Developing the Social Work Academic Workforce:
Profiles from the United Kingdom and the United States of America

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Abstract:

In the UK and the USA, social work academics must balance the requirements of research excellence against the time, expertise, and focus needed to ensure students are ready to practice safely and effectively with clients and community members service users and carers. However, there is variation to the extent to which academics have experience in both research and practice. This chapter presents baseline information needed to fully appreciate the nature of the problem by describing academics' demographic characteristics, practice qualifications and experience, and research skills and activity, and concludes with a discussion of the key issues in terms of developing the future social work academic workforce.

Introduction

Social work is regarded within universities as an "applied discipline" unlike "pure" disciplines, such as sociology or social policy. A key difference implied by this "applied" nature is that the academic staff are required to conduct research and produce new knowledge for the discipline and profession alongside their role as educators, preparing the next generation of practitioners for the challenges of the workplace. Whereas academics in non-applied disciplines may require methodological competence, disciplinary knowledge, and pedagogical skills to undertake research and teaching adequately, social work academics will need additionally to be able to embody and demonstrate the values, personal qualities, and technical skills of professional social work. An appropriately qualified and skilled academic workforce would, then, ideally employ academics who bring experience or skill in social work practice, pedagogical experience or expertise, and a demonstrable potential for high quality research (usually evidenced through a PhD or doctoral degree [referred to throughout

this chapter as "doctorate"] and/or research experience and high quality publications). However, there has been, and remains, a difficulty both within the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA) in recruiting individuals with expertise in these three capabilities.

In beginning to explore these difficulties it was immediately apparent to us that much discussion of this issue relied on anecdote. There was a limited body of knowledge in relation to the profiles and career journeys of the individuals who teach social work students and those who conduct research in the discipline. In recognising that the three of us had entered academia at different career points, each with a social work qualification and practice experience (including direct social work practice, field instruction, and supervision and management) and only two of us initially holding a doctorate, we hypothesised that much might be learned from examining the career trajectories of other academics and identifying facilitators and barriers to being skilled and qualified in both research and practice.

This chapter begins by setting out briefly the context of social work academics' role in social work education in both the UK and the USA and then presenting a profile of the social work academic workforce in both countries based on survey data. The data presented will describe the UK and USA academics' demographic characteristics, practice qualifications and experience, and research skills and activity, as well as highlight similarities and differences between the two groups. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the key issues and challenges in developing the future social work academic workforce.

Social Work Academics: Practitioners or Researchers?

UK Context

In order for individuals to become a qualified social worker, they need to have successfully undertaken an approved social work programme, which entitles them to register with a regulatory body[1]. As there are four countries in the UK, these have separate regulatory

bodies (the Health and Care Professions Council in England; Scottish Social Services Council; Northern Ireland Social Care Council; Care Council for Wales). However, there are no specifications from regulatory bodies regarding knowledge, skills, or qualifications required by university staff responsible for the education of social workers, although the practice educator/field instructor responsible for assessing the student's practice in the placement must be a qualified social worker. Additionally, universities often do not require new academics to have demonstrable pedagogical experience or qualifications, as new appointees are generally required to take some form of postgraduate certificate in higher education, accredited by the Higher Education Academy (https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/services/accreditation). Given this, the ideal academic appointee would bring both social work practice expertise (including experience, knowledge, and skills) and knowledge and experience in research. However, there has been, and remains, a difficulty in recruiting individuals with experience in both practice and research.

Some universities, when faced with this dilemma of a lack of staff with both practice and research knowledge and experience, appear to have chosen to re-balance the priorities in one or other direction. (No formal research appears to have been done on this matter, so our perception is necessarily partial and anecdotal). In the group of universities known as "post-92"[2] (Scott, 2012), which are funded primarily on the basis of teaching, and which consequently have less insistent drivers for appointing researchers over practitioners, there appears to be a tendency to appoint individuals with practice qualifications, substantial field experience, and registration (or eligibility for registration) with a social work regulator. Indeed, we continue to notice that person specifications for most new posts continue to require a qualification in social work as an essential criterion but cite a doctorate, research experience, and publications as desirable. This is very different from non-applied disciplines,

and other health science disciplines, such as nursing and occupational therapy (OT), where academics enter or are recruited at post-doctoral level (Mills, et al., 2006).

Whilst student learning is benefited by university tutors/advisors who understand contemporary practice issues and contexts, can deploy practice skills, and embody professional values, traditionally social work academics have lacked a doctorate or research experience at the time of appointment and perhaps beyond. This requirement for practice credibility is a key factor which Sharland (2009) linked to the "dilution" of research expertise, with limitations in the quality and complexity of research undertaken, and a lack of capacity within the discipline to draw on the wide range of methodologies appropriate to address complex social, psychological, emotional, and familial problems. This lack of researcher capacity reinforces itself cyclically: educators lacking their own research training are ill-equipped not only to undertake their own research, but to teach research methods, critically appraise the research literature and integrate relevant findings in their teaching, supervise social work students' research dissertations or mentor new staff. This then "limit[s] the possibility of building up a critical mass of research students as future researchers within the discipline" (Orme and Powell, 2008, p. 994), as well as social work practitioners who use empirically derived work to inform their practice.

