

The same as any other office workers? How to Respect Academics In Five Easy Steps

1. Try to Understand Our Jobs (so we can work without constantly justifying it)

- » **Academic work is complex, creative, and difficult to quantify.** It changes daily and throughout the year.
- » It requires **flexibility and a broad range of skills**, from synthesising ideas to calming stressed students.
- » Sometimes we need **quiet spaces** to read and think.
- » **Each discipline is different**, with unique practices, perspectives and priorities. Embrace diversity.

Top Tip: Education doesn't need to be a profit making business!

2. Think Outside the Balance Sheet

- » **Profit is only one measure of value.** Most academic work will not be profitable.
- » **Many academics aren't motivated by profit.** Why else would we work in higher education, not business?
- » **In staffing, be realistic.** 'Bare minimum' is not enough.
- » **Question short-term 'efficiency.'** Workers in secure employment are more productive – and happier!

Information & References

Dr Myshele Goldberg is a teaching associate at the University of Strathclyde. Background material for this poster comes from the publications below, interviews with sociologists at six Scottish universities in 2008, and observations from working in a department scheduled for closure in 2015. Specific sources are omitted due to space constraints. Please get in touch for further details: myshele.goldberg@strath.ac.uk.

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3. Recognise the Human Element (until the cyborgs invade)

- » **Basic courtesy goes a long way.** Nobody likes being treated like a number on a spreadsheet.
- » Technology is great, but fundamentally, **teaching and learning are about relationships.**
- » **Students value committed teachers. Management should take note.**

Top Tip: Academics are human beings! (students are, too)

4. Reconsider Accountability (hint: it's not about accountants)

- » **Metrics don't tell the whole story.**
- » **Academics want to be accountable**, in ways relevant to our work – not meaningless abstractions.
- » We're hard-working professionals. **Please don't treat us like we're wasting public money.**

Did you know? More than half of UK academic workers are on fixed term or part time contracts.

5. Take a Long View (perhaps standing on the shoulders of giants)

- » **Universities provide long-term benefits to society:** critical citizens, new ideas, social innovation and more.
- » **Much of our 'impact' is impossible to measure.**
- » **Learn to appreciate basic and 'blue sky' research:** it's the foundation of innovation, and valuable on its own.

Title & Inspiration

Many thanks to the senior manager who inspired this poster. During negotiations on open-plan offices, he claimed that academics do not need quiet spaces because they are "the same as any other office workers."