other hand relate to wider institutional matters. It stands to reason, as Gosling suggests, that EDCs should be responsible for Learning and Teaching, Assessment and E Learning strategies (Gosling, 2008). What emerges strongly from the current research is the very clear refocusing of many EDCs on the Learning and Teaching Strategy; and the vital need for EDCs to be seen to be effective in driving the strategy forward on the ground. The strategic focus is now on enhancing the student experience, raising the quality of teaching and learning and encouraging staff to engage in professional development. E-Learning is the second most frequently mentioned strategy for which EDCs are fully responsible, again reconfirming the importance of elearning as a priority for EDCs.

The current research shows that EDCs are also responsible for and contribute to a number of other central university policies and strategies. However, as the charts below demonstrate, the numbers of current survey respondents who say that their centres are responsible for, or contribute to, these other policies are small.

Fig.21: Policies for which EDCs are fully responsible

(Number of respondents = 39)

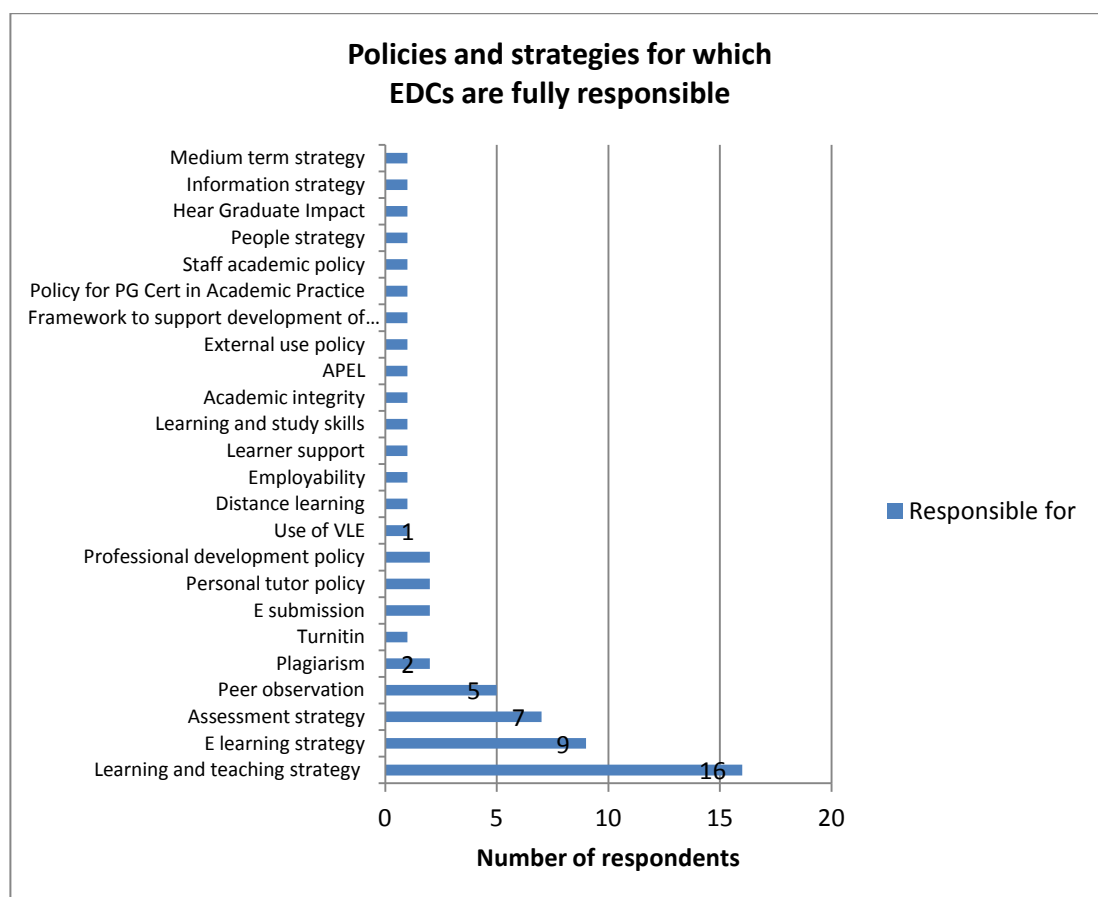
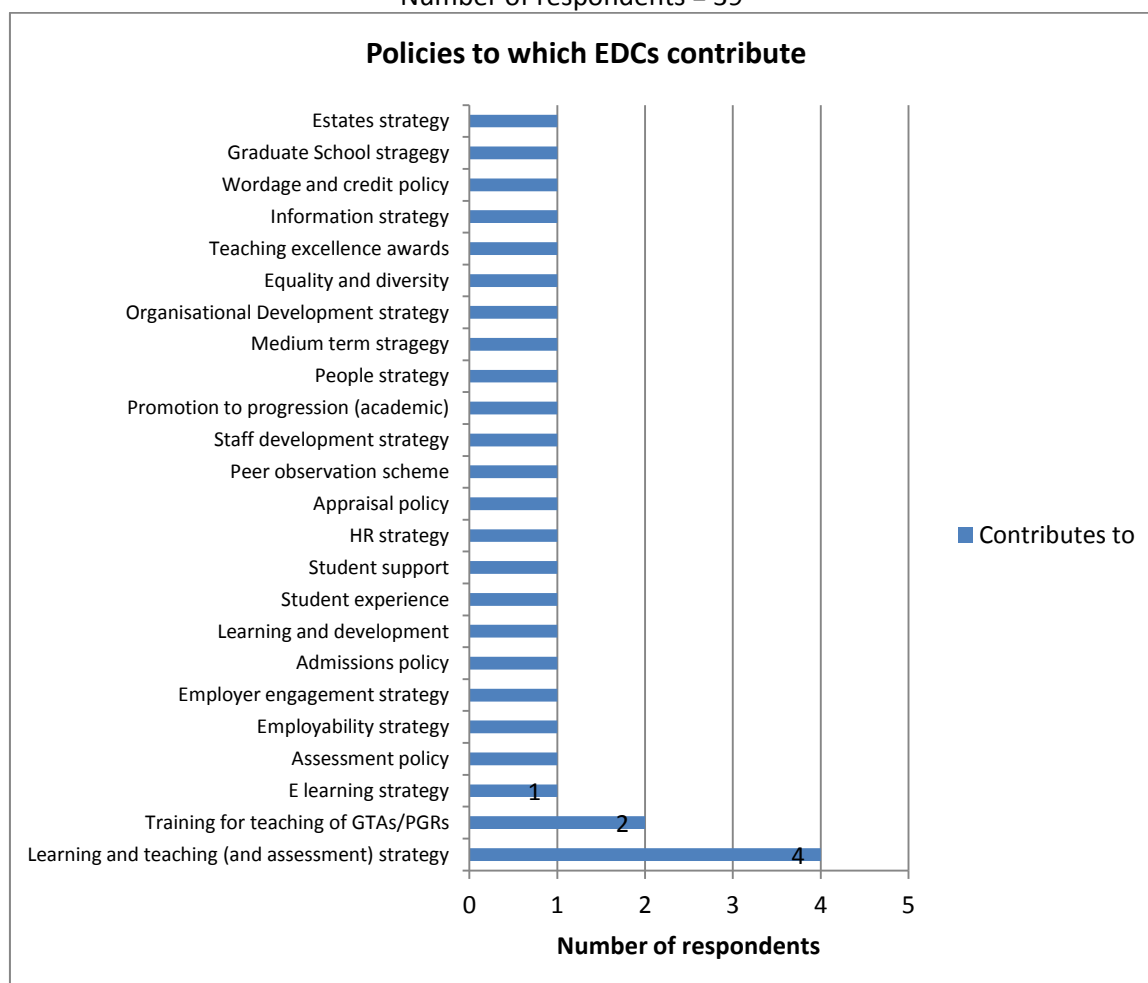