An alternative strategy to resolve the dilemma has been the appointment of early career academics who have a doctorate and publications but who lack a social work qualification. The group of universities known as "pre -92" or "research-intensive," who traditionally have had a higher percentage of their budgets coming from research funding, appear more likely to appoint early career academics who lack a social work qualification but who hold a doctorate and/or research experience, in preference to a qualified and experienced practitioner or manager, if there is no applicant with both skill sets. The driver here is the importance of ensuring high quality academic outputs which, when judged at periodic UK

"research excellence" audits, determine government research funding for the next six or seven year cycle (e.g. 2014 Research Excellence Framework [REF, www.ref.ac.uk] and the preceding 2008 and 2001 Research Assessment Exercises 1986; 1989; 1992; 1996; 2001 [RAE, www.rae.ac.uk]). This often leads to the appointment of "research active" staff who might lack practice experience, but who can advance the research agenda of the university, and the appointment of "teaching focused" staff (holding a title of "teaching fellow") who have practice experience and can focus on teaching with no requirements for research. Such practice appears to be leading to a dual workforce: those who are researchers and those who are educators.

However, evidence of the impact of this more "research-focused" approach has begun to accrue. The Social Work Task Force (SWTF) gathered opinions from both employers and students that social work academics could be "out of touch" when it came to current practice concerns (SWTF, 2009). There appears to be little or no encouragement or incentive for social work academics to regularly update practice experience, as there is in other professions such as nursing, clinical psychology, or medicine. However, this may be changing as in England the Government is funding early adopter pilot partnerships between local authorities and academic providers. Part of the funding includes replacement staff for academics to update their practice skills and will be evaluated to ensure that universities can demonstrate that 10% of academic staff are provided with protected time in practice (DfE and DoH, 2015).

In summary, within the UK, the social work academic workforce has historically been recruited in terms of practice experience rather than research expertise. As important as it is for educators to be in touch with contemporary practice, this historical prioritisation of a social work qualification and practice experience has resulted in insufficient research capacity or capability. Conversely, the more recent drive towards research-intensiveness

appears to be at the cost of practice-nearness by academics (White, et al., 2009). Dichotomised responses to the difficult question of how best to build a social work academic workforce remains problematic.

USA Context

In terms of the social work academic workforce, the USA has experienced a different dilemma for newly appointed social work academics as high quality researchers rather than practitioners are valued, with this varying depending on the type of educational institution (e.g. teaching-intensive versus research-intensive universities). Teaching-intensive and research-intensive universities can be either: public universities, which receive funding from state legislatures; private, non-sectarian; or private, religiously affiliated. The extent to which a university is considered teaching-intensive versus research-intensive is based on *The Carnegie Classification*[3] (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2011) with the largest factor being the number of doctorates granted per year and the amount of external funding received.

There is a growing interest in the research capacity of social work academics and how to build a solid infrastructure which supports high quality research (McRoy, Flanzer and Zlotnick, 2012). Whereas research by social work academics in the USA is not assessed via a "research excellence" audit as in the UK, nor is government funding to public universities tied to the outcome of any assessments of research, there is an "unofficial" assessment of the quality of research via Hirsch's *h*-index, which is "one of many metrics used to evaluate the effect of a researcher's contribution to the knowledge base of his or her respective discipline" (Barner, et al., 2015, p. 6). In particular, the *h*-index has been used to compare the "quality" of research produced by social work academics compared to other disciplines, such as psychology (Barner, et al., 2015).

Despite the push to build research capacity and productivity within the social work discipline, academics in the USA are also "generally" required to have some practice experience. Based on a study examining academic positions advertised during 2006, Anastas (2010, pp. 202-3) listed the following four qualifications as critical in gaining a position in academia: (1) having a Masters of Social Work (MSW) degree and post-MSW practice experience; (2) having some teaching experience and having published in the field; (3) having a well-defined area of expertise that fits with what the hiring institution focuses on in teaching and research; and (4) having some expertise in diversity, cultural competence or anti-oppressive practice.

This specification of practice experience is a result of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) set by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) – the accrediting body of social work programmes in the USA – that social work academics hold an MSW from a CSWE-accredited program and at least two years post-MSW practice experience in order to teach "practice-based" classes (CSWE, 2015). In some states, such as New York, the requirement to teach practice-based classes is even more stringent: only those academics holding a LMSW[4] (Licensed Master Social Worker) are able to teach practice-based classes to undergraduates; whilst only those with a LCSW[5] (Licensed Clinical Social Worker) are able to teach practice-based classes to MSW students. Although holding an undergraduate degree in social work or an MSW classifies someone to be "qualified" as a social worker, many states require licensure in order to practice, and, thus, in order to teach practice-based classes.