Fig.22: Policies to which EDCs contribute

Number of respondents = 39



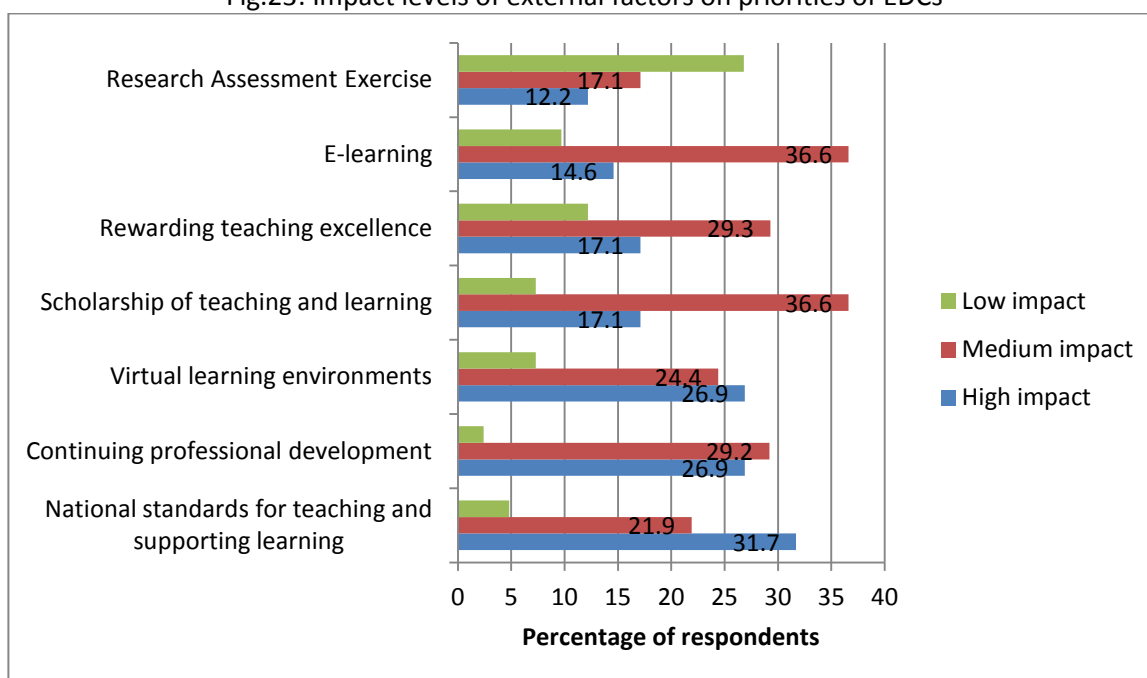
5.1 Factors which have greatest impact on strategic priorities for EDCs

Not surprisingly, factors which are shown to have the greatest impact on strategic directions of EDCs have changed considerably since 2006. The most influential factors in order of frequency of response currently are:

1. National standards for teaching and supporting learning (31.7%). In 2006 Scholarship of Teaching and Learning was shown to have the highest impact.
2. Continual professional development/ virtual learning environments (26.9%). In 2006 e-learning came second.
3. Scholarship of teaching and learning/rewarding teaching excellence (17.1%). In 2006 rewarding teaching excellence also came third.

E-Learning and the scholarship of teaching and learning are strongly shown to have a medium impact.

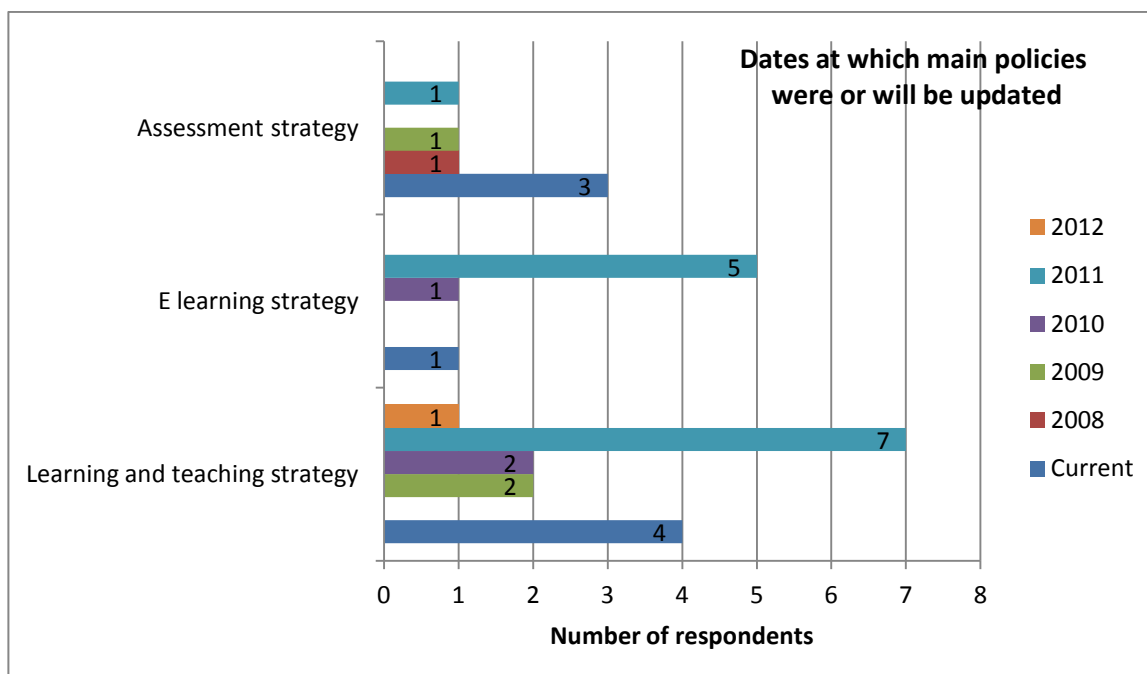
Fig.23: Impact levels of external factors on priorities of EDCs