Although USA universities specify the desire to appoint academics who have both practice (post MSW) and research experience, there has been growing concern that individuals increasingly have little or no practice experience prior to beginning their doctorate. This appears to be due, at least in part, to an increasing number of PhD programs

not requiring an MSW for entry (Anastas, 2012); such students may (although most likely do not) have a social work undergraduate degree, but they do not have the two years "post-MSW" practice experience. The result appears to be applicants for social work academic posts who hold research expertise but lack the practice experience necessary to teach practice classes competently (Anastas, 2012). Many social work programmes are then left with a divide where social work academics undertake research and social workers from the community teach practice-based classes on an adjunct (i.e. short-term contract) basis.

The Current Study

As illustrated in both the UK and USA contexts, there is an aspiration for social work academics to combine capability and experience in both research and practice (Mills, et al., 2006). This is a tall order. Like those in other applied disciplines such as nursing, social work academics must align competing demands, balancing the requirements of research excellence against the time, expertise, and focus needed to ensure students are ready to practice safely and effectively with clients and community members in challenging contexts. As yet, this tension has been insufficiently researched, with many perceptions being partial and anecdotal. Social work in the UK and USA has lacked the baseline information needed to fully appreciate the nature of the problem. This chapter provides a profile of social work academics in the UK and USA in relation to their: demographic characteristics; practice qualifications and experience; and research skills and activity. Fuller explorations in relation to the UK study are provided in Teater, Lefevre and McLaughlin (under review), McLaughlin, Teater and Lefevre (under review) and Lefevre, Teater and McLaughlin (forthcoming).

Methods

The data for the USA and UK studies were collected at two different points in time. The UK study was conducted in 2014 and aimed to provide a snapshot of the social work

academic workforce in terms of demographics, practice experience, and research activity and experience. After the completion of the UK study, the authors initiated the USA study of providing a snapshot of the social work academic workforce in the USA. Although the two parallel studies do not constitute one "comparative" study, one intention of the USA study was to explore similarities, differences, and trends between the UK and the USA. We acknowledge the limitations to any parallels being made as the UK and USA constitute very different contexts and there are also differences within the UK and the USA.

The questionnaire was originally devised for an UK audience and was subsequently revised for an USA audience; many of the same questions were used, yet adjusted for country differences, and other questions were added based on the USA-specific context. The methods for each involved a cross-sectional online survey consisting mainly of closed-ended questions, yet with some opportunities for participants to provide qualitative comments. The UK-based questionnaire consisted of 55 questions and the USA-based questionnaire consisted of 58 questions that covered: the characteristics of the social work academics; their academic roles and aspirations; their perceptions of social work and social work education; their past and present experience of practising social work; and their current research activity. Eleven respondents to the UK survey who volunteered were also interviewed individually to provide fuller accounts of their career journeys, aspirations and factors influencing research activity and practice-nearness, but are not discussed at length in this chapter (see Teater, et al., (under review), McLaughlin, et al., (under review) and Lefevre, et al., (forthcoming).

In the UK, the authors distributed a link electronically to social work academics through the Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee (JUC SWEC) and 'Ning'[6] listservs as well as through social media (e.g. Twitter). The online survey was open from May – September of 2014 and yielded a sample of 200 social work academics. In the USA, the authors distributed the link electronically to social work academics through the

Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD) listserv, individual emails to all program directors of bachelor and masters social work programs accredited by CSWE, and through social media (e.g. Twitter and Facebook). The online survey was open from May – June of 2015 and yielded a sample of 501 social work academics.

Ethical approval was granted by Manchester Metropolitan University for the UK study, and by the College of Staten Island, City University of New York for the USA study. The purpose of the study was set out in group and individual emails as well as at the beginning of the online questionnaire. Potential respondents were informed that completion of the questionnaire was voluntary and confidential; completion of the online questionnaire served as consent for participation in the study.

Quantitative data were analysed in SPSS using descriptive statistics where percentages, basic frequencies, and/or measures of central tendency were calculated for all variables. Bivariate analysis (e.g. *t*-test) was used to determine any statistically significant differences between variables.

Demographic Characteristics

As Table 1 illustrates, the demographic characteristics of the UK and USA samples are relatively similar in terms of age, sex, ethnicity, and years employed in academia. The mean age for both the UK and USA sample is around 50 years with the UK participants ranging in age from 32 to over 70 years, and the USA participants ranging in age from 28 to over 70 years. The majority of participants in both samples are female, with a higher percentage of female social work academics in the USA (75.5%) versus the UK (62.8%). The majority of both samples identified their ethnicity as White (91.2% for UK; 84.6% for USA), yet there is greater diversity in terms of race/ethnicity reported in the USA sample compared to the UK. Finally for both samples, the range of years employed in academia ranged from 0 to over 40 years with a mean of 11.0 years for the UK sample and 13.2 for the USA sample.

The majority of the UK participants reported being employed by post-1992 universities (64.0%). The USA participants were predominately from public universities (68.9%), followed by private, religiously affiliated (20.9%), and private, non-sectarian (10.2%).

The role titles of the academic posts, which participants were in, are set out in Table 1. These reflect the stepped progressions in terms of role titles that vary not just across country but across type of institution. In UK pre-1992 universities (or research-intensive universities), the career structure is usually (although there may be variations dependent on the university) lecturer grade A → lecturer grade B → senior lecturer → reader → professor, whereas in post-1992 Universities it is often lecturer → senior lecturer → principal lecturer/associate professor → reader →professor. Across all universities within the USA the "traditional" entry route into academia, for staff whose appointment involves teaching and research, is assistant professor → associate professor → professor. Titles for UK staff whose primary responsibility is teaching are: teaching fellow → senior teaching fellow → professorial teaching fellow (in some universities). In the USA such titles include clinical appointment, lecturer, instructor, and adjunct.

For both UK and USA participants, the majority reported being in either early to mid-career with 44.5% of the UK sample as senior lecturer, and 23.5% as lecturer, and 32.1% of the USA sample as assistant professor, and 31.3% as associate professor. In the USA, 19.6% of participants held the highest title of full professor and 11.0% of the UK participants held the highest title of professor.

In terms of education, the USA participants reported a higher percentage of doctorates (75.4%) compared to the UK participants (34.4%). The UK participants were more likely to hold a masters degree/MPhil (53%) as their highest qualification. No participant in the USA sample reported an undergraduate degree as their highest level of education, compared to

2.5% of the UK sample. Of those participants who did not have a doctorate, around one-third of each sample reported they were currently working towards one. Table 1 reports the full results of the demographic characteristics.

-----Table 1-----

Practice Qualifications and Experience

Table 2 reports the practice qualifications and practice experience for both the UK and USA participants. Almost all of both samples were social work qualified (95.4% UK, 97% USA) with all of the USA participants being qualified at Masters level (MSW). Of the UK participants who held a social work qualification, 84.3% were registered with a regulatory body; registration enables individuals to practice social work and assess practice through field instruction, but is not necessary to teach social work. Sixty-one per cent of the USA sample held a social work licence while 31% did not; a license enables individuals to practice social work, and is only required for teaching practice-based classes in some states.

-----Table 2-----

Our study found that individuals entered academia with wide variations in practice experience and length of time since practice. Figure 1 indicates that UK participants had undertaken between 1-36 years in practice, with a mean of 13.9 years; in the USA this was 0-42 years, with a mean of 11.4 years. The UK sample had, on average, longer in practice (76.5% between 6-20 years compared to 61.1% with the USA sample). Over 3% of the USA sample reported having no years in practice at all.

-----Figure 1-----

The range of years since UK and USA participants had practised was similar, for the UK sample (range of 0-34 years; mean of 9.5 years) and USA sample (0-38 years, mean of 9.5) – see Figure 2. Fewer of the UK participants, however (29.8%), had practised within the past five years (43.2% of the USA sample). More of the USA sample (19.9%), were still in

practice (UK 6.7%), with over 37% of the UK sample having not practised for 11 years or more compared with 32.6% of the USA sample. Of those respondents who continued to practise, more of the UK sample (69.6%) compared to the USA sample (58.4%) responded "yes" to the question: If you continue to work directly with service users and carers, is this valued by your employing university?

-----Figure 2-----

Research Activity

Three-quarters of both samples **(**73% UK, 74% USA) responded yes to the question: Are you research active?[7]. It is important to remember that the remaining 26-27% included those holding positions that generally do not require research activity (e.g. teaching fellow; instructor).

The primary research methodology used by participants varied. The majority of the UK sample used qualitative methods (57.9%), whilst this was the third primary research methodology among the USA sample (23.9%) who preferred mixed methods (44.7%) and quantitative methods (26.8%). Whilst 36.7% of UK participants used mixed methods, for only 2.8% was quantitative methods the primary methodology, indicating a substantial gap and potential difference in mixed methods with the UK favouring quantitative approaches to support their qualitative work and vice versa in the USA.

To determine the amount of time that academics are expected, and are actually able, to participate in research activities, participants were asked to indicate both the importance that their university placed on the typical three aspects of a social work academics' employment – research, teaching, and administration/service – and the actual time they spent on each. Academics are generally evaluated in these three areas for promotion and probation/when obtaining tenure[8]. Often, employing universities specify the percentage of time that academics should spend on each area through either their employment contract or through

workload calculators. This might be specified in terms of number of classes to be taught within a year and/or number of peer-reviewed journal articles published within a specified timeframe (e.g. the UK REF period of around 6-7 years, or USA "tenure clock", which is usually 7 years from appointment). As Table 3 indicates, for both the UK and USA sample, there was a difference in terms of the importance placed on research, teaching, and administration/service by universities and the actual amount of time academics spent on these three areas, with both samples reporting the largest percentage of their time was spent on teaching (UK 41.3%, USA 49.7%), followed by administration/service (UK 38.8%, USA 35%), and lastly by research (UK 20.3%, USA 20.1%).