5.2 Review of policies and strategies for which EDCs are responsible

Fig.24: Review of policies and strategies

(Number of respondents = 39)

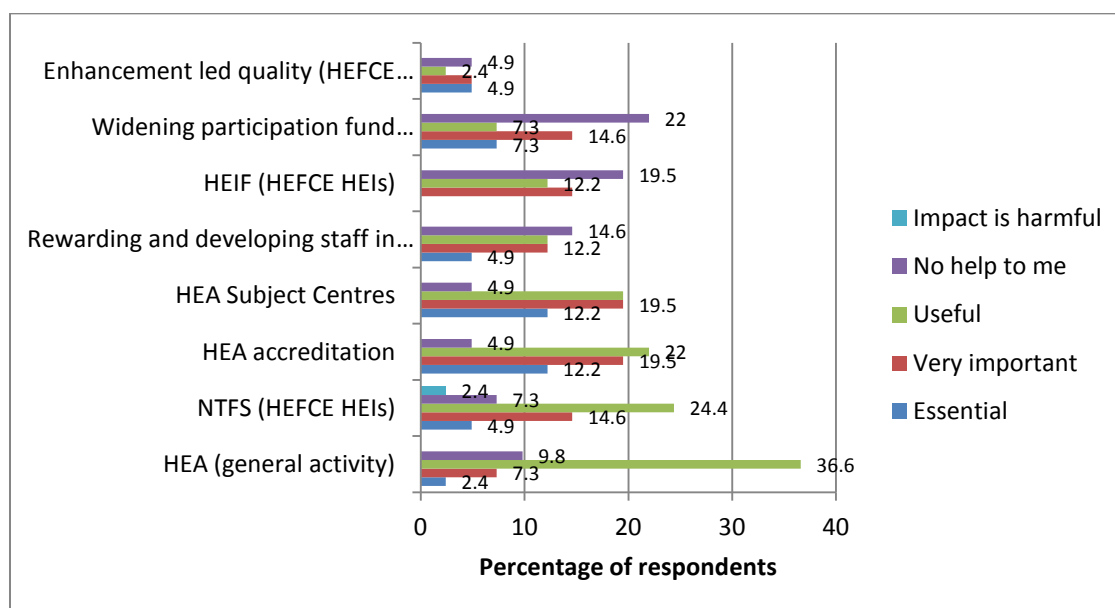


The Learning and Teaching Strategy and the E-Learning Strategies are most often mentioned by respondents as being updated either recently, or in the next 2 years, as can be seen in the chart above. Given that the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy and e-learning are the current major responsibilities for EDCs, it is not surprising that these strategies are often being updated.

6. The international economic climate and funding of EDCs

The current research and previous international studies show that the lack of funding and funding cuts in higher education are a worldwide issue. For instance, within the context of the current recession, many US universities are being restructured and there is growing consumer culture (Felten, 2011). Funding cuts are also an issue in Australian HE (Lane and Akerman, 2010; Chalmers, 2011), where restructuring of university departments, including Educational Development Centres, is widespread, causing a pervading sense of insecurity among Australian educational developments (Holt, Palmer and Challis, 2010; Chalmers, 2011). The current HEDG funded research demonstrates that this is also very much the case in UK Educational Development Centres. Educational Development Heads' insecurity regarding funding is a common theme in the research interviews, and is also demonstrated through the survey results below. In terms of the impact of funding initiatives on the work of EDCs recently, the funding initiative most frequently described as useful was HEA general activity (36.6% of respondents), followed by NTFS (24.4% of respondents). HEA Accreditation and HEA Subject Centres are the funding initiatives most frequently described by respondents as very important (19.5%), and essential (12.2%). These results are not surprising since many other external funding sources have now disappeared.

Fig.25: Impact of external funding initiatives on educational development



The current research shows that the funding situation of many EDCs has changed considerably since 2006. As Gosling indicates in the 2006 report, fewer institutions were receiving TQEF funding even in 2006 than previously, but some were still receiving considerable funding through CETLs, which have also now come to an end (Gosling, 2008). Moreover, there is far less external research and project funding available now due to the recent HE research and funding cutbacks. As the chart below demonstrates, on average, respondents agree that EDCs now receive approximately 75% of their funding directly from the core institutional funding, and are therefore mainly reliant on this. There is little difference between the averages for pre and post 1992 universities in this regard. The number

of EDCs which receive between 80% and 100% of funding from their institutions has risen from 16 in the 2006 report (Gosling, 2008), to 24 in the current research. The research interviews show that the reliance on central funding can be very positive if the senior managers are supportive of EDCs. Nevertheless, reliance on core funding puts some EDCs in a risky position if there was little core funding from the institution for EDCs in the first place, and EDCs were previously reliant on TQEF and CETL funding, as the following example demonstrates:

“I haven’t had any cuts to my core budget, which is tiny anyway. Historically we had an enormous amount of TQEF funding that’s stopped. I don’t know what I’m going to get next year.”

(Group Discussion, Participant 1)

Fig.26: Average percentage of funding from different sources – respondents from pre and post 1992 institutions

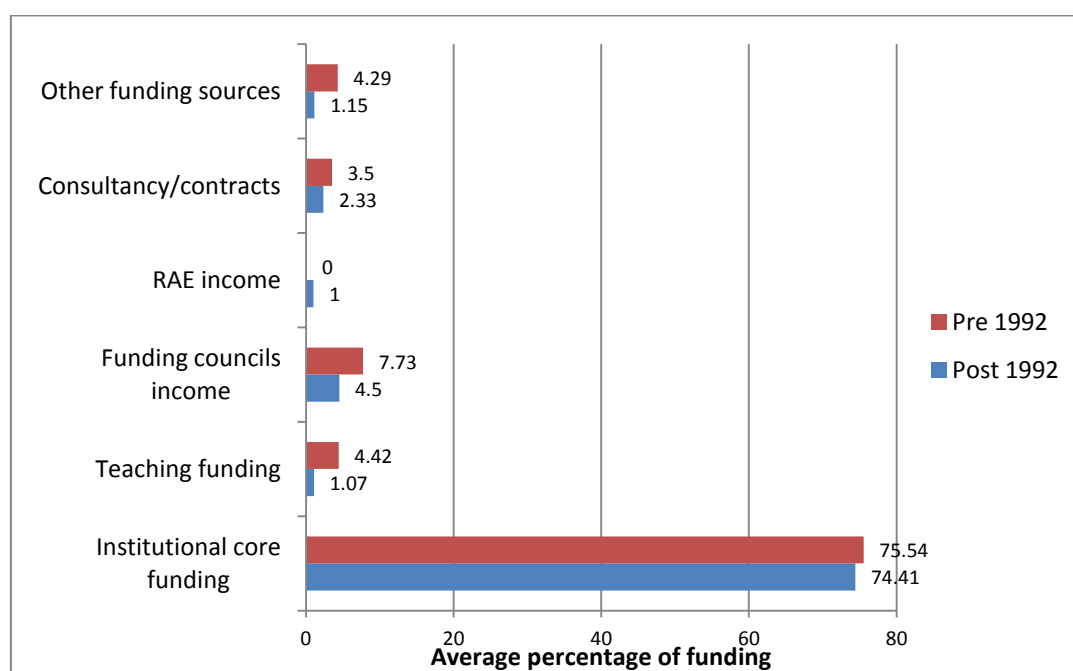
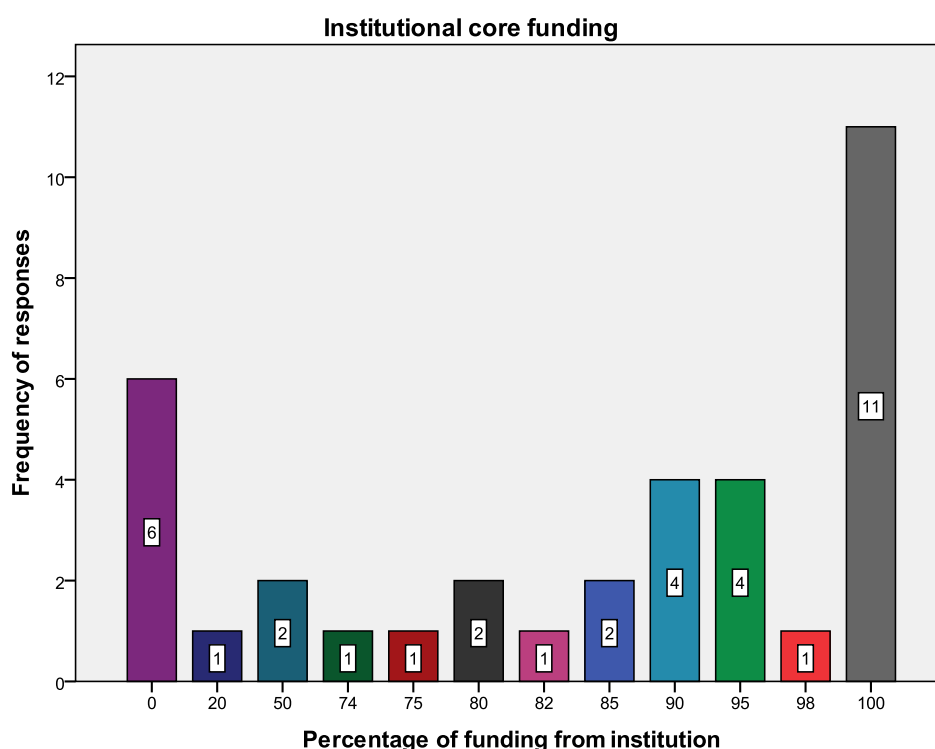