-----Table 3-----

A series of paired-sample *t*-tests were utilised in order to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the UK and USA participants' perceived expectations of the university in terms of amount of time spent on research, teaching, and administration and their reported actual time spent on the three. The results for the UK sample indicate that participants spent less time on research activities than is expected by their universities ($t(157)=6.15$, $p< .001$), less time on teaching than is expected by their universities ($t(163)=2.50$, $p=.01$), and more time on administration/service than is expected by their universities ($t(162)=-11.00$, $p< .001$). Likewise, the results of the USA sample indicate that participants spent less time on research activities than is expected by their universities ($t(374)=4.24$, $p<.001$), less time on teaching than was expected by their universities ($t(407)=4.57$, $p<.001$), and more time on administration/service than was expected by their universities ($t(404)= -9.08$, $p<.001$).

Limitations

This study should be considered against several limitations. Firstly, the number of social work academics across the UK and USA is not known so we are unable to provide an

accurate response rate or indication of how the demographics of the sample might have skewed the results; the extent to which the results would vary based on more responses is unknown. Secondly, as the study was exploratory in nature, the findings are descriptive rather than inferential, thus limiting the generalizability of the results. Thirdly, the authors constructed the questions on the questionnaire, which have not been subject to psychometric testing. Finally, as indicated in the methodology section, the UK and USA comprise different contexts and any similarities and differences between the UK and USA should be considered with caution. Despite these limitations, this study provides a snapshot of the current social work academic workforce in each country and provides an initial understanding of the characteristics, practice background, and research experience of academics involved in the teaching and assessment of social work students.

Discussion

Despite their differing practice contexts and requirements, there are similarities as well as differences in the social work academic recruitment and progression difficulties faced by UK and USA universities. As indicated in the context sections, there are signs that professional discourses in both countries set an aspiration for their academics to integrate expertise and experience in both research and practice, and both countries appear to have experienced difficulties in recruiting early career social work academics who bring expertise in both. There are, however, some differing facilitators and barriers experienced in each country for academics holding expertise in research and practice.

Most respondents in each country held social work qualifications, yet not all were registered/licensed. Proportionally, many more UK respondents were registered than those licensed in USA. Thirty-nine per cent of the USA participants did not hold a social work license, which could have implications in some states for teaching practice-based classes. The lack of a registration or license leads to further questions of whether social work academics

should be required to hold a registration or license to teach social work and, if so, how do they manage this requirement alongside the demands of research activity often required by many universities?

The UK workforce has historically been stronger in terms of practice experience versus research expertise, which is perhaps why it has so far not needed to follow the USA in introducing regulatory requirements, such as CSWE's EPAS requirement of two years post-MSW practice experience for those teaching practice-based classes. The lower USA proportion of those licensed could lead to an argument that the licence requirement doesn't make a difference. However, it is also possible that, without the requirement, even fewer USA academics might have obtained the licence. Future research should explore whether the lack of a license reflects a lack of commitment or interest on the part of the remaining 39% to teach practice skills and whether, as is noted at times in the UK, there is a perceived split between those who see themselves more as researchers and those who identify themselves more as a social work teacher.

In terms of practice experience prior to moving into academia, those in the UK, on average, had more prior practice experience but the variance from the mean was wide in both countries, with outliers at either end, and some in the USA with no practice experience at all. Practice experience is generally viewed in both countries as either essential, or at least desirable, when entering the academic workforce, but the extent to which social work academics remain abreast of current practice issues while in academia is worthy of further study.

Although the USA academics had on average fewer years of practice experience, the number of years since they had last practiced was less than those in the UK. Additionally, around one-fifth of USA academics still practice – more than in the UK – but a smaller percentage of those still practising in the USA viewed practice experience as being valued by

their university, compared with those in the UK. Perhaps a wider debate is also needed as whether all those responsible for the teaching and assessment of social work students should require a qualification, a certain level of practice experience, recent practice experience, and/or statutory registration/licence, for at least those parts of the curriculum specifically relating to social work practice.

Around three-quarters of each sample reported being research active, but both groups signalled that they were spending less time on research than expected by their universities. Both the UK and USA participants reporting spending the largest percentage of their time on teaching, followed by administration, and then research. The administrative duties may be indicative of a professional program – just as nursing, physical therapy, or education – which require extra time to support field placements, admissions, ensuring students are suitable for practice, and tutoring to develop students' "use of self". Such activities are not always recognised in contracts or workload calculators (see McLaughlin, et al., under review), and, thus, can take time away from research activities. This finding lends weight to Sharland's (2009) concern that, as important as it is for educators to be in touch with contemporary practice, this historical prioritisation of a social work qualification and practice experience has resulted in insufficient research capacity and expertise.