Fig.27: Percentage of institutional core funding received by EDCs across the response set

(Number of respondents = 35)



In relation to funding security, in the previous 2006 survey, 16% of respondents felt very secure about their funding in 2006 (Gosling, 2008). In contrast, and understandably in the current financial climate, the 2011 survey data shows that no respondents are feeling very secure. However, 59.4% are feeling quite secure. In the 2006 survey (Gosling, 2008) no respondents were feeling insecure about funding. However, in the current survey, 31.3% of respondents are feeling quite insecure, and 9.4% are feeling very insecure. This suggests a significant rise in the general feelings of insecurity of Heads of Educational Development with regard to their funding. As indicated by the chart below, a slightly higher percentage of respondents from pre 1992 universities are feeling quite secure about funding, and a slightly higher percentage of post 1992 universities are feeling quite insecure. However, a considerably higher percentage of pre 1992 universities are feeling very insecure in this regard, 16.7%, compared to 5% of post 1992 universities. The feeling of unease with regard to funding security is compounded by some research interviews, in which, participants describe how EDCs have been severely affected by funding cuts.

“We’ve just come through our restructuring. We’ve shrunk and have lost about 25% of staff. Some people took voluntary severance when it was offered.”

(Group Discussion Participant 7)

“I’ve only been there for 2 years. The first year I had a 40% cut in my budget. The second year 27%, so I don’t know what next year will bring.”

(Interview 4, Post 1992)

Despite this, however, some other interview participants describe how their EDCs are finding new ways of acquiring funding, which are necessary in order for EDCs to survive.

“At the moment I’m trying to look into alternative funding sources. For example, we’ve got a lot of *overseas* lecturers coming over, who are doing PhDs but who want a teacher training qualification, so we’ve done a deal with the head of xxx that when they come we’re going to offer this programme, but obviously in exchange for a certain amount of funding.”

(Interview 1, Post 1992)

In contrast, some participants describe that they have been lucky in the support provided by the Vice-Chancellor, which is significant in permitting their funding to remain intact, and in some unusual cases for them to grow as a unit.

“Where does the money come from you ask, all centrally – so we’re well funded as a service department. In the last 2 years I’ve had an extra xxxx....and I’ve used that to do a couple of research projects on what constitutes excellent teaching.”

(Interview 3, Post 1992)

“The VC is very keen. I think we’re unusual in that we’re actually growing, whereas some universities seem to be contracting, or even disbanding EDCs. The VC sees that there is a need to develop learning and teaching, so at the moment we’re in quite a fortunate position.”

(Interview 2, Post 1992)