Another difference in the two samples was that USA respondents were markedly more likely to hold a doctorate than those in the UK. Most academic posts in the USA require a doctorate, which is likely to be influential in this regard, and the UK is moving in this direction. Around a third of each sample were working on a doctorate at the time of the survey with others planning one in the future. This is a longer-term way of upskilling the academic workforce, but there were substantial minorities among the whole samples of each group who had no plans for a doctorate.

Conclusion

Dichotomised responses to the difficult question of how best to build a social work academic workforce seem to be problematic, with potential to create a partially split workforce of educators who lack research expertise and researchers who are distant from the realities of practice. Indeed this was highlighted in the qualitative data from the UK study where respondents advised that teaching should be done by research-active staff and research by those who understand social work practice, if research and teaching are to be credible and practice relevant (Teater, et al., under review). Ways forward need to be found, such as supporting practitioners in undertaking doctorates whilst in practice, or in the first few years of an academic post, and ensuring that the teaching and administration workload related to social work programmes, relative to other "pure" disciplines does not hinder research activity.

The authors of this chapter have argued from the perspective that a social work academic is someone who has social work experience, is research active, and is able to bring both sets of skills to the classroom to prepare the next generation of social workers. However, all this begs the question as to whether social work academics in the UK and US, or for that matter the social workers they develop are "fit for purpose?" This larger question is beyond the scope of this chapter and is one that will depend on the vision the reader has of the social work task and social work academics' contribution to this task. This chapter provides some initial information about social work academics, their demographic characteristics, practice qualifications and experience, and research skills and activity to help inform the bigger debate.

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Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

	UK (*N*=200)			USA (*N*=501)	
Variable (*n*)	***M*(*SD*)**	**%(*f*)**	**Variable (*n*)**	***M*(*SD*)**	**%(*f*)**
Age (183)	51.3(7.9)		**Age** (402)	50.8(10.8)	
Sex			**Sex**		
Female		62.8%(121)	Female		75.5%(321)
Male		37.2%(71)	Male		24.2%(103)
			Intersexed		0.2%(1)
Ethnicity			**Race/Ethnicity**		
White British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish		77.2%(149)	White (non-Hispanic)		84.6%(362)
White other		6.2%(12)	African American/Other Black		5.4%(23)
White Irish		5.2%(10)	Multiple Race/Ethnicity		3.8%(14)
White European		2.6%(5)	Other		1.6%(7)
Black-African		1.5%(3)	Asian American/Other Asian		1.4%(6)
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups – White and Asian		1.5%(3)	Puerto Rican		0.9%(4)
Other ethnic group		1.5%(3)	American Indian/Native American		0.7%(3)
Black-British		1.0%(2)	Chicano/Mexican American		0.7%(3)
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups – White and Black African		1.0%(2)	Other Latino/Hispanic		0.7%(3)
Prefer not to say		1.0%(2)	Unknown		0.7%(3)
Asian/Asian British-Indian		0.5%(1)			
Black-Caribbean		0.5%(1)			
Yrs employed in academia (190)	11.0(7.5)		**Yrs employed in academia** (466)	13.2(9.0)	
Employment			**Employment**		
Post-1992 university		64.0%(127)	Public		68.9%(343)
Pre-1992 university		36.0%(72)	Private, religiously affiliated		20.9%(104)
			Private, non-sectarian		10.2%(51)
Title of academic role			**Title of academic role**		

Professor	11.0%(22)	Full Professor	19.6%(98)
Associate Professor	1.5%(3)	Associate Professor	31.3%(157)
Reader	1.0%(2)	Assistant Professor	32.1%(161)
Senior Lecturer (Post and Pre-1992)	44.5%(89)	Clinical Appointment	1.6%(8)
Principal Lecturer (Post-1992)	7.5%(15)	Lecturer	3.4%(17)
Lecturer (Post and Pre-1992)	23.5%(47)	Instructor	3.8%(19)
Senior Teaching Fellow	1.5%(3)	Field Instructor	1.0%(5)
Teaching Fellow	2.0%(4)	Adjunct	2.6%(13)
Other	7.5%(15)	Emeritus	0.6%(3)
		Other	4.0%(20)
Highest level of education		**Highest level of education**	
PhD (traditional research route)	25.3%(50)	PhD (traditional research route)	69.7%(315)
DSW/Professional Doctorate/EdD	5.6%(11)	DSW/Professional Doctorate/EdD	4.4%(20)
PhD (by publication)	3.5%(7)	PhD (by publication)	1.3%(6)
Masters degree	50.5%(100)	Masters degree	19.3%(87)
MPhil	2.5%(5)	Undergraduate degree	0%(0)
Postgrad certificate	7.6%(15)	Other	5.3%(24)
Undergraduate degree	2.5%(5)		
Other	2.5%(5)		
Plans for a doctorate		**Plans for a doctorate**	
Yes, currently working towards	33.8%(45)	Yes, currently working towards	35.0%(36)
Yes, but not right now	36.8%(49)	Yes, but not right now	15.5%(16)
No	29.3%(39)	No	49.5%(51)