Fig.28: Levels of funding security by percentage of respondents

Number of respondents = 32

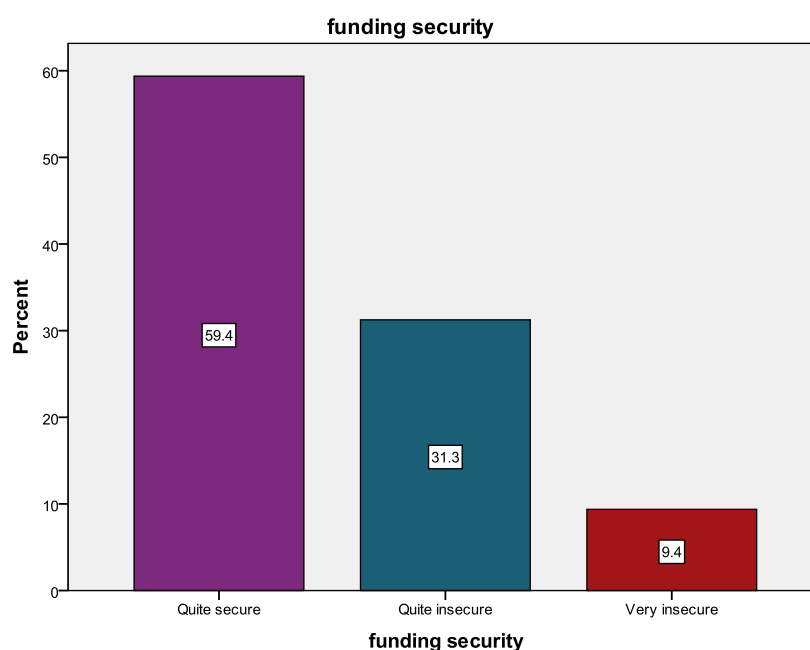
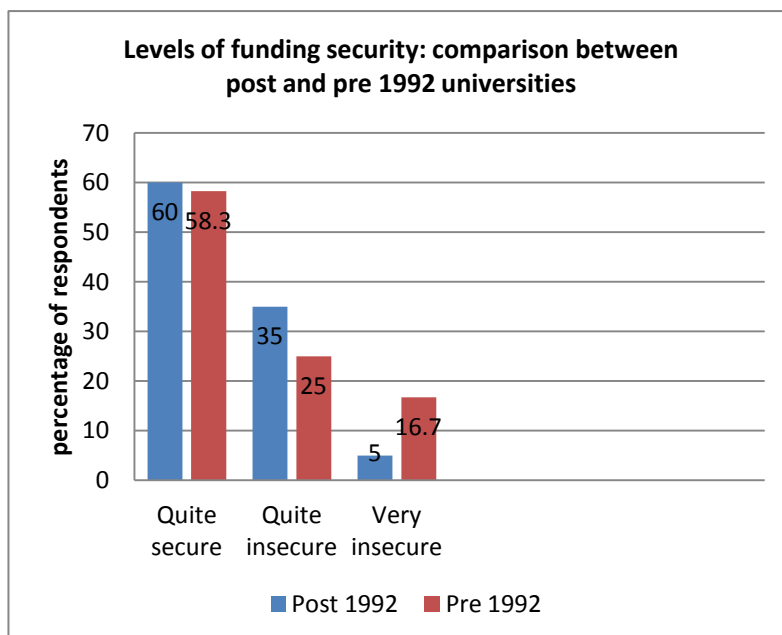


Fig. 29: Levels of funding security by percentages of respondents in pre and post 1992 institutions



Section C

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current situation for EDCs is volatile, changing, and exciting. It is filled on the one hand with troublesome unease about the future, under the new funding regimes in HE. On the other hand, there is the potential for higher expectations, and greater recognition of EDCs and their work, given the current funding changes, and recent developments focusing on student engagement. Funding restrictions for educational development have limited the recent growth of EDCs across the UK HE sector, which remains at a slow pace, and led to this mix of precariousness and possibility. Since 2010, many UK EDCs have been restructured or reformed. The latter may be related to institutional cost cutting exercises, and also the changing priorities of universities where teaching and learning development has become a key mission across the institution. More EDCs are becoming a core service within a larger university department, especially in pre 1992 universities. This is not always a positive step for EDCs and educational development staff, where their identities and effectiveness in role are threatened. Since EDCs can no longer rely on external funding (TQEF, CETLs, research funding); some EDCs are finding new ways of acquiring funding, such as providing staff development courses for international staff. A greater number of EDCs are now reliant on central core funding than in 2006. This is only positive when EDCs are supported by senior managers in terms of the funding they receive and the role they play in leading educational development and the professional development of staff within their institutions. According to the survey results, this leadership role may be more likely to apply to Heads of Educational Development and EDCs in post 1992 universities. With regard to performing their roles as educational developers effectively within their institutions, some respondents do not feel confident of the support of their senior managers; and describe uncertainty about their future funding and role. The survey shows that more respondents from pre 1992 universities are feeling very insecure about funding in comparison to respondents in post 1992 universities.

Many Heads of Educational Development are maintaining a high status within their institution, which is also an international trend. Some senior managers now realise that educational development staff are in the 'hot-seat', as universities focus primarily on the quality of teaching, and the professional development of staff as a mainstream activity. Some (but not all) senior managers are very supportive of EDCs in this context. The research suggests that EDCs in post 1992 universities may be more supported in this context.

The fact that 'development' is a word now often used in the titles of many EDCs is appropriate; since the main focus of EDCs now is on teaching staff professional development. The survey shows that the most significant full responsibilities of EDCs are the initial professional development of staff, followed by professional development of staff in relation to learning and teaching. The most significant shared responsibilities are raising the overall quality of teaching and learning and driving forward the learning and teaching strategy.

The current research indicates that e-Learning and development of the VLE are both a strong focus of educational development in UK HE institutions. This responsibility is usually shared across the institution, or is a remit to which EDCs contribute. Universities are often perceived by interview participants to be pushing forward e-learning initiatives relating to e-submission, online assessment, online marking and online feedback. A great deal of support is needed from e-learning specialists in this context, and this is assisted by strong e-learning development communities of practice, which are described as forming and growing in universities currently. E-Learning is described by interview participants as a tool with which to engage academic staff in professional teaching and learning development.