Table 2: Practice Qualifications and Experience

	UK (*N*=200)			USA (*N*=501)	
Variable (*n*)	***M*(*SD*)**	**%(*f*)**	**Variable (*n*)**	***M*(*SD*)**	**%(*f*)**
Qualified social worker			**Degree in social work**		
Yes		95.4%(185)	Yes, BA or BSW		0%(0)
No		4.6%(9)	Yes, BA or BSW and MSW		29.4%(131)
			Yes, MSW		67.6%(301)
			No		2.9%(13)
Registered with a regulatory body			**Hold a social work license**		
Yes		84.3%(156)	Yes, LSW		4.0%(17)
No		15.6%(29)	Yes, LMSW		14.1%(60)
			Yes, LISW, LCSW, or LICSW		42.5%(181)
			No		31.0%(132)
			Other		8.5%(36)
Yrs in practice/management	13.9(7.3)		**Yrs in practice/management**	11.4(8.2)	
0		0%(0)	0		3.3%(14)
1 – 5		9.1%(17)	1 – 5		23.8%(100)
6 – 10		32.1%(60)	6 – 10		30.2%(127)
11 – 15		24.6%(46)	11 – 15		17.8%(74)
16 – 20		19.8%(37)	16 – 20		13.1%(55)
21 – 25		5.9%(11)	21 – 25		5.5%(23)
26 – 30		5.9%(11)	26 – 30		4.8%(20)
31 and over		2.7%(5)	31 and over		1.9%(8)
Yrs since practice/management	9.5(6.7)		**Yrs since practice/management**	8.5(7.9)	
0		6.7%(12)	0		19.9%(80)
1 – 5		23.0%(41)	1 – 5		23.3%(94)
6 – 10		33.1%(59)	6 – 10		24.3%(98)

11 – 15	19.1%(34)	11 – 15	14.9%(60)
16 – 20	11.8%(21)	16 – 20	9.7%(39)
21 – 25	3.9%(7)	21 – 25	5.5%(22)
26 – 30	1.7%(3)	26 – 30	1.0%(4)
31 and over	0.6%(1)	31 and over	1.5%(6)
Continued practice valued by university		**Continued practice valued by university**	
Yes	69.6%(39)	Yes	58.4%(97)
No	30.4%(17)	No	41.6%(69)

Table 3: Research Skills and Activity

	UK (*N*=200)			USA (*N*=501)	
Variable (*n*)	***M*(*SD*)**	**%(*f*)**	**Variable (*n*)**	***M*(*SD*)**	**%(*f*)**
Research active			**Research active**		
Yes		72.9%(145)	Yes		74.0%(361)
No		27.1%(54)	No		26.0%(127)
Primary research			**Primary research**		
Mixed methods		31.7%(46)	Mixed methods		44.7%(155)
Qualitative		57.9%(84)	Qualitative		23.9%(83)
Quantitative		2.8%(4)	Quantitative		26.8%(93)
Other		7.6%(11)	Other		4.0%(14)
University expectations of time on:			**University expectations of time on:**		
Research (169)	32.8(17.5)		Research (391)	23.5(17.6)	
Teaching (171)	44.4(16.4)		Teaching (414)	53.4(20.6)	
Administration (170)	22.1(11.8)		Admin/Service (410)	27.2(19.6)	
Actual time spent on:			**Actual time spent on:**		
Research (175)	20.3(18.7)		Research (394)	20.1(18.9)	
Teaching (179)	41.3(18.5)		Teaching (424)	49.7(22.5)	
Administration (179)	38.8(18.2)		Admin/Service (418)	35.0(22.5)	