The survey results indicate that Faculty or Departmental learning and teaching fellows are seen to contribute most strongly to educational development (as staff not funded by EDCs). As with e-learning development, departmental or faculty learning and teaching fellows are also often described as forming strong communities of practice across universities. Heads of Educational Development, who responded to the survey, agree that they have the greatest level of collaboration with faculty/departmental fellows as educational development staff who are not funded by EDCs.

Some interview participants describe the increasing focus of their centres on playing a student facing role, and offering greater learning development support.

Externally focused pedagogic research is now seen as less of a priority in terms of the remits of EDCs than it was 5 years ago. This decreasing focus on, particularly external, pedagogic research is a matter of concern to some educational developers, who believe that the development of teaching should always be research informed (Blackmore and Blackwell, 2006; Blackmore et al., 2010). There are now very few pedagogic research staff within EDCs, due to the fact that many were on fixed term contracts and their funding was reliant on TQEF and CETLs that have now ended. It is suggested by this research that the current loss of research funding and staff creates an additional pressure for educational developers, who have little time to conduct their own pedagogic research. However some EDCs retain or have developed this function and some recent examples indicate that universities are turning to their EDC to produce interpretations of the NSS, for example.

59.1% of respondents perceive the institutional environment to be more favourable to educational development and its goals now than 5 years ago. 18.2% consider it less favourable. In this regard, a greater number of respondents from post 1992, than from pre 1992 universities, consider the institutional environment more favourable. With the recent White Paper's focus on the quality of teaching, and professional development of teaching staff, some senior managers are fully supporting EDCs in driving forward the Learning and Teaching Strategy and engaging in staff professional development. This may be particularly the case for Heads of Educational Development and EDCs in post 1992 universities.

In contrast, funding cuts and changes in government policy are also leading to financial cutbacks, redundancies, and restructuring of university departments including EDCs, disrupting their work and resulting in uncertainty over their roles and purpose. In addition, some interview participants often refer to their need to fight and struggle against several challenging trends in universities including: changing their location to a department where they will lose their identity and effectiveness; changing their role from that of enabling and supporting staff to develop their teaching, to that of evaluating lecturers' performance as teachers; fears that students may acquire too many rights and

become consumers of education rather than learners; and also the difficulty in engaging staff in professional development when they do not have sufficient time available.

The recession means that financial cutbacks have affected HE internationally. 56% of survey respondents consider the current higher education environment to be more favourable to educational development now than 5 years ago, and 24% consider it less favourable. Lack of external funding is one major problem for educational development in this regard. In addition, as a result of the White Paper, HE institutions are likely to become increasingly competitive and businesslike in order to survive. However, this research shows that educational developers and Educational Development Centres are now faced with their greatest opportunity yet, to lead the core mission of higher education to focus on the quality of teaching, enhance the student experience and fully support the professional development of teaching staff.

Recommendations

In times of such great upheaval, EDCs and their staff may need to undergo some unsettling, but exciting, changes in their strategies and focus, in order to survive and be successful in the context of contemporary higher education. Below are the elements of good practice that enable EDCs to thrive under extraordinary pressure and in a volatile HE environment, which have been identified by this research.

1. Maintain the support of and good working relationships with senior managers
2. Align the strategies of EDCs with institutional (and national) strategies
3. Update the Learning and Teaching Strategy to focus on quality, learner engagement and the professional development of staff
3. Drive forward the Learning and Teaching Strategy
4. Fully engage in and encourage the professional development of teaching staff
5. Promote e-learning development initiatives as a means of fostering strong e-learning communities of practice, and engage staff in professional development
6. Foster and strengthen learning and teaching communities of practice, and links with Faculty learning and teaching advisors/fellows
7. Provide student facing learning development activities and support for the student engagement themes and concerns
8. Fight to maintain the location and identity of the centre
9. Find new and creative ways of acquiring additional funding
10. Be seen as effective by senior managers
 - a. in leading educational development across the institution
 - b. in maintaining a research profile

Limitations of this study and possibilities for further research

The interview and survey data from this research provide a comprehensive overview of the trends and changes in contemporary educational development in varied HE institutions across the UK higher education sector. The contribution to knowledge provided by this research enables Heads of Educational Development and educational developers to find new directions in their strategies and work in challenging times and circumstances. Because of the relatively small sample, survey results are not statistically representative with regard to differences between pre and post 1992 universities. However, the findings raise important questions, which may be the subject of further research and debate in the future, particularly with regard to the possible differences between EDCs in pre and post 1992 universities. In addition, further qualitative research may also be advantageous in exploring in greater depth ways in which struggling EDCs are weathering the storm, and surviving; and flourishing EDCs are continuing to succeed.

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