Figure 1: Years in Practice

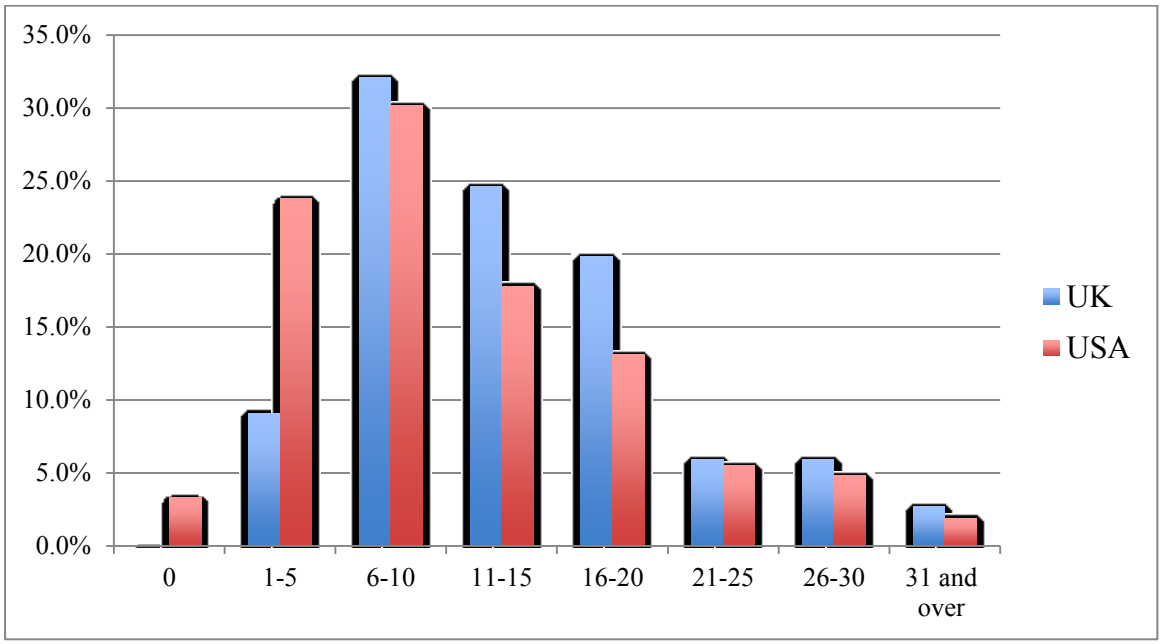
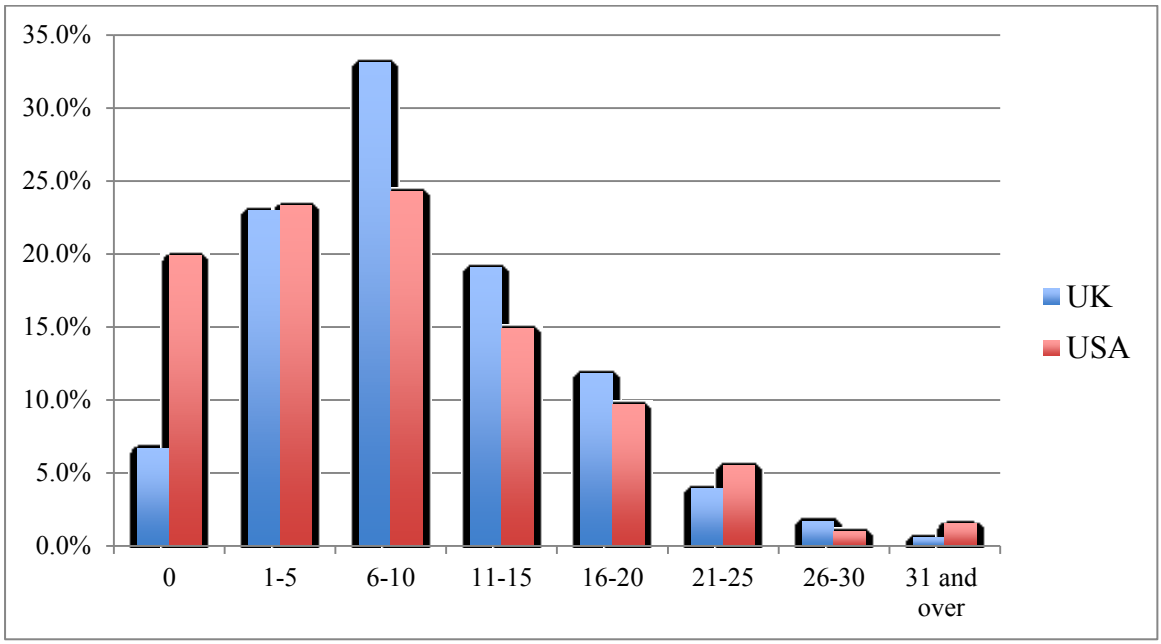


Figure 2: Years Since Practice



[1] Registration requires a social work qualification and a monetary fee to the registering body in the country in which the social worker will practice.
[2] Funding arrangements depending whether the HEI was granted university status before or after the Further and Higher Education Act 1992
[3] Universities are recognized and described by *The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education* (http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu). Doctorate granting universities are classified as either Research Universities (very high research activity); Research Universities (high research activity); or Doctorate/Research Universities. Those non-doctorate granting universities are described by whether they provide undergraduate and/or masters programs and tend to, though not always, be referred to as "teaching universities" where academics have higher teaching loads and less research expectations. "Research intensive" universities generally refers to those universities classified as "Research Universities (very high research activity".
[4] An LMSW is license obtained by a social worker who has a MSW from a social work programme accredited by CSWE and who has passed the state LMSW test and paid a monetary fee.
[5] An LCSW is a clinical license obtained by a former LMSW who has received the mandatory clinical supervision, passed the state LCSW test and paid a monetary fee.
[6] A listserv for social work educators.
[7] "Research activity" was not defined for the participants and could be seen as a limitation to this study. We chose not to define "research activity" as we wanted to be inclusive of all types of research from literature reviews to federally funded studies.
[8] Tenure is a USA process to achieve a permanent position within a university, which cannot be terminated without just cause.